Intergroup dynamics of acculturation and cultural identity: an inter-disciplinary investigation

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Declaration of Authorship for Co-authored Work

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I confirm that the thesis that I am presenting has been co-authored with:

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Within this partly co-authored work, I declare that the following contributions are entirely my own work:

(Here you should indicate, in précis style, the datasets that you gathered, interpreted and discussed; methods that you developed; complete first drafts that you wrote; content that is entirely your own work; etc. It is often appropriate to organise this statement by chapter)

Chapter 1: Introduction

This is entirely my own work.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This is entirely my own work.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This is entirely my own work.

Chapter 4: Paper 1

I designed and collected data for study 2 (study 1 involved secondary data), analysed both studies and drafted the full manuscript.

Chapter 4: Paper 2

I designed the study, collected the data, analysed the study and drafted the full manuscript.

Chapter 5: Paper 3

I designed the study, collected the data, analysed the study and drafted the full manuscript.

Chapter 5: Paper 4

I designed both studies, collected the data, analysed the studies and drafted the full manuscript.

Chapter 6: Paper 5

I designed the study, collected the data, analysed the study, and drafted the full manuscript.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This is entirely my own work.

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Abstract

This thesis explores intergroup processes involved in acculturation and cultural identity, with the aim to enhance the understanding of how acculturation processes interact with intergroup variables and shape relations between majority and minority groups in society. I begin with an overview of the relevant literature on acculturation and intergroup relations from a social psychological perspective, but also offer some sociological and alternative approaches to understanding these issues. Then, the methodology adopted for the thesis is summarised, and some important reflections on the quantitative and qualitative approaches used in the study are included. Five papers within the British context are presented exploring three specific areas of interest: compatibility of acculturation preferences, the role of majority culture change, and feelings of belonging among second generation immigrants.

Overall, a number of conclusions are drawn regarding the importance of intergroup variables in the acculturation process. Essentialism is shown to be an important moderator of the compatibility of heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption preferences (2 studies, N = 198 & 200), while perceived threat moderates the extent to which majority members *perceive* minority acculturation preferences are compatible or not (1 study, N = 163). The role of the majority culture in acculturation research is emphasised by showing that majority members react negatively to perceptions that minority groups expect the majority culture to change (1 study, N = 266) or that their culture is already changing (2 studies, N = 275 & 300). Finally, I show that it is important to go beyond dualist traditional frameworks to consider the lived complexities of how second generation immigrants construct their belonging (1 study, N = 14). Here, the importance of feeling 'othered' and situated, place-based identities are discussed. The thesis ends with a discussion of potential areas of future research and the implications of the findings for policy and practice.

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Publication status & bibliography of papers in this thesis

Paper 1: Published in the British Journal of Social Psychology

Moftizadeh, N., Zagefka, H., & Mohamed, A. (2021). Essentialism affects the perceived

compatibility of minority culture maintenance and majority culture adoption

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Paper 2: Published in the International Journal of Intercultural Relations

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Paper 3: Published in the International Journal of Psychology

Moftizadeh, N., Zagefka, H., López-Rodríguez, L., Vázquez, A., & Barn, R. (2021).

Exploring the intergroup consequences of majority members' perceptions that

minority members want majority members to adopt the minority culture. *International*

Journal of Psychology, *57*, 483-490. https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12756

Paper 5: Published in the Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology

Moftizadeh, N., Zagefka, H., & Barn, R. (2022). Negotiating social belonging: A case

study of second-generation Kurds in London. *Journal of Community & Applied Social*

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Chapter 1: Introduction & Overview

Increased migration is one of the hallmarks of a globalised world; there is now an estimated 272 million international migrants, making up 3.5% of the global population (International Organisation for Migration, 2019). These include labour migrants, asylum seekers and refugees fleeing natural disasters, war and/or persecution, or people seeking greater economic opportunities. Therefore, we now live in a world where many different cultural groups have come together. There are large numbers of immigrants, but also generations of people who come from immigrant families and have settled in new countries, created families and engaged in interethnic marriages (Fernández-Reino, 2020a; Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2020).

Consequently, in recent years, discourse around the impact of immigration and multiculturalism has been salient across national contexts, and Britain is no exception. Many celebrate the diversity, inclusivity and learning that comes from multiculturalist societies (e.g., Burnet, 1995; Berry et al., 2006). On the flip side, negative reactions to demographic changes are also apparent, emphasised for instance by the global rise of anti-immigration sentiments, particularly stoked by populist and far-right political movements (Cox, 2018a, 2018b). Such sentiments primarily suggest that immigration leads to widespread change that poses a threat to the existing cultures, traditions and values of a society. Of course, such views can be a catalyst for prejudice and hostile group relations.

Given the importance of these issues, academics have been concerned with understanding the mechanisms and processes through which people deal with the diversity that comes with cultural changes to the societal landscape (Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2020a). Within social psychology, the term acculturation is often used to refer to the process of culture change which occurs following migration (Berry, 1999; Sam & Berry, 2006), and there have been a number of different ways of conceptualising, and modelling this process. This has allowed scholars to both predict how people might adapt to particular situations, but

also analyse the individual and group-level consequences of particular strategies used by individuals and groups. This thesis is primarily interested with how such processes of culture change interact with identity and group membership, and the implications this might have on group-level cultural adaptation and intergroup relations in society. This will be done by considering both the psychology of mainstream majority members and ethnic or cultural minority members in Britain.

Within the thesis, the formation of group identities, how such identities and group boundaries are defined, and how this shapes intergroup relations become the main lens through which acculturation processes are understood. It is important to note that the majority of this thesis is positioned within social psychological literature, and addresses the questions from theoretical perspectives within social psychology. However, for a holistic and inclusive analysis of these issues, this thesis uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods, and draws on some alternative perspectives of identity and notions of belonging from the wider social sciences. Such perspectives can provide a critical tool to understanding how identity is constructed, taking into account the socio-political context and power dynamics at play. This is important to address some of the particularities and complexities associated with processes of fusing identities and cultures. In sum, then, this thesis presents five papers, all conducted within the context of British society, which broadly tap into issues to do with acculturation, identity and intergroup relations. Building on our understanding of these topics can help to foster harmonious intergroup relations in society, and provide some potential solutions to the challenges presented by changes to the cultural landscape of society.

Overview of this thesis

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on acculturation, identity and intergroup relations. Here, popular bi-dimensional frameworks of acculturation, which have been the predominant frameworks in psychology, are introduced. Then, some of the seminal theories

and concepts relating to identity and intergroup relations, which form the foundations of the arguments in this thesis, are introduced. These include social identity theory, essentialism and integrated threat theory. As mentioned above, to incorporate an inter-disciplinary analysis, this chapter also includes a review of identity from the sociological and wider social sciences literature. Some of the ways in which identity and culture have been conceptualised in psychology are critiqued in this section, and a social constructivist framework is outlined as an alternative to understanding these issues. Finally, this chapter provides a historical overview of the socio-political UK context, where the research in this thesis has taken place. This is important in order to allow for a situated and context-specific analysis of the processes highlighted in this paper.

Chapter 3 presents some important insights into the methodology in the papers throughout the thesis. Here, some of the methodological considerations across the studies are highlighted and justified. The measures used, and any changes throughout studies are also addressed and explained in this section. Also, there is some reflection on some of the potential implications of the chosen methodology, covering both the quantitative and qualitative studies presented in this thesis. There are also some important reflections on open science and replicability, an important issue within the discipline of psychology and the sciences.

The chapters that follow present the empirical research papers in the thesis. Chapter 4 is concerned with the extent to which people believe that majority and minority cultures are compatible or conflicting, and what variables might influence this. Paper 1 presents a study exploring both majority and minority (i.e., Somali people living in the UK) acculturation preferences with the aim to understand the relationship between heritage culture maintenance and mainstream culture adoption. Additionally, this paper investigated the extent to which the relationship between these acculturation dimensions were moderated by whether people held

essentialist beliefs about British identity or not. Paper 2 also seeks to add to our understanding of how people think about compatibility of heritage and mainstream and cultures. In this paper, however, the focus was on how majority members think about minority members' own preferences. That is, the degree to which they perceive that minority members' preferences for culture maintenance are compatible with a preference for culture adoption. Perceived threat was studied as a potential moderator of the relationship between perceived preferences for heritage culture maintenance and/or majority culture adoption.

Chapter 5 shifts the focus of the acculturation process to changes that occur *within the majority culture*. Paper 3 and Paper 4 attempt to build on recent contributions to this largely under-researched area by exploring how perceptions of minority group expectations for majority culture change can impact majority members' own intergroup attitudes towards minority groups. Specifically, paper 3 explores this by applying an intergroup perspective of acculturation (something which had previously been exclusive to minority culture change) to culture change from a majority perspective. Similarly, paper 4 attempts to investigate similar processes, but using alternative social psychological framework, namely the theory of cultural inertia, to explore the intergroup consequences of perceptions of societal culture change.

Chapter 6 moves away from quantitative social psychological frameworks altogether and incorporates an analysis of cultural identity from a constructivist lens; incorporating some sociological concepts and a qualitative method of analysis. In paper 5, a qualitative study is presented which explores the lived complexities of cultural identity among a particular minority group through a framework of belonging, and explored in relation to the socio-political context and power dynamics in society.

Finally, chapter 7 summarises how each paper has contributed to the overall understanding of cultural identity, acculturation and intergroup relations, and draws some

broad conclusions. The important limitations of the thesis are discussed, as well as directions for future research and some important implications for policy and practice that are born out of the studies in this thesis.

Chapter 2: Theoretical perspectives on acculturation, identity & intergroup relations

2.1 Classic research on acculturation

Conceptualising acculturation

Acculturation is commonly referred to as the process of change that occurs when cultural groups come together (Redfield et al., 1936; Sam & Berry, 2006). In a world where immigration has rapidly increased over the years, more and more people from a variety of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds are coming into frequent contact with each other. Of course, both the immigrants, and the people from the 'host' society have their own unique cultural characteristics, and general way of life. When these groups come together, and have continuous first-hand contact, there is an inevitable process of change in the original cultural patterns of both groups (Redfield et al., 1936). This thesis largely adopts this definition by Redfield et al. (1936) in its conceptualisation of acculturation.

There are many different ways in which acculturation has been modelled and investigated across disciplines, and over time. One of the fundamental debates in acculturation research relates to directionality and dimensionality (Sam & Berry, 2006). Early conceptualisations of acculturation treat it as a *unidirectional* process of change in the immigrant groups' culture towards the stationary culture of the majority society (Gordon, 1964). These conceptualisations also see culture change as *unidimensional* in nature, suggesting that culture change occurs on a single axis, i.e., the more the immigrant group orients towards the host culture, the more they lose their original culture (LaFromboise et al., 1993). Here, the two cultures in contact are seen as mutually exclusive and it is not possible to maintain elements of both. As well as this, there is an underlying assumption that change occurs only in one direction. However, there is now ample evidence that acculturation is bidirectional and reciprocal in its influence (Teske & Nelson, 1974; also see Kunst et al., 2021 for a more recent review), and that people can hold dual identities (Deaux, 2006; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012a). Nowadays, the most common frameworks of acculturation

treat acculturation as *bi-dimensional,* suggesting that change occurs across two independent dimensions. This thesis adopts these bi-dimensional models in its conceptualisation of acculturation.

Bi-dimensional models of acculturation

One of the most influential and wide-reaching frameworks of acculturation in the psychology literature is Berry's framework of acculturation (Berry, 1992, 1997, 1999, 2001). This framework conceptualises acculturation as a consequence of the interaction between two underlying dimensions, desire for heritage culture maintenance and desire for intergroup contact. The different ways in which these dimensions interact form four possible different acculturation strategies (see Figure 2.1), which make up the ways in which individuals *prefer to* or *do* acculturate. When someone expresses a desire to maintain their own culture, and also have contact with the host country, they are said to prefer *integration*. When someone expresses a desire to maintain their own culture, but have no contact with the host country then they are showing a preference for *separation*. When someone does not wish to maintain their own culture, but expresses a desire to have contact with the host country they prefer the *assimilation* strategy. Note, sometimes assimilation and acculturation are used synonymously (Sam & Berry, 2006), particularly within unidimensional perspectives of acculturation, but using this framework, assimilation is a strategy of culture change and not the only means of it. Finally, if someone does not wish to maintain their culture nor have any contact with the host country they are showing a preference for *marginalisation*. It is worth noting that often measures of ethnic and national identities are also used as virtually synonymous with the two acculturation dimensions, heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption (Phinney, 1990), as they also constitute a (more symbolic) means of evaluating someone's feelings towards their heritage culture or that of the majority society. In this way, ethnic and national identities have also been portrayed as two orthogonal dimensions of identification to

the heritage or host identity (e.g., see Verkuyten & Brug, 2001). These orientations have been

shown to interact with each other for minority members in much the same way as Berry

theorized for the acculturation dimensions (Phinney, 1990).

Figure 2.1

Illustration of the Four Possible Acculturation Strategies that Emerge From the Two

Underlying Dimensions.

	High culture maintenance	**Low culture maintenance**
High contact/culture adoption	Integration	Assimilation
Low contact/culture adoption	Separation	Marginalisation

In a later development of the bi-dimensional acculturation framework, Bourhis et al.

(1997) devised the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM). This model deviated from the

classic framework in a number of important ways. Firstly, a *desire for culture adoption*

replaced a *desire for intergroup contact* as one of the key dimensions through which

acculturation is measured. This is because intergroup contact does not necessarily relate to

cultural orientations. For instance, one may desire contact with a host member but not

necessarily appreciate or take on the culture of the host society. Bourhis et al. (1997)

suggested replacing contact with culture adoption as this is conceptually closer to

acculturation than contact, and therefore presents a more valid model of acculturation. A

second important point distinguishing this model from Berry's acculturation framework is an

added emphasis on the acculturation preferences of the host society. The ways in which

immigrants might acculturate in new societies do not occur in a vacuum, but are situated

within a particular socio-political context. For example, adaptation is heavily influenced by

the intergroup climate and wider socio-political context of the host society (Bourhis et al.,

1997; Brown & Zagefka, 2011). For this reason, it is important to understand the

acculturation preferences of the host society. This might be through considering official policy or through considering the preferences of majority group members (Bourhis et al., 1997). For instance, the host society is said to be fostering 1) *multiculturalism* if it encourages cultural diversity, 2) a *melting pot* society if the onus is on the immigrants to assimilate, 3) *segregation* if the host society separates the immigrant group, and finally 4) *exclusion* if marginalisation is enforced by the majority group (Berry, 2011). The IAM was primarily devised to shed light on the perspective of the host society, and intergroup processes involved in the acculturation of immigrant groups, which will be focused on in much greater detail in Chapter 3.

Acculturation and adaptation

The principal purpose of the acculturation framework devised by Berry (1999) was to predict cognitive, affective and behavioural changes in immigrant groups that result from their different acculturative choices. These changes in response to the acculturation process are referred to as acculturative stress or adaptation (Berry, 2006; Ward, 2001). Ward (2001) distinguishes between two types: *psychological* and *socio-cultural* adaptation. A meta-analysis of a plethora of studies on acculturation and adaptation has shown that integration is the strategy that is associated with the most optimal psychological outcomes (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013), while marginalisation is associated with the worst outcomes (Berry, 1997). In addition, in societies where there is great hostility, and reported experiences of discrimination or clear racism, there is a greater likelihood of poor adaptation of immigrants (Clark et al., 1999; Geeraert & Demoulin, 2013; Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000).

It is clear, then, that the way in which people acculturate has a major influence on various psychological and socio-cultural outcomes. However, exploring people's isolated acculturation preferences and associated stress and health outcomes does not tell the full acculturation story. Later developments in acculturation highlight that acculturation should be

considered as a dynamic intergroup process and that acculturation also has important consequences for intergroup relations, conflict, and/or intergroup prejudice.

2.2 Classic research on intergroup relations

This section provides an overview of some of the fundamental theoretical frameworks on identity and intergroup relations in the social psychological literature. Of particular relevance is social identity theory and the wider literature around social identities (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), the concept of essentialism as a lay theory of identity, and integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). These theories have contributed greatly to the understanding of intergroup relations, conflict and prejudice in society. It is important to outline in detail the fundamental principles of these theories and concepts as they are instrumental in the study of acculturation as an intergroup phenomena and lay the foundation for the research explored in papers 1 to 4 of this thesis.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory (SIT) is based on the notion that identities are not only *personal* and defined by individual traits and character, but also *social* and defined by memberships and social positions one may hold in society. Tajfel (1978) considers social identities as "part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 63). The theory proposes that people are motivated to view their social identities positively to enhance their self-esteem, and therefore they identify with their ingroups, and make favourable group comparisons against outgroups. Early studies using what is now known as the *minimal group paradigm* demonstrated that even being categorised in arbitrary and meaningless groups can foster an environment where group members try to uphold their superior social identity and behave in ways that result in positive distinctiveness (Tajfel et al., 1971). The need for positive distinctiveness often results in ingroup bias and a

tendency to favour and positively differentiate one's ingroup from the outgroup, more than it results in particularly negative attitudes towards the outgroup (Brewer, 1979). This means that the ingroup is desired to be relatively better, and not that the outgroup is desired to be seen negatively per se. However, studies have shown that negative intergroup attitudes and outgroup derogation can also manifest following some threat to the collective self-esteem of a group – particularly among higher identifiers (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Ellemers et al., 2002).

In a society where there is an abundance of different social categories, organizations and cultures with which people can identify and belong to, SIT predicts that 'us vs them' mentalities are likely to manifest (Tajfel, 1981). A primary concern of groups is to preserve their collective self-esteem through *differentiation* and *positive distinctiveness*. This is particularly pertinent given resource scarcity in society, and the range of different hierarchies, and power positions that various groups hold. Relative to *majority* members, a *minority* group consists of group members who are either considerably smaller in number (Moscovici & Paicheler, 1978), or who hold a less powerful position or lower social status in society (Tajfel, 1981). Of course, this is a debilitating starting point to be in, as these groups are disadvantaged relative to the majority group. In such cases, these groups are motivated to increase their group self-esteem and can do so using a variety of different strategies including leaving the group entirely (either physically or psychologically), making downward comparisons that flatter the ingroup or engaging in social change to try and overturn existing hierarchies and challenge the status-quo (Hornsey, 2008; Reicher, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Brown, 1978).

The extent to which groups can change, and the specific strategies that will be used in order to facilitate change, depends on a number of factors including permeability of group boundaries, and the extent to which differences in group status are seen as stable and/or

legitimate (Hornsey, 2008). In cases where group boundaries are seen as relatively fixed and impermeable, individual mobility is not as likely – here, there is a tendency for collective action and social change by the group. For example, in cases where individual mobility is unlikely, low status group members are likely to adopt strategies such as increased ingroup identification (Ellemers, 1993; Jetten et al., 1999). However, in cases where group boundaries are permeable, individual action is more likely, meaning that individuals can 'escape' one group and join the higher status group (Ellemers et al., 1988; Ellemers et al., 1990; LaLonde & Silverman, 1994). Similarly, if status differences between groups are seen as something that can change, or something that is illegitimate in nature, the likelihood of collective action is greater (Major, 1994; Turner & Brown, 1978). These arguments can be applied to ethnic identity, which is one important form of social identity (Liebkind, 2001).

Clearly then, in the intergroup literature there are many strategies that are discussed that minority members can use to cope with their disadvantaged status. It is important to note that the present work will not focus on these strategies as outcome variables because naturally the scope of this thesis needs to be limited. However, as a formative theory on intergroup relations, principles of SIT and majority-minority psychology inform the theoretical approach and conceptualisations of most intergroup relations work in social psychology. Indeed, some of the acculturation and wider intergroup dynamics focused on in this thesis are particularly relevant to issues of status in society. Therefore, in this general introduction it is essential to outline the basic tenets of SIT.

Self-Categorisation Theory

Furthermore, Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT) devised by Turner et al. (1987) as an extension of the principles of SIT posits that social contexts create particular group boundaries which are salient at a given time, meaning that identification with particular groups, and ingroup and outgroup formations, are heavily context-dependent. However, in a

given context where a particular social identity is salient, individuals act on the basis of the norms, beliefs and values associated with said identity – of course there is the possibility of a wide range of different behaviours and attitudes, as a function of the particular social identity that is salient at any given point (Reicher, 2004). Importantly, the level of identification with one's social identity moderates the extent to which people may behave and think according to the norms of the group (Doosje et al., 1999; Ellemers et al., 1988; 1999), and as mentioned above can also shape the ways in which group members respond to an outgroup (Ellemers et al., 2002).

Why minority status often goes hand in hand with increased identification

The Rejection Identification Model devised by Branscombe et al. (1999) aims to explain how minority groups deal with rejection and/or discrimination in society. This model argues that when low status minority groups make attributions of prejudice against their group, and feel like they are being treated illegitimately, the members of the minority group are likely to show greater hostility towards the majority group, but parallel to this show a greater level of ingroup identification. This identification is designed to mediate the relationship between feelings of prejudice and psychological well-being – it is seen as a technique to enhance the collective self-esteem of the devalued group (Branscome et al., 1999). This model becomes particularly relevant when applied to acculturation and cultural identity, and will be elaborated on and applied to ethnic and cultural groups later in this chapter.

Although the strength of identification is not one of the main outcome variables in the empirical studies conducted in this thesis, it is important to highlight these processes to understand the broader literature on minority psychology, particularly the underlying motivations and identity processes which may inform issues such as minority acculturation processes and cultural identity. This is especially important given that some of the empirical

studies presented in this thesis focus on participants from minority groups, e.g., Somali and Kurdish ethnic minorities in Britain.

Essentialism

As mentioned above, permeability of group boundaries is a key concept in SIT, as perceptions of group permeability often impact social identification and intergroup relations (Ramos et al., 2016). The concept of essentialism is relevant here, as it is central to how some group boundaries are perceived – particularly in relation to cultural, racial and ethnic groups (Yzerbyt et al., 1997). In recent years, research on defining and understanding essentialism has increased. Rothbart and Taylor (1992) argued that people tend to treat social categories as 'natural kinds', with an underlying 'essence' that is the main driver of observable differences in appearance and behaviour. In order to explain why people tend to essentialise social categories, Yzerbyt et al. (1997) argued that people are inclined to rely on such essentialist notions in order to rationalise and maintain the status-quo. Through empirical investigation, Haslam et al. (2000) proposed a structure of essentialism, with two underlying dimensions. The first concerns the extent to which categories are understood as 'natural kinds' with sharp boundaries, are immutable in nature, and stable throughout history. The second concerns the extent to which categories are reified or perceived as 'real things'. In their research, Haslam et al. (2000) found that ethnic and racial groups are essentialised on at least one, and sometimes both, of these dimensions. National groups can also be portrayed in essentialist terms, through 'ethnic nationalism' which sees national groups as having the same immutable and fixed qualities conveyed by essentialism (Connor, 1994; Smith, 1991). In particular, one feature of essentialist thinking which is usually applied to cultural and ethnic groups relates to a 'biological' and 'natural' connection often portrayed through shared ancestral origins and blood ties (Keller, 2005; Verkuyten, 2018). For example, if one considers the ethnic category 'English', an essentialist belief would suggest that being English is something intrinsic to

one's biological make up and membership of this category is contingent on having such biological traits.

A number of studies have found links between essentialism and prejudice (Bastian & Haslam, 2008; Haslam et al., 2002). The psychological research on this topic is highlighted here, and a sociological perspective is also offered later in this chapter. Where majority members define their national identity in more 'ethnic' or essentialist terms, there is a greater likelihood of outgroup derogation and prejudice (Meus et al., 2010; Pehrson, Brown & Zagefka, 2009; Pehrson, Vignoles & Brown, 2009) and less support for multiculturalism (Verkuyten & Brug, 2004). In such cases, the rigid nature of group boundaries, defined by a fixed and natural connection, creates a clear divide between different groups, creating exclusionary discourses and the greater likelihood of prejudiced attitudes. Such findings suggest that having a strong national identity alone does not predict prejudice, but this depends heavily on the way in which identity is represented.

Also, an important finding related to essentialism is that it can be defined and deployed according to the interests of the group at hand. Studies have shown that minority groups (e.g., LGBT group members) can sometimes deploy essentialist arguments to argue for their group rights (Morton & Postmes, 2009). In addition, a qualitative study conducted by Verkuyten (2003) on majority and minority members living in the Netherlands found that both minority and majority groups use 'essentialist' or 'de-essentialist' arguments to make certain arguments in the interest of their group. For instance, minority members use essentialist arguments to argue against their expected assimilation into the majority society. In sum then, it is important to consider the role of essentialism when studying identity processes and intergroup relations. Because essentialism has implications for whether people are viewed as *being able* to change from one cultural group to another, the concept is of fundamental importance when considering minority and majority members' views on culture

change. This is why the empirical part of the present thesis attempted to measure the

construct of essentialism directly, in order to chart how it comes into play in acculturative

contexts.

Integrated threat theory

Another theory central to understanding prejudice and intergroup relations is the

Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) devised by Stephan and Stephan (2000). This theory

postulates that prejudice is a result of a perception of different types of threat: realistic and

symbolic threat. Although early research on this theory included intergroup anxiety and

stereotypes as types of threat, subsequent work has disputed whether these two variables are

actually types of threat or antecedents or consequences of experiencing it, and therefore

symbolic and realistic threats are now the primary types of threat that are studied under this

theoretical framework (see Riek et al., 2006 for a review). Realistic threat is based on

principles of Realistic Group Conflict Theory (Sherif, 1966). This theory argues that when

two groups are in competition for scarce resources, the potential for conflict between these

groups arises as the competition instils a sense of 'zero-sum' thinking in groups, suggesting

that one groups success will come at the expense of the outgroup (Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

Realistic threats, then, primarily concern features that comprise the very existence of a group,

such as their physical safety, and their political or economic power. Typically, realistic

threats can be conceptualised in physical, political or economic terms. However, when

investigating ethnic majority and minority relations and anti-immigrant sentiment, realistic

threat often focuses on the competition over material and economic group interests (e.g.,

McLaren & Johnson, 2007; Velasco Gonzalez et al., 2008). For this reason, this thesis also

focuses more on this conceptualisation of realistic threat. Secondly, symbolic threats refer to

the worldview of the ingroup. In other words, this corresponds to their beliefs, values and

meaning-making systems. This type of threat is based on the idea that each group believes in

the 'moral rightness' of their system of values (Stephan & Stephan, 2000), and any attempt to

undermine this is met with resistance. It is important to note that this theory primarily

addresses *perceptions* of threat that one group holds about a particular outgroup; studies have

shown that such a perception is not necessarily accurate or a reflection of reality (Semyonov

et al., 2004).

Nevertheless, a host of studies provide empirical support for the fundamental tenet of

ITT, that symbolic and realistic threats lead to prejudice (Riek et al., 2006). In particular,

research on ITT has shed light on why anti-immigration attitudes and prejudice of particular

religious minority groups arise. For example, early research on ITT conducted by Stephan

and colleagues (1998) showed that prejudice towards immigrants living in Israel and Spain

was predicted by perceptions of threat. Additionally, Velasco Gonzalez et al. (2008) found

that threat was linked with prejudice towards Muslims in the Netherlands, and a number of

studies have also shown that perceptions of threat can shape majority groups' opinions and

attitudes towards minority groups in the UK (Croucher, 2013; Hellwig & Sinno, 2017;

Swami et al., 2018). A number of studies looking at perceived competition and realistic threat

between groups has also shown that this is an antecedent of prejudice (Esses et al., 2001).

Importantly, the type of threat that a majority group might feel towards a particular minority

group depends on the nature of the group (Hellwig & Sinno, 2017; Jedinger & Eisentraut,

2020). In some cases, perceptions of threat can also have catastrophic consequences for

intergroup relations, as some studies have shown that perceiving outgroups as threatening can

lead to a willingness to commit acts of extreme violence and terrorism (Obaidi et al., 2018;

Tahir et al., 2019). In this thesis, the various ways in which perceived threat is associated

with particular acculturation related attitudes and perceptions are explored empirically. In

paper 2, perceived threat is explored as a moderator of whether majority members think that

minority culture maintenance is compatible with majority culture adoption. In papers 3 & 4,

perceived threat is explored as a mediator of the relationship between perceived expectations of majority culture change and prejudice.

2.3 Acculturation from an intergroup perspective

Having introduced some of the foundational theories and concepts relating to intergroup relations and identity in social psychology in this chapter, this section will now explore how these theories and concepts have been applied to the study of acculturation. Indeed, the main theoretical framework underpinning the research in this thesis is the intergroup perspective of acculturation (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). The primary assumption here is that acculturation preferences do not occur in a vacuum, and it is important to understand how they are shaped by the intergroup climate and wider socio-political context (Bourhis et al., 1997; Brown & Zagefka, 2011). In other words, the perspectives of both minorities and majorities should be taken into account to reach a deeper understanding of the acculturation process and how it might shape intergroup relations. Another important but related assumption of this approach is that acculturation preferences do not only have implications for psychosocial functioning and well-being of individuals, but also for the peacefulness or conflictual nature of relations between different cultural groups. Here, I highlight what is already known in the literature regarding acculturation and intergroup processes and how the studies in the thesis aim to build on this.

Importantly, when referring to acculturation, the first chapter in this thesis used the terms 'immigrant' and 'host' society to dichotomise the two different groups of interest, consistent with initial research based on the acculturation framework (Berry, 2001). However, hereafter this thesis will adopt the terms 'majority' and 'minority' to address the groups of interest in the acculturation process. This is for a number of reasons. Firstly, as highlighted in chapter 2, minority-majority distinctions may also convey power and status inequality in the different groups, and this is integral to our understanding of intergroup

relations. In some places, the terms 'dominant' and 'non-dominant' are also used to convey unequal power relations in society. Second, although initially looking at only people who had migrated, acculturation literature has now explored a plethora of different groups including those who have not necessarily migrated themselves but still constitute a minority in terms of power relations, such as second generation immigrants and indigenous people (Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Sam & Berry, 2006).

In the beginning of this chapter the bi-dimensional acculturation framework was briefly introduced, and some important developments of the model were also highlighted. In particular, the IAM is relevant here as it was one of the key models which emphasised the intergroup nature of acculturation (Bourhis et al., 1997). This model proposed that the interaction of majority-minority preferences can have important implications for intergroup relations. Bourhis et al. (1997) proposed that, depending on the ways in which majority and minority views interact, there is the possibility of *consensual*, *conflictual* or *problematic* outcomes. Subsequent research built on this idea of exploring how majority-minority acculturation preferences can interact. In their Concordance Model of Acculturation (CMA), Piontkowski et al. (2002) argue that a mismatch in attitudes between majority and minority groups can create threatening intergroup situations. Level of concordance of attitudes between German majority members and Italian and Polish immigrants was found to be related to perceptions of intergroup threat; discordant attitudes were associated with more perceived threat (Piontkowski et al., 2002). Such models highlight the importance of exploring acculturation attitudes from an intergroup lens, and therefore incorporating an analysis of majority members when studying the acculturation of minorities.

Intergroup antecedents of acculturation preferences

Since the shift to an intergroup focus of acculturation, there is growing research on the majority group's own *preferences* or *expectations* for minority groups. Generally, a host

of research conducted across different contexts has found that majority members tend to prefer minority members to adopt the majority culture and not maintain their own heritage culture (e.g., Arends-Tòth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998; Van Oudenhoven & Esses, 1998). Similarly, a range of studies have shown that majority members tend not to endorse an ideology of multiculturalism and prefer assimilation instead, whereas minorities tend to prefer multiculturalism as an ideology, and integration as the best strategy for their groups' acculturation (Berry et al., 2006; Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998; Verkuyten 2005, Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007; Zagefka & Brown, 2002).

Of course, acculturation attitudes of both majority and minority groups have been found to depend on a number of intergroup variables. Piontkowski et al (2000) explored a variety of intergroup variables and how they predict acculturation preferences among majority members (Swiss people, Germans, Slovaks) and minority members (Turks, Yugoslavians, Hungarians). Intergroup similarity, ingroup bias, permeability of group boundaries, and identification were all found to be associated with the strategies that majority and minority members chose. Within the majority groups, a preference for integration was associated with greater perceived similarity with the outgroup, and less ingroup bias, but the opposite was found with majority members who favoured assimilation. Within the minority groups, permeability of group boundaries was associated with a greater likelihood to adopt the majority culture, but if boundaries were seen as impermeable minority members were more likely to adopt strategies that allow them to maintain their own heritage culture (integration or separation). Ingroup identification was also related to acculturation attitudes; minority members who did not identify strongly with their ingroup were more likely to assimilate to the majority culture. Prejudice has also been found to be an important antecedent of acculturation attitudes among minority and majority members (Zagefka et al., 2014; Zick et al., 2001). Over time, the more prejudiced minority members were, the less

they wanted to adopt the majority culture. Likewise, over time more prejudiced majority members showed a preference for majority culture adoption and less heritage culture maintenance (Zagefka et al., 2014). In another study conducted by Zagefka et al. (2007), perceptions of economic competition reduced the support for integration among majority members and led to more negative attitudes towards minorities (Zagefka et al., 2007). Another important antecedent of acculturation attitudes of majority members has been shown to be the degree to which they subscribe to essentialist beliefs about groups. In one study, Zagefka et al. (2013) demonstrated that majority members who held essentialist beliefs about British identity were less likely to think that mainstream culture adoption by minority members was possible. Paradoxically, those high in essentialism demanded greater culture adoption, and this discrepancy in expectations and perceived possibility mediated the relationship between essentialism and prejudice towards minorities.

Another important variable which shapes the acculturation attitudes of minority members in particular is the perception of discrimination from the majority group. Many studies conducted across various national contexts have supported this by showing that perceived discrimination affects minority members' acculturation attitudes and ethnic identification (Berry et al., 2006; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009; Neto, 2002; Piontkowski, et al., 2000; Ramos et al., 2016; Robinson, 2009; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Verkuyten (2016) argues that an 'integration paradox' is evident in the Netherlands, where there is increasing evidence that minority members turn away from host society as opposed to becoming more oriented towards it, and pinpoints the impact that perceived discrimination and host society rejection have on this tendency to orient away from the majority culture. In one study of Turkish Muslim minority members in Netherlands, Verkuyten & Yildiz (2007) showed that ethnic and religious identification related negatively with national identification, and perceived group rejection was associated with increased

Turkish and Muslim identification but decreased Dutch identification. This is also supported by studies looking at acculturation preferences of other minority groups. Neto (2002) showed that in Portugal, minority members generally support integration but where they perceive greater discrimination from majority members, they are more likely to support separation – that is, maintaining their heritage culture and not adopting the host culture. This finding has also been supported by studies in a UK context looking at South Asian minorities' acculturation preferences (Robinson, 2009).

Similarly, this pattern can be seen on a societal level as well. Berry and Kalin (1995) argue that minority members will only choose integration in national contexts where multiculturalism is endorsed. For instance, in a large cross-national survey, Berry et al. (2006) showed that biculturalism was more common in more accepting societies with a long history of diversity, such as Canada, as opposed to Germany and France, who are more assimilatory in their policies and discourse on immigration (Guimond et al., 2014). In contexts where multiculturalism is not the dominant discourse, Berry argues that minority members are more likely to maintain their heritage culture without adopting mainstream culture (Berry & Kalin, 1995; Kalin & Berry, 1994). These findings are in line with the 'rejection identification model', which argues that when participants perceive discrimination from outgroup members they are more likely to identify with their own groups (Branscombe et al., 1999; Jetten, et al., 2001). Again, although these variables were not directly investigated in this paper, it is important to understand how particular intergroup variables can shape the acculturation process. As well as this, societal contexts become particularly important when understanding the complexities of lived experiences of some minority groups in the UK, something which is explored in detail in paper 5.

Perceptions of acculturation preferences

An important aspect of the intergroup perspective to acculturation relates to how one group *perceives* the preferences of another group (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). Not only do groups have their own preferences, but they exhibit particular attitudes in response to how they *perceive* other groups might think about acculturation. Since interactions between majority and minority acculturation preferences can lead to various relational outcomes, *perceptions* of acculturation preferences become an important area of research, as how one group perceives an outgroup's preferences, and whether this is consistent with their own preferences plays a critical role in their group relations (Zagefka & Brown, 2002). Understanding perceptions of acculturation preferences, and subsequent reactions to them, is critical for intergroup relations, particularly because sometimes such perceptions may not reflect reality. For instance, one study in the Netherlands showed that majority members predicted that separation was the most frequently chosen strategy among minority members, when in fact minority members preferred integration (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998). An additional study in Belgium conducted by Van Acker and Vanbeselaere (2011b) found that Flemish majority members believed that Turkish minority members who choose to maintain their heritage culture prefer not to adopt the majority culture – of course, it is clear from other studies conducted in Belgium that this is not necessarily always the case (Roblain et al., 2017). Various studies emphasising how majority members react to particular acculturation preferences they perceive the outgroup to have, and their consequences for intergroup relations, are highlighted below.

Early experimental studies in the Netherlands demonstrated that majority members evaluated minority members who assimilated more positively than those who integrated (Van Oudenhoven & Eisses, 1998). In addition, Kosic et al. (2005) showed that Italian majority members evaluated Moroccan minority members who assimilated or integrated more positively than those who wanted to only maintain their heritage culture. In France, majority

members showed more positive stereotypes (warmth and competence) of minority members who wanted to adopt the majority culture (Maissoneauve & Teste, 2007). Some scholars have argued that intergroup contact plays an important part in the intergroup process, as majority members who perceive that minority members seek contact with the majority group are more likely to support integration strategies themselves (Zagefka et al., 2007). Another study in Belgium showed that that positive contact experiences and perceiving that Turkish immigrants make efforts to adopt the majority culture, or engage in contact with majority group members, are associated with less negative affective reactions towards them. However, perceiving that Turkish immigrants maintain their heritage culture is associated with more negative affective reactions among the majority group (Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011a).

A number of studies seeking to demonstrate the intergroup consequences of particular perceptions of acculturation have emphasised the role of perceived threat. First, as mentioned above, discordant acculturation attitudes, both in terms of heritage culture maintenance and intergroup contact, enhance perceptions of threat as opposed to concordant attitudes (Rohmann et al., 2006). If a majority group perceives that minority groups wish to acculturate in a way that is not consistent with their own preferences for that group, they are likely to feel threatened. Also, studies exploring how majority members perceive minority acculturation preferences have shown that a perception that minorities want to maintain their culture is often associated with greater perceptions of threat, while a perception that minority members want to adopt the majority culture is associated with less perceived threat (Tip et al., 2012; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011a). Importantly, threat often mediates the relationship between perceptions of acculturation preferences and own preferences (López-Rodríguez et al., 2014), intergroup attitudes (Matera et al., 2015), and support for multiculturalism (Tip et al., 2012), such that higher perceived threat is associated with more negative attitudes, greater desire for assimilation, and less support for multiculturalism.

Going even further, some studies have also shown how minority members'

perceptions of what the majority group want for them can impact their own preferences. For

example, one study in Chile found that members of an indigenous minority group were more

in favour of integration if they perceived that the majority group also wanted them to

integrate. If minority members perceive that majority members are happy with them

maintaining their heritage culture, they are more likely to attempt this, because it then appears

to be a more realistic goal (Zagefka et al., 2011). Perceiving that majority members are

supportive of particular acculturation preferences can also act as a moderator of the impact on

minority members' acculturation preferences on their subsequent adjustment to the majority

society (António & Monteiro, 2015). Overall, this once again supports the idea that minority

group acculturation preferences do not occur in a vacuum, and that they are dependent on

both majority group preferences and the wider societal climate. How minority groups react to

such perceptions, and their own subsequent acculturation preferences, is important in shaping

intergroup relations. In a nutshell, majority and minority members both have perceptions of

what they think the outgroup wants to do, or what they actually do, and these perceptions

often drive their own acculturation preferences. Of course, if these perceptions are inaccurate,

then a situation could arise where one group has a false impression of the other group,

resulting in unnecessarily negative attitudes towards the outgroup (Van Oudenhoven et al.,

1998). Importantly, misrepresentations of minority acculturation preferences can affect

minority members' well-being and acculturative adaptation (Barreto et al., 2003; Roccas et

al., 2000), and perpetuate negative intergroup relations (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2011).

Given the importance of *perceptions of acculturation preferences* on intergroup outcomes,

understanding the factors that might influence how one group perceives how an outgroup

acculturates warrants further attention. One of the papers in this thesis (paper 2) aims to

further explore the ways in which *perceptions* of outgroup acculturation preferences can be influenced by particular intergroup variables, e.g., perceptions of threat.

Gaps in the research and novel contribution of the present studies

In recent years, the research on the intergroup processes involved in acculturation has taken strides in highlighting how majority and minority groups' acculturation preferences and perceptions can interact and influence intergroup relations. This thesis aims to further advance our understanding in two distinct but equally important areas of acculturation that have not received much attention so far. The first area relates to the extent to which majority and minority members' desires for heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption are seen as compatible or conflicting, and what variables this might depend on. The second area relates to culture change from the perspective of the majority group.

Compatibility of acculturation preferences

Bi-dimensional frameworks of acculturation argue that acculturation is dependent on two independent dimensions: heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption (Bourhis et al., 1997). As mentioned towards the beginning of this chapter, early research conceptualised acculturation as unidimensional, suggesting that acculturation occurs on a single continuum of strict heritage culture maintenance on the one extreme to complete assimilation to the majority culture at the other extreme (e.g., Gordon, 1964). More and more research has shown that this is not necessarily the case and that minority members can be bicultural, and maintain their heritage culture while also expressing a desire to participate in the majority culture (e.g., Demes & Geeraert, 2014; Ryder et al., 2000; Tsai et al., 2000). This is further exemplified by research showing that minority members prefer multiculturalism (Verkuyten, 2007), and that ethnic identification and national identification can occur simultaneously (Phinney, 1990; Nesdale & Mak, 2000; Verkuyten & Brug, 2001). For majority members however, as outlined above, assimilation is the most preferred

strategy. This might suggest that majority members often do not see the heritage culture as compatible with the majority culture, and prefer minority members to *only* adopt the majority culture. Relatedly, majority members often show zero-sum thinking regarding minority groups, so they are inclined to think that any form of accommodation of minority culture might come at their expense (Norton & Sommers, 2011).

Although some studies have tested the relationship between acculturation dimensions, these have largely been conducted within the context of measurement and to test dimensionality of acculturation models. Not many studies have directly addressed the issue of whether acculturation preferences and positive orientations towards more than one culture seen as *compatible* or *conflicting.* In other words, are preferences for participation in one culture perceived to be compatible with participation in other cultures, and do people believe that it is possible to want to maintain one culture whilst simultaneously wanting to adopt another culture, and what are the consequences of such beliefs? In a recent longitudinal study, Hillekens et al. (2019) showed in a school setting with adolescents that acculturation orientations of minority groups are compatible over time, as there was a positive association between heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption across time points. This suggests that over time, partaking in one culture complements the other. For majority groups however, the opposite effect was apparent. Over time majority members' preferences for minority members to maintain their heritage culture was negatively correlated with their preferences for majority culture adoption.

Moreover, as highlighted in the above sections, majority members do not only have their own preferences for how minorities should act, but they may have pre-existing perceptions about how they *do* act. In relation to compatibility, then, majority members might perceive that minority members who wish to maintain their own culture are likely not to want to adopt the majority culture. We have already seen that in other studies majority members

tend to underestimate the extent to which minority members seek integration (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998; Zagefka & Brown, 2002). Such stereotypes about minority preferences may have implications for intergroup relations in cases where there is a discrepancy between what the majority thinks the minority do, and what the minority actually do. In the study by Van Acker and Vanbeselaere (2011b) majority members in Belgium who perceived that Muslim minority members maintained their heritage culture were more likely to report that the minority members did not want to adopt the majority culture, and vice versa.

Of course, it is important to acknowledge that despite general patterns that have been portrayed in the literature, there is considerable variation between different national contexts and ethnic groups on their acculturation preferences and their intergroup dynamics (Brown et al., 2016). Therefore, it becomes important to test the specific contexts in which particular dynamics might play out. In relation to compatibility of acculturation preferences, no research has explored the conditions under which culture maintenance and culture adoption are experienced as compatible or conflicting. This thesis aims to address this gap in the literature by studying potential third factors involved in this process, i.e. factors that might inform whether culture maintenance is seen to imply a rejection of culture adoption or not.

Majority culture change

So far, much of the research reviewed in this thesis addresses the acculturation of minority members, and the intergroup influences of this. That is, the onus of change is placed firmly on the minority members, with little attention to potential culture change within the majority society. Note that within the research on minority acculturation, majority members' acculturation preferences refer to what they want for the minority groups. However, there has been little research on majority members' own acculturation; that is the degree to which they have to change and adapt in an increasingly globalised world. Indeed, the classic definition of

acculturation by Redfield et al. (1936) defines acculturation as: "Those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups", (p.149). Similarly, Teske and Nelson (1974) have argued that the acculturation process is bidirectional and reciprocal, meaning that change is something that occurs for both groups. Taking this into account, then, it is surprising that research on culture change within the majority culture has been largely overlooked over the years.

One study by Geschke et al. (2010) demonstrated that majority members' own acculturation is particularly important, as it is associated with a range of intergroup variables, e.g., prejudice, desire for contact, and negative attitudes towards migration. This study highlights the importance of studying culture change from the perspective of majority groups: majority members' own acculturation goals (in relation to their own culture, and the culture of migrants) were the most important determinants of attitudes towards minority members. There has been a recent growth in the number of studies exploring the acculturation of majority groups (e.g., Haugen & Kunst, 2017; Lefringhausen & Marshall, 2016; Lefringhausen et al., 2021; Kunst et al., 2021). Early studies into this phenomenon showed that majority members' acculturation can be conceptualised in much the same way as minority acculturation, with the two underlying dimensions of national culture maintenance and minority culture adoption (Haugen & Kunst, 2017). It was found that majority members who seek integration have better psychological outcomes (e.g., self-esteem, life satisfaction), and better intergroup relations, whereas those who only maintain the national culture and do not adopt the culture of immigrants are more prone to identity threat (Haugen & Kunst, 2017; Lefringhausen & Marshall, 2016).

As well as using the bi-dimensional acculturation framework, majority culture change has also been explored through alternative frameworks. Relevant here is the theory of cultural

inertia by Zárate and colleagues (2012). According to this theory, groups are generally resistant to culture change and prefer a climate that preserves the stability of their groups. If, however, change is continuously occurring and is normative, then groups are likely to be more receptive of this and prefer change to be ongoing. Related to acculturation, then, minority members are likely to prefer ideologies that limit the extent to which they have to change (e.g., multiculturalism), and likewise for majority members (e.g., assimilation). In short, groups prefer to maintain stable trajectories and react negatively to sudden changes. From the perspective of majority members, a perception that minorities are changing the culture is likely to lead to negative attitudes. In a series of experimental studies, perceptions of culture change were manipulated, and in the conditions where majority members were led to believe they had to change to accommodate a minority group, they exhibited greater levels of prejudice towards said minority group (Zárate et al., 2012). This theory sheds light on the intergroup consequences of *perceptions of culture change*. However, research in this area remains limited, especially within the European context.

Although there have been a number of studies exploring perceptions of outgroup acculturation preferences and how they impact own preferences and intergroup attitudes within the framework of minority culture change, this has not been explored at all in relation to majority members' own processes of culture change. On the back of research by Geschke et al. (2010) which showed that majority members have stronger preferences for what they want to happen to their own culture than the minority culture, it seems necessary to understand how majority members might react to expectations of culture change on their part from the minority groups. How this might affect their own attitudes towards how minorities should acculturate, and general prejudice towards said groups, is explored in a number of studies in this thesis.

2.4 Sociological and other alternative approaches to identity

In order to allow for a more holistic approach to understanding and evaluating the key questions in this thesis, this chapter moves beyond the discipline of psychology to examine some of the central concepts relevant to this thesis from sociological and other alternative perspectives in the social sciences. In fact, many disciplines within the social sciences speak to concepts of identity, group behaviour, and cultures, making an inter-disciplinary exploration enriching. In this chapter, I will present some alternative approaches to understanding identity and culture. Then, I will highlight criticisms of acculturation as it has been conceptualised in models primarily adopted in this thesis, and put forward some alternative approaches to understanding acculturation processes and cultural identity in a globalised and transnational world. Finally, I will explore notions of belonging and the politics of belonging as a theoretical framework for studying how minority members living in the UK negotiate their identities, and frame their belonging to their various group memberships. This alternative framework is then adopted for the final paper (paper 5) in this thesis: a qualitative study which moves away from the theoretical framework of acculturation, and instead presents an analysis of the lived complexities of cultural identity among second generation minorities in the UK.

A shift to social constructivist approaches to identity

Historically, ethnic and national identity was understood primarily through a primordial lens. Primordialist approaches to identity, as clarified by Shils (1957), place the importance of attachment to a member of one's kinship group on blood ties. Similarly, Geertz (1973) also contributed to an understanding of primordialism through his argument that primordial ties developed from 'assumed givens' of social existence, such as blood and kin connections, religion, language and custom, and these create bonds, which are considered to be the foundation of one's character. Similarly, national identity has also been treated as a

fixed, essentialised characteristic particularly through the concept of 'ethnic nationalism', which sees the formation of nations being based on ancestral roots and immutable ties (Connor, 1994; Ignatieff, 1993; Smith, 1991).

Contrary to primordial views of identity, a social constructivist approach sees identity as socially constructed. This way of thinking is underpinned by the principle that all knowledge is socially constructed, and that meanings ascribed to things, i.e., our social reality, are shaped and brought into being through historical and culturally situated social processes (Berger, 1967; Gergen, 2011; Gergen & Gergen, 1991). The social reality is then reified and enforced through dominant socio-political institutions (Gergen, 2011). A number of perspectives across various social science disciplines have adopted principles and assumptions of social constructivism in their conceptualisations of particular issues. Below, I outline some important perspectives on identity in the sociological and wider social sciences literature.

For Hall (1990), identity is not a fixed and biologically defined entity. People can assume different identities at different times, and such identities can be contradictory, pulling in different directions, and continuously shifting. Arguments that portray a 'unified' identity that is carried from birth to death stems from self-constructed narratives and not any objective reality (Hall, 1987). Rather, cultural identity is conceptualised by Hall (1990) as a position, a process of 'becoming' as well as 'being', which is shaped by the socio-political and historical context, and always in transformation. This challenges popular essentialist viewpoints of identity as something universal that we possess inside us. While people who share a common culture and history tend to come together and construct a common identity, Hall (1990) argues that another crucial tenet of the construction of cultural identity is *difference*. That is, identity is not constructed in isolation but through 'difference', and formed in reference to the 'other'. In other words, we can see what identity is, by understanding what it is not.

According to Hall (1996), "identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out" (p.5). Therefore, identities and people's sense of self are more determined by markers of difference and exclusion, which emerge from unequal power relations, than they are by a naturally constituted unity (Hall, 1996).

Similarly, when exploring how nations and national identities are understood, there has also been a shift away from essentialist notions of identity to more constructivist approaches. Anderson (1991) defined the nation as an 'imagined community', where ties to fellow members of a nation are symbolic and any feeling of unity with fellow members reside in one's mind. This is on the basis of the argument that members of even the smallest nations do not know all their members, and therefore must construct this sense of national unity symbolically. Such feelings of unity, according to some scholars, are reinforced by particular narratives. For instance, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) argue that 'inventions of tradition' are central to this feeling of unity between members of a nation. These traditions serve the purpose of establishing social cohesion, legitimizing institutions, status and authority relations, and to instil particular beliefs and behaviours in members of a nation. Relatedly, the term 'banal nationalism' has been coined to highlight the various ways in which established nations are reproduced, and reinforced in everyday life (Billig, 1995). Nationalist ideology serves to make people forget that the world has been historically constructed, and instil a sense of a 'natural world' where nations are a fundamental and intrinsic feature of the world we live in. According to Billig (1995), this is done through a form of 'banal' and 'everyday' reproduction of nations, which he terms 'flagging'. Billig (1995) argues that this form of everyday reminding about nationhood is so mundane, and so deeply embedded into everyday functioning, that it is rarely interpreted explicitly as a 'reminder', yet it remains instrumental to the preservation of the nation in the minds of its inhabitants. Examples include the way

language is used in the media, e.g., popular phrases, or use of 'we' to emphasise togetherness, symbols such as national flags, and sporting events. Through doing this, the definition and continuity of the nation, as well as the boundaries that define it, are continuously reinforced.

In the modern world, an increase in globalisation and the emergence of transnational networks have been argued to pose a challenge to traditional perspectives of identity, and the notion that identities are distinct, fixed and anchored in a specific place, e.g., a nation. Some have argued that globalisation can erode nations and identities associated with them, giving rise to more 'hybrid' identities instead (Hall, 1997). Notions of hybridity and diaspora are important to explore here as they are often used to counter essentialist perceptions of identity, and ethnic absolutism (Bhabha, 1994; Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1990). Hybridity and diaspora both relate to shifting and transnational formations of culture and identity (Anthias, 2008). Post-colonial migration means people are no longer tied to one place; "they must learn to inhabit two identities, speak two cultural languages and to translate and negotiate between them" (Hall, 1992, p. 310). Such individuals cannot be considered to have 'unified' identities, as they are the product of several histories and cultures, and do not belong to one particular 'home'. It is important to acknowledge that, despite these developments, dominant discourses in society such as those mentioned above serve to reinforce traditional and essentialist perspectives of identity.

Nevertheless, on the back of developments in our understanding of how globalisation has affected identity, some of the ways acculturation has been understood from a cross-cultural psychology perspective has invited some criticism. There is often an overreliance on particular paradigms, which subsequently limit the scope of investigation into the complexities of cultural identity and adaptation (Ozer, 2013). These paradigms often treat culture as essentialised, static, bounded and homogenous entities. The heritage culture or ethnic identity and the mainstream culture or national identity are often treated as single,

universal entities. In addition, the heritage and host cultures are often seen as distinct and separate from each other, with the boundary drawn at a national level. In this line of thinking, Hermans and Kempen (1998) argue that acculturation is typically seen as the process by which a particular individual moves from culture A to culture B in a linear fashion. In addition, the acculturation strategies as proposed by Berry imply relatively stable outcomes or 'end-states' (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Hermans, 2001; Ozer, 2013). In reality, as mentioned above, people living in contemporary diasporas engage in a fluid and interminable negotiation across their various cultural sites (Bhatia & Ram, 2001, 2009; Brocket, 2020). An increasing number of studies into diasporas have now challenged conceptions that assimilation and integration are the primary means through which various minority groups navigate their cultural lives (e.g., Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Brocket, 2020; Kim, 2019; Werbner, 1999).

Even within particular strategies, there are likely to be many different experiences and lived complexities which are overlooked, as well as asymmetrical relations of power, and diversity between the ways different groups experience acculturation (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). The socio-political context, and power positions of various groups in society all become relevant when investigating the cultural identities of minority groups. Therefore, acculturation should not be studied as a uniform phenomenon, but, similar to arguments about the study of identity, as a *process* where people living in hybrid cultures and so-called diasporas are "constantly negotiating their multiple, and often conflicting histories and subject positions" (Bhatia & Ram, 2001, p.3). Of course, defining a phenomenon of interest as a process rather than a static state has implications for the methodological choices for its study, with qualitative methods more suited to capturing the complexities of such processes.

Belonging and politics of belonging

One way to understand the complexities and processes involved in the construction and negotiation of cultural identity is through the lens of belonging. Yuval-Davis (2006) points out three key elements central to the analysis of belonging in society. The first relates to one's social and economic location in society. Belonging to a gender, race or nation has to be considered as a social or economic *location,* which at any given point in history has a particular power status attached to it. The second element of belonging relates to people's identifications and emotional attachments. As highlighted above, identities are not so much a fixed essence than they are a process of *becoming*, in constant transformation (Hall, 1990), and "they can shift and change, be contested, and be multiple" (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p.14). The third level of the construction of belonging that Yuval-Davis (2006) has outlined relates to ethical and political value systems which drive the ways the self and others assess the social locations and identity narratives mentioned above. This has been referred to as the 'politics of belonging' and is primarily concerned with the boundaries that define particular groups (Favell, 1999; Yuval Davis, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2011).

To explain this further, Yuval-Davis (2006) extends Anderson's (1991) notion of 'imagined communities', and argues that the 'imagination' is not merely down to an inability to meet all members of a nation, because if this was to occur, then 'imagination' would no longer be necessary. Instead, constructions of boundaries that include some and exclude others involves an act of active and situated imagination (Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis, 2002). It is these imaginary boundaries, specified within the political community, that symbolically separate the world into 'us vs them' (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In this way, politics of belonging can be seen as the 'dirty work of boundary maintenance' (Favell, 1999). An important part of the politics of belonging centres around determining what is involved in belonging to a particular group, and the roles that specific social locations and narratives of identity play in this (Yuval-Davis, 2006). For example, various historical political projects in different

national contexts have sought to define boundaries of belonging to the national group (see the next chapter for examples within British society). These boundaries can vary in their permeability depending on the specific ways in which they are constructed. However, when considering the politics of belonging it is important not only to consider the ways in which boundaries are maintained and reproduced by those in power, but also their contestation, challenge, and resistance by other political agents (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

In light of the above criticisms levelled at some of the ways in which acculturation and identity has been conceptualised and studied in mainstream psychological literature, this thesis incorporates an alternative theoretical framework to study cultural identity among minority members living in the UK. In the study on minority members' cultural identities (paper 5), a constructivist approach is adopted, which treats notions of acculturation, and cultural identity as an ongoing process of negotiation, situated within a socio-political context. Investigating minority groups with the use of static and essentialist acculturation frameworks risks losing sight of the complex nature of their multiple identities and their subjective feelings towards them. Instead, this thesis draws on social constructivist approaches to identity and belonging, to shed light on the experiences of a group of Kurdish second-generation minority members living in the UK. In this way, the focus is on the particular identity *positioning* of minority members, and on how they construct their *belonging to or exclusion from* particular categories.

2.5 The UK context: A socio-historical overview

This thesis presents five papers which have been conducted in the UK and therefore should be situated within the socio-political context of the UK, as it is important to understand identity processes and group relations within the wider cultural and structural settings which they occur (Reicher, 2004).

Along with the rest of Europe, the UK has seen widespread post-war immigration, leading to increased diversity. Today, approximately 14% of UK residents are foreign born, and there is also a large proportion of people who were born in the UK but whose parents or grandparents were born elsewhere (Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2020). London has the largest number of migrants among all regions of the UK, making up roughly 35% of the UK's total foreign-born population (Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2020). As of 2019, India, Poland and Pakistan were the top three countries of birth for the foreign-born population in the UK – accounting for 24% of all foreign-born people in the UK. Moreover, among non-UK citizens, Poland is the top nationality, accounting for 15% of all non-UK citizens living in the UK (Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2020). As well as this, the most recent data on religion from the 2011 census shows that the most common religion in the UK remains Christianity, accounting for 60% of the UK population, but Muslims make up the largest religious minority group in the UK accounting for 5% of the British population (ONS, 2020).

The effects of globalisation have had some noticeable effects on the British national context, and particularly the prevailing discourse on 'Britishness', and how ideologies pertaining to acculturation of immigrants and minority members have been developed and translated into policy. As mentioned above, the way in which national identity is defined is changing, with hybrid identities becoming more common. Moreover, a reaction to anxieties caused by increased migration has been to re-emphasise and defend the importance of a fixed 'culture' or 'nation' – and this has been a critical part of the political discourses apparent

within right-wing movements in the UK (Solomos, 1998). Such discourses reflect what some scholars describe as a 'new racism', or 'cultural racism' (Barker, 1981; Gilroy, 1987; Modood, 1997). This form of racism represents a shift away from feelings of biological superiority, and instead is based on an 'essentialist' rhetoric, emphasising an inherent, and natural difference between cultural groups.

This form of essentialist thinking forms the basis of much of the anti-immigration rhetoric in the UK. Central to this has been the defence of a mythic 'British/English way of life' which is presented as being threatened by outside cultures (Solomos & Back 1994). Gilroy (1987) highlights how, within this new form of cultural racism that existed in the UK in the 1980s, 'blackness' and 'Englishness' are reproduced as mutually exclusive categories. A memorable example of this in British history, which Yuval-Davis (2006) also illustrates as a 'political project of belonging' in the UK, was Conservative minister Enoch Powell's attempts to define boundaries of 'Britishness' in the UK in terms of common descent. For Powell, people from different countries and cultures of origin did not belong together, and therefore could not be part an integrated society. For example, in a number of speeches he argued that being born in England does not qualify someone from West Indies to be an 'Englishman' (Gilroy, 1987). In his infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech, Powell argued that there would be 'rivers of blood' in Britain if people who did not belong to Britain did not return to their 'proper' countries (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

However, on the back of mass post-war migration, multiculturalism soon became a pressing issue in relation to policy and practice, particularly at a local (and decentralised) level (Joppke, 2004). This is epitomised by a prominent report conducted by the Runnymede Trust, where Parekh (2000) asserted that "Britishness has systematic, largely unspoken, racial connotations" (Parekh, 2000, p.38) and called for a 'multicultural post-nation' Britain. However, following the 2001 race riots in Britain, there were some serious questions posed

about the ways in which multiculturalism manifested in the UK. These riots were followed a period of heightened tensions between the South Asian and white British communities living in some regions in the Midlands and Northern England, and culminated in a few nights of unrest across various towns and cities in those regions (Poynting & Mason, 2007).

The government-issued Cantle Report (2001) largely attributed the root of the riots to failed multiculturalism policies and practices which segregated communities and became a barrier to social cohesion. Subsequently, key figures in the New Labour government shifted the focus to social and community cohesion, and defined Britishness not in terms of common culture or common ancestry but loyalty and solidarity to the British state, and its principal values, e.g., human rights and democracy (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Furthermore, in a bid to improve social and cultural cohesion, the government called for more mixed marriages, put in tougher rules for learning English, and mandatory citizenship classes (Home Office, 2002). Despite a shift away from some of the earlier, more essentialist boundaries of Britishness, this represented, as some scholars argue, a shift back to assimilation-oriented ideology (Back et al., 2002; Lewis & Neal, 2005; Joppke, 2004). Indeed, analyses of media narratives have shown that often calls for integration and social cohesion are represented by a discourse that actually represents a demand for assimilation, without referring to it explicitly (Bowskill et al., 2007).

In more recent years, issues to do with British identity, immigration and multiculturalism have remained at the forefront of political, media and public discourse. There has been a steady rise in racist and religious hate crime (Home Office, 2020) and anti-immigration sentiment in the UK – although this is recently starting to stagnate (Blinder & Richards, 2020). Indeed, the 2016 'Brexit' vote has been largely attributed to anti-immigration attitudes (Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017). Notably, prejudice also affects UK-born ethnic minorities, as research has shown that second generation immigrations in the UK

report a higher level of discrimination than non-UK born migrants themselves, and the rate of reported discrimination against such groups is higher in the UK than the EU (Fernández-Reino, 2020b).

Prejudice does however, affect some minority groups in the UK more than others. For instance, in one survey study, it was found that the British public took less issue with immigrants from culturally close countries like France and Australia, but showed more scepticism towards immigration from countries like Nigeria or Pakistan (Blinder & Richards, 2020). Additionally, since the 9/11 terrorist attack, the 2005 London bombings, and various other political events since the start of this millennium, there has been a rise of islamophobia in the UK (Abbas, 2019). Continuous negative representations of Muslims in the media have presented them as a threat to British culture (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010), and cast doubt on their true 'Britishness' and their perceived ability to integrate into British society (Modood, 2005). This, according to some scholars, is not a new feature of British society. Rather, it is a reconstruction of what used to be a broader anti-Asian prejudice following post war migration (Poynting & Mason, 2007), which stems from the same discourse designed to exclude based on cultural difference. It is clear that issues relating to integration of minorities, identity, and intergroup relations remain salient today in the UK, rendering it an interesting context for the research questions explored in this thesis.

2.6 Aims of this thesis

Overall, the overarching objective of this thesis is to explore the formation of cultural identity and the intergroup dynamics relevant to this formation. To do so, the papers in this thesis have two primary aims.

The first aim is to extend our understanding of the intergroup processes involved in acculturation, and this is done with a specific focus on two streams of research in this broad area. First, the extent to which heritage and majority cultures are seen as conflicting and

compatible is explored. There has not been much research exploring whether majority and minority members' acculturation preferences or perceptions of outgroup preferences are compatible or conflicting, and even less so exploring potential third factors of this.

Second, the previous research on intergroup processes involved in acculturation focuses on culture change from the minority perspective, how majority members think minority members should acculturate, and the consequences of these perceptions and meta-perceptions for intergroup relations. However, this present thesis extends the scope to explore the intergroup dynamics of *majority culture change*. The aim here is to understand how expectations of majority culture change might affect the minority-majority relationship, primarily from the perspective of the majority group (white British people living in the UK).

The second primary aim of this thesis is to provide a more detailed account of acculturation, and explore some of the intergroup dynamics involved in cultural identity negotiation and formation from an alternative, and largely sociologically informed theoretical perspective. Therefore, this thesis also adopts qualitative methods to provide a more in-depth account of the complexities involved in the negotiation of minority members' identities. Using alternative frameworks also allows one to go beyond the 'host' and 'immigrant' dichotomy to explore the ways in which UK born and/or raised ethnic minority members negotiate their identities and navigate their cultural lives. In the final paper of this thesis, the sample comprised of ethnic Kurds who were either born or raised (from early childhood) in the UK.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the methodology adopted in the studies in this thesis. This thesis is mixed-methods in nature; the first four studies conducted are quantitative, and follow pre-existing psychological frameworks of acculturation and intergroup relations. Then, qualitative methods are adopted in order to go beyond particular models and gain insight into some of the lived complexities of cultural identity and acculturation processes.

In the first section of this chapter, I draw on current debates within acculturation literature to explain some of the important methodological decisions underpinning the quantitative studies in this thesis. I also highlight some of the adaptations and changes I have made throughout my studies in order to address some of the particular concerns associated with my chosen method and how I overcame these issues. Then, I will discuss some of the key issues related to conducting online surveys, and also present some reflections on open science and replicability.

In the second section of this methods chapter, I outline the qualitative methods used in this thesis, the reasoning behind using such methodology, and reflect on and discuss some of the important issues that have to be considered when conducting this kind of research. In particular, issues relating to subjectivity of research and reflexivity are discussed, as well as some issues related to conducting qualitative research on online platforms.

3.1 Quantitative methods

As mentioned, papers 1-4 presented in this thesis are cross-sectional online surveys. Participants were asked about their attitudes on a number of different variables relating to acculturation, identity, and intergroup relations. In all studies, acculturation preferences or perceptions of acculturation preferences were measured along with a range of different intergroup variables.

Assessing acculturation preferences

Past research on acculturation has taken many forms and there has been intense methodological debate on the best ways to operationalise and study acculturation. As highlighted by Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2006), the way in which acculturation is operationalised and studied should be informed by one's wider research questions and aims. One of the more common ways to examine acculturation preferences is through survey methodology, where participants directly respond to particular questions on their acculturation preferences and their scores reflect their attitudes on particular dimensions. Of course, there are some issues with cross-sectional survey designs more generally and going beyond acculturation as a specific topic of study, and these will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 7. Here, some of the important considerations concerning the assessment of acculturation chosen for this thesis are discussed. As highlighted in detail in the literature review, Berry's (1999) model, and subsequent modifications, offer a range of potential ways to understand acculturation. In keeping with some important variations to Berry's (1999) initial framework, the dimension of *majority culture adoption* is preferred to *desire for intergroup contact* in all the studies presented in this thesis, as it is conceptually closer to the dimension of heritage culture maintenance, and therefore offers a more consistent measure of attitudes towards both cultures in question (Bourhis et al., 1997).

Furthermore, when measuring acculturation preferences, there are a number of different approaches often taken by researchers. One can either ask directly about the preference for each strategy, which has been referred to as the 'four-statement measurement method', and would include an item like 'I would like to maintain my heritage own culture and adopt the culture of the host society at the same time'. Alternatively, the 'two statement measurement method' asks about each dimension separately. For example, one would ask participants the extent to which they would like to maintain their own culture in one item (or set of items), and then the extent to which they would like to adopt the majority culture in a

separate item (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006). Based on these responses, participants

would then be classified as preferring one of the four potential acculturation strategies.

Taking the four-statement approach entails asking directly about both acculturation

dimensions, and some argue this would inevitably lead to measures which are double-

barrelled in nature and cognitively complex; therefore this method has been subject to

criticism, because it raises concerns about reliability and validity (Arends-Tóth & Van de

Vijver, 2006; Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001; Rudmin, 2003).

Indeed, previous studies on acculturation using double-barrelled items have found poor or

only modest levels of internal reliability (e.g., Berry et al., 2006; Bourhis et al., 2009;

Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001). While using the two-statement method has been argued to

somewhat improve the internal reliability (Brown & Zagefka, 2011), complexities with this

method include agreeing on a standard and consensual cut-off point to classify respondents in

'high' or 'low' conditions (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006). In addition, how one

conceptualises acculturation and the dimensions that are measured has important implications

for the resulting strategies. Past studies have shown that using the contact dimension makes a

preference for integration more popular, but when acculturation is conceptualised by ethnic

and national identification (Phinney, 1990), or using the adoption dimension (Bourhis et al.,

1997), separation becomes more popular (Snauwaert et al., 2003).

In this thesis, the studies presented have all adopted a bi-dimensional and 'two-

statement' approach, where *heritage culture maintenance* and *majority culture adoption* are

separately measured. In order to avoid some of the measurement and conceptual issues

highlighted above, the studies presented do not deal with overall strategies and instead

explore both dimensions of acculturation independently. Doing this also presents an

interesting opportunity to independently assess each dimension in relation to 1) each other,

and 2) relevant intergroup variables in order to investigate the role of each dimension in

driving intergroup outcomes. It also allows for the exploration of more complex relationships such as moderation and mediation, all the while still allowing for the option of exploring the combined effects of the dimensions if desired (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). In sum, given that the overarching aims of this thesis were to consider how each acculturation variable relates to other intergroup variables, this approach was preferred.

Another methodological consideration when assessing acculturation relates to the life domains through which acculturation preferences are measured. Typically, acculturation research conceptualises culture in general terms to capture attitudes *overall.* This means that rather than specifying particular contexts in which cultures may play out, e.g., at home, in a work setting, or at school, culture is being conceptualised at a more abstract and *overall* level. This is also the case in papers 1, 2, and 4 in this thesis, due to the fact that these papers explore relatively novel research questions within the acculturation literature and therefore, it is of interest to first explore these ideas through an *overall* lens. Drawing general conclusions from studies which are based on only one aspect of culture can provide an incomplete picture (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006). Notably, when assessing overall acculturation, the measures primarily refer to traditions, customs, and culture in general without specifying particular aspects of culture such as food, clothing and cuisine, and the variety of contexts where these aspects of culture manifest (e.g., Zagefka & Brown, 2002).

Of course, there are a multitude of different contexts in everyday life and the way individuals may navigate their cultural lives may differ depending on these contexts, e.g., maintaining one's heritage culture at home or in private settings only, or maintaining one's heritage language but assimilating in other aspects of culture. As a result, it is important to also consider context-specific acculturation, as this may shed more light on some of the nuances involved in the acculturation process. Some developments in the acculturation literature, such as the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM), present models

which highlight some of the key life domains through which acculturation should be considered (Navas et al., 2005). For this reason, in one of the studies (paper 3) I explore acculturation preferences across six life domains including work, education, values, social relations, family life and language. In this study, factor analyses of the measures showed that they all loaded onto one factor, and this is consistent with research showing that majority members tend to have consistent views across domains (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003). Given more of the quantitative studies in this thesis were exploring the views of the majority members; multiple domains were not used beyond this one study.

Assessing compatibility

This thesis follows previous studies that investigate the notion of compatibility of the two acculturation dimensions, culture maintenance and culture adoption, using correlations (e.g., Hillekens et al., 2019). When studying the associations between culture maintenance and culture adoption preferences, a (strong) negative association between the two means that endorsing one implies rejecting the other. A zero or even positive association implies that endorsing one culture does not mean that the other will be rejected (Arends-Tòth & Van de Vijver, 2006). Of course, this method of measuring compatibility is at the group level, since some of the individual strategies of single participants may still reflect 'integration' if measured in categorical terms – but looking at the whole sample sheds light on group-level associations.

Summary of measures

In this section, I will present an overview of the measures in each study, and changes that were made throughout the studies. In study 1, the dimensions *culture maintenance* and *culture adoption* were measured by asking about culture overall in one item and religion, language and item of clothing in a second item. In this study, the dataset was secondary and this measure was obtained from a previous dataset linked to Zagefka et al. (2016). This

measure was double-barrelled in nature, and therefore in study 2 (paper 1), this was changed. Acculturation was instead measured by asking about culture overall, traditions and language in three separate items that were based on various different studies exploring acculturation from an intergroup perspective (Zagefka & Brown, 2002; Zagefka et al., 2014). As mentioned above this was designed to capture a summary of *overall* acculturation. In paper 3 the two dimensions of acculturation were measured across six life domains: work, education, values, social relations, family life and language (Navas et al., 2005). In the final quantitative paper, the focus shifted to majority culture change, and the acculturation measure was taken from previous work in this area, particularly what has been referred to as 'host national proximal acculturation preferences' (Lefringhausen et al., 2021). An *overall* sense of acculturation was once again the focus, and the items tapped into 'British/English traditions', 'British/English characteristics' and 'doing things the British/English way'.

It is worth noting that there were some subtle wording differences in the way (perceived) acculturation preferences were addressed throughout the various studies. When measuring majority members' *perceptions* of acculturation preferences for paper 3, the term 'demand' is used to refer to the variable which measured the extent to which majority members thought minority members wanted them to adopt the minority culture. Going forward however, I thought that this variable label was too harsh in its portrayal of the items being measured, given that the measures primarily tapped into the extent to which minority members *want* majority members to acculturate in a particular way. Therefore, for paper 4 the word 'desire' was preferred. However, despite the difference in the labelling of the variables in papers 3 and 4, they denote the same overall measure. Some potential implications of this are considered in chapter 7.

Perceived threat was another variable that was used across numerous studies in this thesis. As conceptualised by the integrated threat theory (Stephan et al., 1998), two of the

principal types of threat which drive negative attitudes are *symbolic* and *realistic* threats. Both types of threat were measured in paper 2, as some research has shown that often symbolic and realistic threats merge onto one overall factor, and therefore can be used as a single measure of threat (Tip et al., 2012; Verkuyten, 2009). However, in an exploratory factor analysis of the data in paper 2, the two constructs emerged as single distinct constructs and were therefore treated as such. In the following studies which involved exploring perceived threat, the main focus was on *symbolic threat*, as this threat is related to a group's meaning making system such as values and norms etc., and therefore it is more conceptually relevant to issues related to cultural identity and acculturation preferences (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Another reason for this was to keep the surveys as concise as possible, both to preserve the quality of the data and also to keep within budget constraints.

Prejudice was measured as an intergroup outcome in this thesis, in a number of ways. First, it is important to note that although prejudice and threat are empirically highly correlated, they are theoretically distinct concepts that are strongly associated with each other, but they do not measure the same concept (Stephan et al., 1998; Velasco Gonzalez et al., 2008; Zárate et al., 2004). For this reason, throughout the studies perceived threat and prejudice were measured independently, and their hypothesised relationship was assessed.

One common way to measure prejudice is to use a feeling thermometer (e.g., Velasco Gonzalez et al., 2008). This measure comprises of a single item where one is required to rate one's feelings about a particular individual or group member on a scale of 1-100. Other ways to measure prejudice include measures of *negative affect* whereby respondents rate the degree to which they feel particular emotions towards an outgroup member or group. Finally, a measure of social distance is also often used as a measure of prejudice (Bogardus, 1933). This measure is based on the assumption that people with a tendency to be prejudiced against particular groups do not wish to be in close proximity with those groups (Bogardus, 1933). In

paper 4, the focus was on prejudice as an outcome variable. In the first study of this paper (study 5), a single feeling thermometer was used in the model, and in the second study (study 6) negative affect and social distance were used as separate indicators of prejudice.

Essentialism was an important concept in the first paper in this thesis. This concept has been widely investigated in psychology and the social sciences, which has brought to the fore various different perspectives and complexities associated with it. Therefore, it is important to outline the means through which I opted to measure this concept. The measures in study 1 tapped into *biological essentialism* and were based on previous research on essentialism and prejudice (Pehrson, Brown & Zagefka, 2009). In study 2, the number of items were increased to further improve reliability of the measure and remove double-barrelled items. The items were again based on research exploring biological essentialism (Pehrson, Brown & Zagefka, 2009; Zagefka et al., 2013), and were successful in improving the reliability of the measures.

Reflections on using online platforms for data collection

The primary means of investigation in this thesis was to conduct online survey studies. Qualtrics was used to design all surveys, and the online platform Prolific.ac was used to recruit respondents in all but one (paper 2) of the studies in this thesis. Here, I will reflect on the some of the issues associated with these methods. Of course, collecting data online provides relatively quick and convenient ways to collect samples and allows for the potential of conducting multiple studies simultaneously or in quick succession. As participants were paid for their participation, a requirement for platforms such as Prolific.ac, I had to consider budget when choosing the number of studies to conduct and the number of participants per study. Indeed, for this reason, one of the studies made the most of the department's own research participation scheme, which required students to partake in studies for course credits. While this was a cheaper alternative, it led to a considerably less representative

sample than those offered by online platforms, and therefore this method was only adopted for one study.

Since the use of online platforms for collecting data and obtaining samples is growing in popularity, there is now accumulating research on some of the potential implications of doing research in this way (Newman et al., 2021). One of the primary concerns about using online platforms relates to the limited control over the sample. The available pools of participants have previously been found to be skewed towards particular demographic groups (Follmer et al., 2017). For example, in some of my own studies often education level was found to be high, with the majority of participants reporting at least an undergraduate degree, but often even higher levels of education. As well as this, such platforms often require participants to make an active decision to self-select into the sample, and they often become regular respondents in online studies, which once again raises questions regarding the representativeness of the sample (Stritch et al., 2017). This difficulty in obtaining representative samples poses a threat to the external validity and generalisability of findings using such methods.

The use of online methods also raises a number of concerns regarding the quality of the data obtained (Chmielewski & Kucker, 2020). There has been a number of reports of 'bots' being used to produce superficial data, or fraudulent/dishonest behaviour in online surveys (Dennis et al., 2020; Kennedy et al., 2020). An example from my own experiences using these platforms relates to the number of people who may have given false responses in their initial pre-screening questions in order to partake in studies not designed for them. Because ethnicity was often a pre-screening condition in my studies, I found through the use of precautionary double pre-screening measures (using one in my own survey as well as on the online sampling platform) that often there were inconsistent responses on the two pre-screening measures. Although the number of instances in which this happened was often low

($N < 10$), throughout my studies I often did have to exclude participants from my analysis on these grounds. Also, notably, the first paper (study 2) highlights an exploratory study using data which was initially collected as part of an experimental design involving a manipulation. However, the manipulation was not successful, and therefore the data was used in an exploratory fashion to answer an alternative research question using a cross-sectional design instead. Indeed, past studies on similar issues have also reported weak effects for designs that use online text-based manipulations (e.g., Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2020b), which again raises concerns about how much attention participants are really paying to the information that is displayed to them. Some studies have pointed to random answers to experimental manipulations as one of the reasons for a 'quality crisis' (Kennedy et al., 2020), and this could have impacted my first study.

Nevertheless, online platforms are frequently used and researchers have found a multitude of ways to overcome some of the challenges associated with using them for data collection. I will describe some of the ways in which I attempted to do this throughout my own studies here. First, throughout my studies, I used some attention check measures in the form of instructed response items (Keith et al., 2017). Such measures are often used to identify those who do not pay attention in the study, or provide random responses, and can improve the data quality, and overcome some of the issues associated with inattentive participants, if utilised appropriately (Newman et al., 2021). Initially, I often used one attention check measure in my surveys, but changed this to two measures in my final paper (study 7). A second measure I used to overcome some of the issues related to data quality was to include my own pre-screening questions in the online survey. Here, I often asked participants the demographic questions, e.g., ethnicity, place of birth, place of residence, which were in the initial pre-screening checks on the initial online crowdsourcing platform. Where there were inconsistent responses, e.g., participants identifying as white British

initially but then another ethnicity in my own check, I would exclude them from the analysis. Again, as mentioned above, the cases where this occurred were relatively infrequent but by putting in place such measures I was able to identify and exclude those participants that should have been screened out. Finally, it is worth noting that previous research has pointed to Prolific.ac as one of the better platforms in terms of data quality and diversity of participants (Palan & Schitter, 2018; Peer et al., 2017). For this reason, Prolific.ac was the only crowdsourcing platform used throughout the studies in this thesis.

Open science and replicability

In recent years, there has been increasing talk of a 'replication crisis' in psychological literature, as some of the foundational work has failed to be replicated (Maxwell et al., 2015; Świątkowski and Dompnier, 2017). Also, the bias towards publication only of statistically significant findings has been noted to increase the chance that published psychological theories are founded on Type I errors (Nosek et al., 2012). As a result, the movement of 'open science' has sought to make psychological research more robust by improving transparency, and encouraging replicability (Open Science Collaboration, 2012). One of the most common ways to do this is through the practice of pre-registration (Nosek et al., 2018). This process involves documenting the predictions and processes involved in a study prior to collection and/or analysis of the data, in order to make clear the distinction between *confirmatory* and *exploratory* research. The former is held in higher regard than the latter in terms of its scientific value, as it has undergone a more rigorous approach to ensure robustness (Nosek et al., 2018). In this thesis, paper 2 was a pre-registered study specifically because the specific research question was devised on the back of another study, and therefore I wanted to replicate, but also advance, the findings in another context.

Of course, there are some important points regarding the practices of open science. Some researchers have acknowledged a number of key challenges associated with the

adoption of open science principles such as pre-registration (Allen & Mehler, 2019). One problem relates to restrictions on flexibility; once a study is pre-registered, it cannot be changed. This sometimes presents a challenge for early career researchers who are in the process of learning and developing their understanding, as it becomes difficult to improve any component of the study which has been previously pre-registered. If any change is made to the existing pre-registered design, or anything new and unregistered is added to the study on the grounds of improving it, it is difficult to reconcile with the rigid distinction between confirmatory and exploratory analysis (Allen & Mehler, 2019). However, at the very least, transparency is required. For instance, in my pre-registered study, I slightly changed the wording of the predictions in the final paper from the initial pre-registration. This is because, on reflection and on the back of further scrutiny, I devised a clearer and slightly more valid way of phrasing my hypotheses. However, despite the small change in wording to improve the quality of the final paper, the two hypotheses still convey the same meaning.

A further challenge with pre-registering relates to time and resource limitations (Allen & Mehler, 2019). With ample resource, one can spend time conducting exploratory analysis using pilot data to formulate well-informed hypotheses, and then devise multiple studies to try and replicate and confirm the findings, and create well informed and detailed pre-registrations of these studies. However, I wanted to investigate a breadth of different research questions broadly related to acculturation, and did not have the budget or the time to conduct multiple studies for each topic, and therefore conducted many of the studies reported in this thesis in an exploratory fashion.

Another means of adhering to open science practices is to have all data used in particular studies available in public domains (Fecher & Friesike, 2014), and in keeping with this principle, the data for all of the quantitative studies in this thesis were uploaded onto the OSF platform (Foster & Deardorff, 2017).

3.2 Qualitative research methods

In paper 5, I shifted the focus to qualitative research methods in order to present an alternative perspective on some of the central questions of this thesis. Here, I will discuss some of the important research practices associated with qualitative research methods such as reflexivity, and also discuss some of the important implications of doing qualitative research online.

The qualitative research in this thesis is grounded on the principal notion that knowledge is socially constructed, and that shared meanings, which ultimately make up social reality, are constructed and reconstructed both within the individual and through social interactions (Berger, 1967; Blumer, 1969; Gergen & Gergen, 1991; Patton, 1990). The interviews in study 5 were designed as semi-structured to allow for a 'conversational' exchange between interviewer and interviewee. Here, the collaboration between the researcher and the individual participants is central to the construction of knowledge, and the various social worlds of the participants are brought together and formed into a narrative by the researcher (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998). Of course, researchers' interpretations are likely to differ in their social and historical positioning (Harding, 1987), and therefore it is more than likely that different researchers might construct different understandings from interviewing the same participants. Instead of viewing this as an inherent disadvantage, some argue that the researcher's active role is an integral part of the process, and actively acknowledging their locality can assist the reader in positioning the findings and understanding in greater depth how they may have emerged (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998).

Reflexivity involves a process of critical internal dialogue before, during, and after the research, whereby the researcher's positionality and subsequent influence on the process and outcomes of the research are being considered and acknowledged (Berger, 2015; Guillemin

and Gillam, 2004). The process of reflexivity is used in qualitative research to address concerns about the impact the researcher might have on the research process and outcomes, and improve the transparency and credibility of the research (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). I will briefly reflect on some important ways in which my own positionality might have influenced my research aims, the research process, and the findings I have reported in this thesis.

Reflexivity

First and foremost, my choice of target group to investigate in my qualitative study and the sample I chose were both undoubtedly influenced by my own background. As a second generation immigrant born to Kurdish (from Iran) parents, I myself was well aware of the lack of research on the identity of Kurdish people, particularly in relation to cultural identity. Having some first-hand, lived experiences and subsequent awareness of the tensions associated with being a bicultural Kurd in London/England/the UK, I was motivated to understand and dissect this in greater depth. It is important to acknowledge that my motives to support my community and improve the recognition of Kurds in academia played a part in my choice of investigation.

Further, in my past, I had built connections with my own local Kurdish community in London and had participated in various events that were organised to bring together Kurds from various regions, for the purpose of celebration, but also education and political mobilization. This provided me with quite a few starting points when it came to the recruitment, and relatively easy access to particular Kurdish communities. I knew where to go, and who to ask. Although I ensured that I used snowball sampling as much as possible, and tried to reach out to people I did not know on a personal and intimate basis, it was inevitable that the participants recruited were part of my wider social network and

community, as they were recruited through people I choose to interact with or places (e.g., University Kurdish societies) I actively engaged with.

Moreover, there are a number of important ways in which my *positionality* might have affected the way I conducted the research, and my interpretation of the outputs. These issues are important to reflect on during the process and report (Watt, 2007). Feminist researchers have emphasised the importance of the role of the researcher and power imbalances in the interview process (Edwards 1990; Song & Parker, 1995) and how this might affect findings (Herod, 1993). For instance, some might argue that my role as a man may have influenced the degree to which participants were open about particular issues, e.g., relationships, sexual freedom, and gender roles. On one hand, I partly suspect this was not too much of an obstacle in this research, as the female participants often freely initiated and addressed these issues. On the other hand, it is important to consider that these interactions may have taken an entirely different direction with an interviewer of the same gender. It may also be the case that my interpretation and trajectory of enquiry was influenced by my position as a man in society.

As well as gender, the implications of my own position as a Kurd from Iran is also another characteristic worth exploring. The sample obtained in this study included Kurds from Turkey, Iran and Iraq. As mentioned above, these participants were obtained through my own community networks. In the case of Kurds from Iran, it was even more difficult to access a range of participants who were unknown to me, as historically my family, just like other Kurds (Wahlbeck, 1998), had built many ties with various organisations and communities of Kurds from Iran. Just as I mentioned above, politics and religion also informed whether I could easily access particular groups of Kurds from Iran, and therefore I was limited in my ability to access many different communities who were completely detached from me or my family.

As well as this, differences between Kurds and their identity politics may have influenced my approach to my own participants as well. For instance, I might have inadvertently displayed some degree of ingroup bias when interviewing different Kurds. Also, I noticed that sometimes the nature of the conversations with Kurds from Iran was slightly different from the other interviews. For example, upon finding out I was also Kurdish from Iran, my participants who were from the same region sometimes used some Kurdish phrases (specific to my own region) or switched languages back and forth to convey certain points. This created a dilemma for me, because I did not want to risk creating distance from my participants or making them feel uncomfortable by rejecting their attempts at doing this. However, by engaging in this style myself I would potentially risk an imbalance of approach between my participants, since such a level of intimacy was inevitably difficult to achieve with the Kurds from other regions in my study due to greater cultural distance between us. Ultimately, in my approach, I allowed each interview to take its natural course without imposing too many restrictions.

Online video interviews

The qualitative study in this thesis was conducted using interviews that took place online over the video calling platform Zoom. Although initially planned to be face-to-face, the COVID-19 pandemic led to many researchers having to change their approaches to data collection in keeping with social distancing guidelines and restrictions to face-to-face meetings (Roberts et al., 2021). Therefore, I opted to conduct the interviews online using Zoom. Past research has suggested that using Zoom can offer a viable, cost effective alternative to face-to-face interviews while being able to maintain some interpersonal aspects through the use of video (Archibald et al., 2019; Gray et al, 2020). Of course, there were a host of ethical considerations for doing online interviews which I had to ensure my research was in keeping with, such as consent for recording, and anonymity (Roberts, 2015). One

particular problem which I had to contend with was broadband issues which would sometimes affect the quality of the calls. In some of my interviews, bad connection and buffering led to a difficulty transcribing some of the audio. As well as this, a couple of the interviews were disrupted due to connectivity issues, and although I tried to ensure that the trajectory of the conversation was not disrupted too much, it undoubtedly impacted the momentum and flow. Issues arising from connectivity have been previously acknowledged as a common issue with conducting online interviews (Archibald et al., 2019). Nevertheless, circumstances necessitated such a computer-mediated approach, but as it is a relatively new phenomenon, more research is needed to understand the strengths and limitations of using video calling technology.

Having considered the literature background, and outlined the methodology chosen, I will now present the empirical work of this thesis. In the next chapter, I present two papers exploring issues related to the compatibility of acculturation preferences. Then, chapter 5 explores issues related to majority culture change. Finally, chapter 6 shifts the focus to the qualitative study in this thesis, exploring feelings of belonging among second generation Kurds living in the UK.

Chapter 4: Compatibility of acculturation preferences

4.1 Paper 1: Essentialism affects the perceived compatibility of minority culture maintenance and majority culture adoption preferences

Abstract

This paper presents two cross-sectional survey studies, both conducted in Britain, which focus on how different cultural identities are managed in multicultural settings. Specifically, the studies explored the extent to which essentialism moderates the perceived compatibility of acculturation orientations, heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption. In study 1, participants (*N*=198) were Somali minority members living in the UK. It was found when minority members essentialised Britishness themselves, and when they perceived that British people essentialised Britishness, they saw a desire to maintain the culture of origin and a desire adopt the majority culture as conflicting with each other. In study 2, participants (*N*=200) were white British majority members living in the UK. Findings showed that when white British majority members essentialised Britishness, they too perceived the two acculturation preferences as being incompatible with each other. Taken together, these studies show that essentialising British identity can lead to a view that the majority and minority cultures are mutually exclusive. Implications for intergroup relations and integration into British society are discussed.

Keywords:

acculturation, culture maintenance, culture adoption, essentialism, integration

Introduction

Like many other societies around the word, British society is now multicultural and diverse (Office for National Statistics, 2020). This raises questions of how members of different groups adapt to this diversity. Issues relating to immigration, integration and multiculturalism prominently feature in politics, media, and public discourse in the UK (Shabi, 2019). This paper presents two studies exploring how people's perceptions of British identity may impact their preferences for identity management of ethnic minorities within wider society. In particular, we will test whether minority and majority members' essentialist perceptions of British identity moderates the relationship between preferences for minority heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption.

Acculturation preferences and the perceived (in)compatibility of culture maintenance and culture adoption

People who migrate to another country undergo a process of change and adaptation to the majority society, whilst members of the majority society also adapt to the changes in society as a result of migration (Redfield et al., 1936). According to the acculturation model devised by Berry (2001), two dimensions underlie four potential acculturation preferences that minority members might adopt. The two dimensions are: the extent to which one desires heritage culture maintenance, and the extent to which one desires to adopt the mainstream culture. Generally, a preference for integration, where preferences for both culture maintenance and adoption are high, has been shown to have the most positive outcomes for minority groups (Berry, 1974, 2001; Berry et al., 2006).

Majority members may also show particular preferences when it comes to how minority members should adapt to the majority culture (Berry, 2001; Bourhis et al., 1997). Acculturation preferences for both minority and majority groups are influenced by factors such as prejudice, ingroup bias, permeability of group boundaries and intergroup similarity

(Piontkowski et al., 2000; Zick et al., 2001). Majority and minority acculturation preferences also influence each other (Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Kosic et al., 2005; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011; Zagefka et al., 2007; Zagefka, et al., 2011). Moreover, how well they fit together has consequences for intergroup relations (Bourhis et al., 1997). For instance, studies have shown that discordance of acculturation attitudes can lead to perceived intergroup threat (Rohmann et al., 2008). This is important to consider, especially considering some majority groups may show misconceptions of minority members' acculturation preferences (Van Oudenhoven at al., 1998).

A host of studies have supported the idea that minority members often prefer integration into new societies, where they maintain aspects of their heritage culture whilst simultaneously adopting to the customs and traditions of mainstream society (Berry et al., 2006; Roblain et al., 2017; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). Clearly, it is possible for minority members to identify with both their ethnic group and their national group (Nesdale & Mak, 2000; Phinney, 1990), and it is possible for minority members to support multiculturalism whilst identifying highly with their own ethnic group (Verkuyten, 2005). This suggests that often minority members see a compatibility between their heritage culture and the mainstream culture and may show a preference for combining both.

While minority members often prefer integration, majority members generally expect from them more mainstream culture adoption than heritage culture maintenance, and majority members may evaluate minority members less positively when perceiving that they wish to maintain their heritage culture (Tip et al., 2012; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011; Van Oudenhoven & Eisses, 1998). As well as this, research by Verkuyten (2005) in the Netherlands has shown that majority members tend to show less support for multiculturalism, and more support for culture adoption (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). Such findings suggest that

majority members may often see the two orientations as mutually exclusive and find a combination of them unfeasible.

   Despite these general patterns, minority and majority acculturation preferences vary considerably between different national contexts and ethnic groups (Brown et al., 2016). For some minority members, there is evidence that separation, i.e choosing to maintain your own culture and not adopt the majority culture, is the most desired acculturation preference (Robinson, 2009). For majority members, there is some evidence that integration, indicating a preference for both culture maintenance and culture adoption, is sometimes preferred to assimilation (Maisonneuve & Teste, 2007; Zagefka et al., 2007). As well as this, research into the Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) construct, which was devised as a framework to understand variations and individual differences in the experience of biculturalism, also suggests that there are variations in the extent to which bicultural individuals perceive their mainstream and ethnic cultural identities as compatible or not (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002). Such a variation in how people view acculturation preferences may be due to state policies, or particular ideologies that are prominent in a given society, e.g. assimilation in France and Germany (Brubaker, 2001), or due to the influence of particular intergroup variables, which differ across contexts and cultural groups e.g. perceived discrimination (Neto, 2002). Therefore, the extent to which individuals perceive minority and mainstream cultures as compatible or not, and the factors that may influence this, warrants further investigation.

   When investigating how compatible two cultures are perceived to be, one can adopt different approaches. Studies have focussed on simultaneous identification with ethnic and national groups (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016; Nesdale & Mak, 2000), support for multiculturalism (Verkuyten, 2005), and on overall preference for integration (Van Oudenhoven & Eisses, 1998). Here, we focus on the association between the underlying acculturation dimensions, culture maintenance and culture adoption. Measuring each

dimension separately, and exploring their relationship is advantageous as it avoids past issues with double-barrelled items, and low internal reliability of scales (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). In addition, it allows for insight into how each dimension individually relate to other intergroup variables as well as each other.

To be clear, when studying the associations between culture maintenance and culture adoption preferences, a negative association between the two means that endorsing one implies rejecting the other, i.e., this speaks to a perceived incompatibility. A zero or even positive association implies that endorsing one culture does *not* mean that the other will be rejected. This speaks to perceived compatibility. This, then, is what we mean by studying when culture maintenance and culture adoption are seen as compatible.

Previous research suggests that culture maintenance preferences and culture adoption preferences sometimes seem to be independent of (i.e., not associated with) each other, and sometimes they seem to be negatively associated, meaning that endorsing one implies rejecting the other (see e.g., Hillekens et al., 2019; Mesquita et al., 2017; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). This variation in the relationship between preferences for minority heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption suggests that it may be moderated by a third variable. Here, we test the moderating effects of essentialism.

Essentialism as a moderator of the perceived compatibility between culture maintenance and culture adoption preferences

Essentialism has been defined as the belief that social categories are fixed and unchanging (Haslam et al., 2000; Yzerbyt et al., 1997). Holding an essentialist view of ethnic categories means buying into primordial conceptions of ethnicity as a fixed characteristic. For example, ethnic group membership has been defined by natural connections through blood ties (Geertz, 1973). Such a perspective suggests that one's identity is an inherent, biological trait which cannot be changed. Essentialist views can be applied to cultural and ethnic groups,

but also to national groups. 'Ethnic nationalism' posits national identity as immutable and based on shared ancestral origins, with reference to shared 'blood' (Connor, 1994; Smith, 1991; Zagefka, 2009). Essentialising ethnic and national categories has been linked to increased prejudice (Bastian & Haslam, 2008; Meeus et al., 2010; Pehrson, Brown & Zagefka, 2009; Pehrson, Vignoles & Brown, 2009).

Research on essentialism in the context of acculturation attitudes remains limited. However, some studies have highlighted that when majority members essentialise British identity, they are more likely to perceive threat from minority groups, and therefore seek mainstream culture adoption from minority members (Zagefka et al., 2013). Verkuyten and Brug (2004) showed that majority members with an essentialist view of identity were less likely to support multiculturalism. On the basis of these findings, we expected that for majority members the two cultures would be seen as incompatible if essentialism is high. Thus, we expected a preference for heritage culture maintenance to be negatively associated with a preference for majority culture adoption only if essentialism is high, but not if essentialism is low.

Furthermore, we know that minority members' acculturation preferences are not independent of the majority society's views (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). An interesting question relates to how minority members' own perceptions of British identity may impact their own acculturation preferences. If minority members perceive that majority members hold an essentialist conceptualisation of British identity, or if minority members themselves essentialise Britishness, this can be assumed to impact on the perceived possibility of integrating into British society. Minority members should only strive for both culture maintenance *and* culture adoption simultaneously if they do not hold lay beliefs that suggest that ethnic and cultural categories are mutually exclusive. Further, because minority members' preferences are limited by what the more dominant group will condone (Zagefka et

al., 2011), minority members should only strive for both culture maintenance *and* culture adoption if they do not believe that majority members consider these categories as mutually exclusive. Therefore, we expected that for minority members too, the perceived compatibility between the two cultures would be moderated by levels of essentialism, and this time we studied the effects of both own subscription to essentialist beliefs about British identity, and the perceived essentialist beliefs of British majority members. We expected a preference for heritage culture maintenance to be negatively associated with a preference for majority culture adoption only if essentialism is high, but not if essentialism is low.

Our study presents a unique contribution to the existing literature, as it is the first study to directly address the associations between acculturation preferences regarding both cultures for both minority and majority groups and explore how this relates to essentialist definitions of British identity. We follow research by Pehrson, Brown and Zagefka (2009) and Zagefka et al. (2013) by exploring the biological element of essentialism (Keller, 2005), where group membership is defined by biological ties. This form of essentialism was chosen for this study as it relates closely to ethnic nationalism, and following previous studies was judged as the most theoretically appropriate measure when considering essentialist definitions of the national group.

The present studies

Expressed at a high level of abstraction, for both studies and for both minority and majority groups, we expected that a preference for maintaining/adopting one culture would be perceived to be incompatible with, and therefore negatively associated with, maintenance/adoption of the other culture *only* if essentialism is high. Under conditions of low essentialism, we expected a non-significant relationship between the two acculturation dimensions (implying orthogonality, independence and potential compatibility of the two dimensions).

The first study explores the associations between heritage culture maintenance preference and majority culture adoption preference in Somali minority members in the UK. We hypothesise that the association between majority culture adoption and heritage culture maintenance will be negative (implying perceived incompatibility) when minority members show high levels of own British essentialism, but non-significant (implying orthogonality) when essentialism is low (H_1). Further, we predict that the association between majority culture adoption and heritage culture maintenance will be negative when minority members believe that majority members essentialise Britishness (labelled 'perceived British essentialism'), but non-significant when perceived British essentialism is low (H_2).

The second study focusses on British majority members in the UK and explores their acculturation preferences for minority members living in the UK (i.e., what majority members want minority members to do). We hypothesise that majority members who strongly essentialise Britishness will also see culture maintenance and culture adoption as incompatible, resulting in a negative association between the two acculturation dimensions. In contrast, the two dimensions should appear compatible if essentialist beliefs are not endorsed, and no negative association between the two dimensions should be evident for participants who do not essentialise British identity (H_3).

Because people overall care most about their own group, we wanted to study the effects of acculturation preferences towards the group's *own* culture on preferences regarding the respective outgroup's culture for both the minority and the majority group. Therefore, to hold this focus constant across both groups, for the minority group culture maintenance preference was the predictor variable, and for the majority group culture adoption preference was the predictor variable.

The data for both studies presented in this paper is available on the OSF platform with this link: https://osf.io/473fu/?view_only=ba80ce5f285b409196f8407908ca5ab0

Study 1

Participants

Participants were 91 males and 99 females (*N*=198; 8 participants did not report their gender) who all self-reported as being ethnic Somalis. Participants were aged between 16 and 36 (*M*=21.32, *SD*=4.52). Almost half the participants (47%) were born in Somalia, and the other participants reported either being born in the UK (27%) or somewhere else (22%). Across all participants, the average length of time living in the UK was 12 years. Also, with the exception of 21 participants who did not report a religion, all participants reported being Muslim (89% of total sample).

This present study presents a secondary data analysis of data collected by Zagefka et al. (2016). Although the sample is identical to one of the studies reported in the previous paper, that previous publication did not focus on research questions related to essentialism, and the present research question is unique to this present paper.

Design and Materials

This study was a cross-sectional survey design. The participants were recruited in public places by a Somali researcher, and they were asked to fill in a questionnaire. There was one version of the questionnaire, which was written in English, but most participants reported speaking English well (18%) or very well (70%) in the questionnaire. All items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale (1-*strongly/totally disagree* to 5-*strongly/totally agree*). Participants did not receive any financial incentive for taking part, but were fully debriefed after their participation, and all aspects of this and the subsequent study were in line with BPS and APA ethics guidelines. The following measures were used in this study[1].

Culture maintenance preference. Culture maintenance was measured using two items based on items from Zagefka and Brown (2002). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following two statements: 'I would like

Somalis in Britain to maintain their own culture', 'I would like Somalis in Britain to maintain their own religion, language and clothing,' α = .81.

Culture adoption preference. Culture adoption was measured in the same way, but here the statements were: 'I would like Somalis in Britain to take on the British culture' and 'I would like Somalis in Britain to take on the British religion, language and clothing', α = .60.

Own and Perceived British essentialism. Essentialism was measured using six items (three for own, and three for perceived). Items were based on previous research by Pehrson, Brown and Zagefka (2009) which focussed on biological essentialism and ethnic nationalism. Participants indicated for each statement the extent to which they agree/disagree, and the extent to which they think white British people agree/disagree. The following statements were used: 'whether someone is British is determined by their biological and genetic ancestry', 'whether someone is British is determined by their blood ties and descent', 'a person cannot be truly British if their parents came from another country'; for own British essentialism α = .82, for perceived British essentialism α = .75.

Some demographic information was also collected from the participants, including age, gender, ethnic group, place of birth, education level, years spent living in the UK and how well they reported speaking English.

Results

Means, standard deviations and correlations of all variables are presented in Table 4.1[2]. Two separate models were tested with culture adoption preference as the outcome variable and culture maintenance preference as the predictor variable in both models[3]. In Model A own British essentialism was tested as a moderator variable, and in Model B perceived British essentialism was tested as a moderator. To analyse these models the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2017) was used on SPSS. Model 1 from this macro

was adopted in this study, which analyses the relationship between one predictor variable and one outcome variable, with a single moderator variable; 5000 bootstrap samples were selected, and all continuous variables were mean-centred.

Table 4.1

Means, Standard Deviations and Bivariate Correlations Across Variables for Study 1

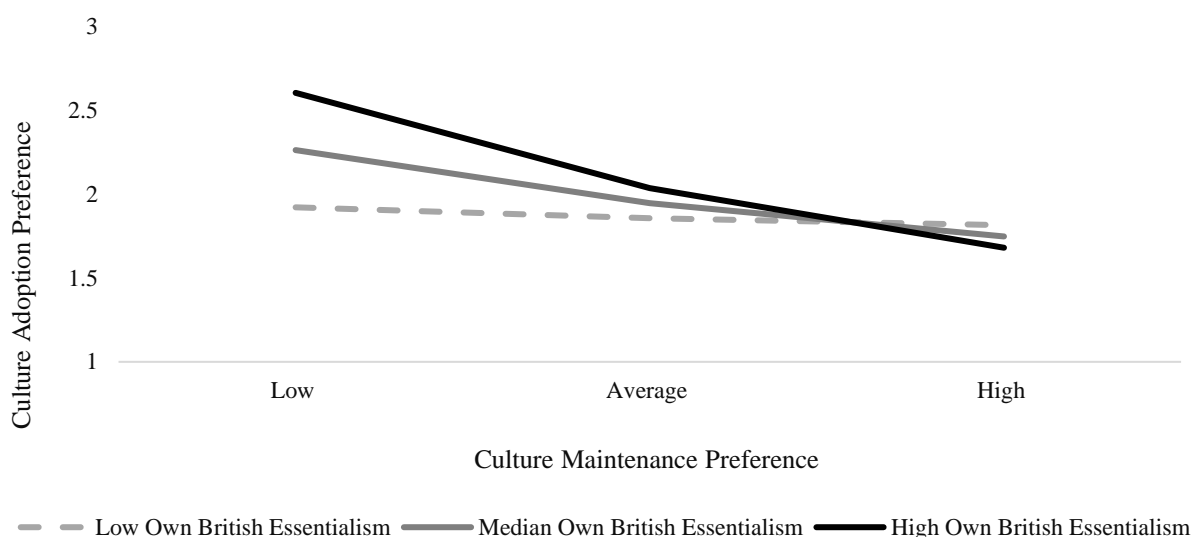|	Mean	SD	Culture maintenance preference	Culture adoption preference	Own British essentialism	Perceived British essentialism
Culture maintenance preference	4.48	0.84	-			
Culture adoption preference	1.90	0.96	-.24**	-		
Own British essentialism	2.91	1.32	.19**	.01	-	
Perceived British essentialism	3.52	1.07	.22**	-.06	.40**	-

Note. ** $p < .01$

Model A, with own British essentialism as a moderator was significant overall, $F_{(3, 194)} = 8.05$, $R^2 = .33$, $p < .001$. Culture maintenance preference was a significant negative predictor of culture adoption preference ($\beta = -.38$, $t = -4.51$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.65, -0.19]), own British essentialism was not a significant predictor of culture adoption preference ($\beta = .07$, $t = 1.33$, $p = .18$, 95% CI [-0.03, 0.18]), but the interaction between culture maintenance preference and own British essentialism was significant ($\beta = -.23$, $t = -3.30$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [-0.44, -0.08]), which means that a significant moderation effect was apparent. To interpret this effect, simple slope analysis of the moderator was undertaken (Aiken & West, 1991). We follow a recommendation by Hayes (2017), who argues that when a moderator is skewed, the mean may not actually be a sensible measure of the centre, and therefore picking values at one standard deviation above or below the mean may lead to the value falling outside the

scale of measurement. To avoid this, it is recommended to use the median as a more sensible measure of the centre, and the 16th and 84th percentiles as low and high values respectively – since they will always fall within the scale (Hayes, 2017). At lower levels of own British essentialism, preference for culture maintenance did not predict a preference for culture adoption (β= -.01, t = -0.06, p = .96), but at the mid-level (β = -.40, t = -4.63, p < .001) and high levels of own British essentialism (β = -.70, t = -4.73, p < .001), culture maintenance preference negatively predicted culture adoption preference (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1

Graph Showing the Relationship Between Culture Maintenance Preference and Culture Adoption Preference at Different Levels of Own British Essentialism for Somali Minority Members (Study 1)

Model B, with perceived British essentialism as a moderator was also significant overall, $F_{(3, 193)}$ = 6.41, R^2 = .30, p < .001. Culture maintenance preference was a significant negative predictor of culture adoption preference (β = -.37, t = -4.15, p < .001, 95% CI [-0.56, -0.17]), perceived British essentialism was not a significant predictor of culture adoption preference (β= .02, t = 0.25, p = .81, 95% CI [-0.11, 0.13]), but the interaction between culture maintenance preference and perceived British essentialism was significant (β = -.22, t = -

2.69, $p = .008$, 95% CI [-0.38, -0.04]). To interpret this effect, simple slope analysis was again undertaken at the 16th, 50th and 84th percentiles. At lower levels of perceived British essentialism, preference for culture maintenance did not predict a preference for culture adoption ($\beta = -.11$, $t = -1.07$, $p = .29$), but at the mid-level ($\beta = -.40$, $t = -4.25$, $p < .001$), and high levels of perceived British essentialism ($\beta = -.62$, $t = -4.05$, $p < .001$), culture maintenance preference negatively predicted culture adoption preference (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2

Graph Showing the Relationship Between Culture Maintenance Preference and Culture Adoption Preference at Different Levels of Perceived British Essentialism for Somali Minority Members (Study 1)
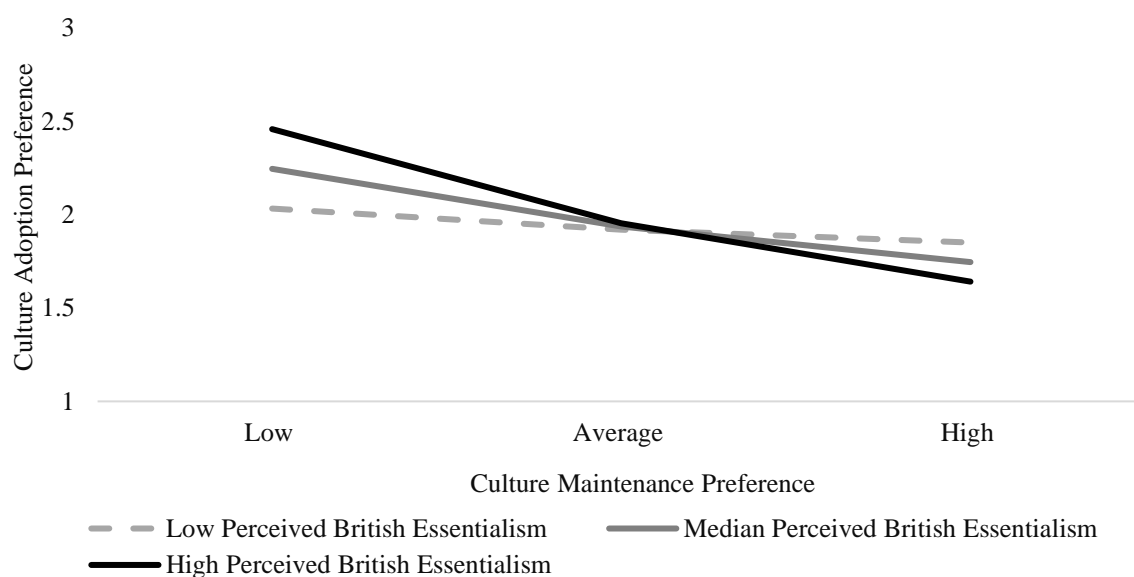

A post-hoc power analysis was conducted to ascertain that the sample size was adequate. Using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009), a post-hoc power analysis was conducted for both models with the R^2 values entered as the effect size, and statistical power was shown to be at the .99 level for both models.

Discussion

This study explored the nature of the relationship between heritage culture maintenance preference and majority culture adoption preference among Somali minority members in the UK, and whether this relationship is affected by both minority members' own essentialist beliefs about British identity and their perceptions of majority members' essentialising of Britishness. Consistent with H_1, we found that when minority members themselves had a relatively stronger essentialist perception of British identity, culture maintenance preference and culture adoption preference were incompatible, as they were negatively associated with each other, but they were not correlated when essentialist perceptions were comparatively low. Further and in line with H_2, when minority members perceive that majority members have an essentialist definition of British identity, they were also more likely to see the two preferences as conflicting and negatively associated, but the two preferences were not related to each other when perceived British essentialism was low. These findings show that when minority members perceive high levels of majority essentialism from a biological perspective, there is in fact a perception of incompatibility between the heritage culture and majority culture.

Interestingly, we found that when not considering essentialism at all and looking at it in terms of main effects, there was a negative association between the dimensions. This suggests by default Somali minority members believe, to some extent, that there is an inherent incompatibility between their heritage culture and British culture, although they might still fall into the 'integration' category if acculturation orientations are measured in categorical terms (Berry et al., 2006; Nesdale & Mak, 2000; Roblain et al., 2017; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). Because a large proportion of the sample in study 1 identified as Muslim, this finding is maybe not surprising. As we know from a social identity perspective, one would expect groups who are subjected to greater rejection and greater levels of discrimination to adopt particular strategies to protect their identities (Branscombe et al., 1999), such as increased ethnic group identification and reduced national group identification (Robinson, 2009). Therefore, taking

into account the current UK context with its pronounced levels of Islamophobia (Abbas, 2007; Home Office, 2019), increasingly negative media representations of Islam after 9/11 (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010), and the tendency for majority members in the UK to perceive Muslims as a threatening group (Croucher, 2013), it is reasonable to assume that baseline levels of perceived discrimination are quite high for Muslims, and that they might therefore feel that they have to choose between the two groups, and cannot easily belong to both.

Having found support for the hypotheses that own and perceived British essentialism moderate the relationship between heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption for minority members in the UK, a second study was conducted to investigate whether essentialism would also moderate this relationship among white British majority members.

Study 2

Participants

The sample consisted of 49 males and 151 females (N=200), aged from 18-63 (M=34.90, SD=10.90), who were recruited from online platform Prolific.ac. The number of participants was determined using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009). Based on small to medium effect sizes usually found in the acculturation literature (Tip et al., 2012; Zagefka et al., 2014), we expected a minimum effect size of $R^2 = 0.1$ and aiming for a power of 0.8, 200 participants were selected.

Pre-screening was used to ensure that only participants who self-reported as white British were selected to take part in this study. In total, 6 participants were excluded from the final dataset, as they were either timed out from the study on Prolific, returned incomplete data for some of the key variables or failed the attention check measure in the survey.

Design & Materials

This study was a cross-sectional survey study. All items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale (1-*strongly/totally disagree* to 5-*strongly/totally agree*). The following measures were used in this study[4].

Culture maintenance preference. Culture maintenance was measured using three items based on Zagefka et al. (2014). In an attempt to improve the measure, double-barrelled items from study 1 were removed. Participants were asked to what extent they agree/disagree with the following statements, 'I think that ethnic minority members should speak original language often', 'I think that ethnic minority members should keep as much as possible their culture of origin', and 'I think that ethnic minority members should maintain their own traditions', $\alpha = .84$.

Culture adoption preference. Culture adoption was measured in the same way as culture maintenance, but this time the statements were, 'speak English often', 'take on as much as possible the British culture' and 'adopt British traditions', $\alpha = .80$.

Own British essentialism. Essentialism was measured using eight items. Participants were asked to what extent they agreed/disagreed with items which were again all based on 'biological essentialism' as conceptualised in previous research by Pehrson, Brown and Zagefka (2009). In this study, we used a slightly longer scale to measure essentialism with items that have previously been found to be reliable, to ensure that we properly capture this complex construct. Example statements include 'it is the British blood that makes British people who they are', 'genetic factors largely determine the British character' and 'one's ancestry is what makes a person British', $\alpha = .91$.

Some demographic information was also obtained from the participants at the end of the survey, including age, gender, and educational level. As well as this, an attention check was included.

Results

Means, standard deviations and correlations of all variables are presented in Table 4.2[5]. To test the hypothesis in this study, model 1 from Hayes (2017) was adopted again, like study 1 the variables were mean-centred, and 5000 bootstrap samples were used. In this

study, culture maintenance and culture adoption were swapped as independent and dependent variables compared to study 1, and own British essentialism was again entered as the moderator variable.

Table 4.2

*Means, Standard Deviations and Bivariate Correlations Across Variables for Study 2*

	Mean	SD	Culture maintenance preference	Culture adoption preference	Own British essentialism
Culture maintenance preference	3.27	0.85	-		
Culture adoption preference	3.79	0.74	-.40**	-	
Own British essentialism	2.19	0.89	-.42**	.42**	-

Note. ** $p < .01$

The overall model was significant, $F (3, 196) = 22.77$, $R^2 = .26$, $p < .001$. Culture adoption preference was a significant negative predictor of culture maintenance preference ($\beta = -.35$, $t = -4.39$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.50, -0.19]), own British essentialism was also a significant negative predictor of culture maintenance preference ($\beta = -.22$, $t = -3.07$, $p = .002$, 95% CI [-0.36, -0.08]), and the interaction between culture adoption preference and own British essentialism was also significant ($\beta = -.18$, $t = -2.40$, $p = .018$, 95% CI [-0.33, -0.03]), indicating a moderation effect. To interpret this effect, simple slope analysis was undertaken using the 16th, 50th and 84th percentiles. At low levels of own British essentialism, culture adoption did not predict culture maintenance ($\beta = -.18$, $t = -1.82$, $p = .07$), but at mid-levels ($\beta = -.34$, $t = -4.28$, $p < .001$), and high levels of own British essentialism ($\beta = -.52$, $t = -4.45$, $p < .001$), culture adoption preference negatively predicted culture maintenance preference (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3

Graph Showing the Relationship Between Culture Adoption Preference and Culture Maintenance Preference at Different Levels of Own British Essentialism for White British Majority Members (Study 2)
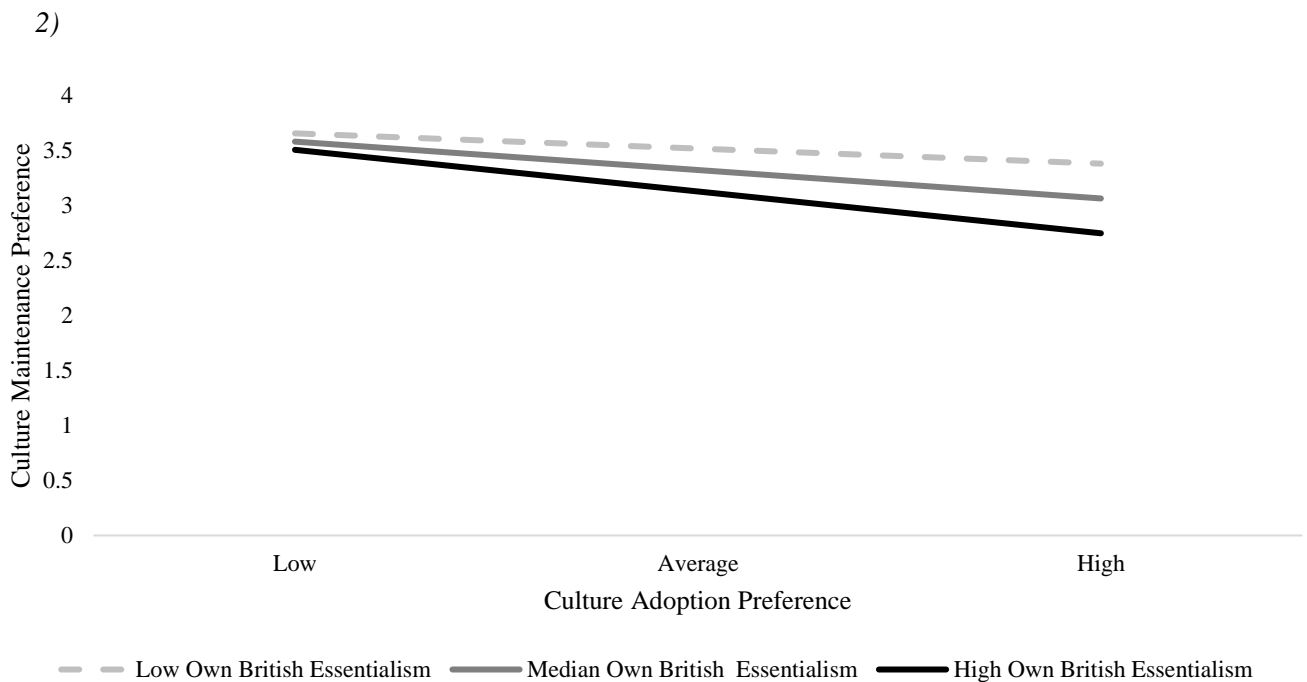
It is important to note that this study originally included an experimental manipulation to test an alternative research question to the one described in this present study. Participants were provided with one of four fictional news articles describing how minority members choose to acculturate in the UK, in an attempt to manipulate perceptions of minority member acculturation preferences. There were four experimental conditions: integration, assimilation, separation and a control group where no article was provided. We found that the manipulation did not have a significant effect on the manipulation check measure or any of the variables featured in this manuscript. Given that the variable the manipulation was designed to tap into was different from the variables featured as independent, dependent or moderating variables in this paper, it seemed feasible to analyse the variables in correlational terms. We conducted some exploratory analysis and confirmed that the manipulation had no effect on the models used in this present study, first when considered as a covariate, and also when checking for multiple moderation.

Discussion

Findings from the second study using British majority members supported H₃. When majority members were essentialist in their thinking about British identity (at median or high levels), they were more likely to see the two dimensions as conflicting, leading to a negative association between them. Here, a greater preference for culture adoption by majority members was associated with less culture maintenance preference. However, at low levels of essentialism, there was no significant correlation between the two dimensions.

This study asked white British majority members about ethnic minorities in general, rather than specifying a particular group, and it is worth reflecting on the implications of this. In the past it has been shown that particular ethnic or religious groups are more discriminated than others (Ford, 2011). Research has previously also shown that the ways outgroups are thought about depends on the abstractness of the level in which they are represented (Watt et al., 2007). Nonetheless, some studies looking into majority members' acculturation preferences and attitudes to multiculturalism have shown that the same patterns emerge independent of whether the focus is on specific minority groups, or whether minority members are categorised more generally as 'ethnic minorities' (Tip et al., 2012; Verkuyten, 2009). Therefore, this suggests a degree of generalisation in such attitudes to 'ethnic minorities' in general. Our findings also support this by showing that majority members who are high in essentialism see adopting British culture as generally incompatible with minority culture maintenance, without specifying any particular minority group. Although previous findings by Tip and colleagues (2012) suggest that this pattern should also hold for specific minority groups (e.g., if participants were asked to think about people from Pakistan), this would need to be tested further to be certain.

General Discussion

We show in this paper that the compatibility of the two acculturation dimensions of culture maintenance preference and culture adoption preference does depend on the extent to which essentialist beliefs are endorsed or – for minority members – imputed into the outgroup. For both minority and majority members, whether they perceive the acculturation preferences as conflicting or not depends on whether they essentialise British identity or not. When minority members themselves essentialise British identity, they are less likely to believe that wanting to maintain their own culture is compatible with wanting to adopt the British culture. Moreover, when minority members believe that white British people essentialise Britishness, those minority members are also less likely to believe that wanting to maintain their own culture is compatible with wanting to adopt the British culture. In an essentialist climate or in situations where society favours an ethnic definition of nationhood, minority members will see the minority and majority cultures as mutually exclusive - keeping one culture means you cannot adopt the other. Similarly, for majority members who see British identity in essentialist terms, the more they prefer British culture adoption the less they support minority culture maintenance. This suggests that when majority members essentialise Britishness, they see minority members adopting the British culture as incompatible with maintaining their heritage culture.

There are some key limitations and discussion points from the two studies presented in this paper that need highlighting. First, the sample used in study 2 was obtained online, using the platform Prolific.ac. There have been concerns in the past regarding such online crowdsourcing platforms (Chmielewski & Kucker, 2019). However, more generally, some studies have argued that Prolific.ac may in fact be superior to other online platforms in terms of data quality and diversity of participants (Palan & Schitter, 2018; Peer et al., 2017).

Nonetheless, the lack of control over the sample obtained in study 2 may raise issues related to generalisability, and this should be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

A second limitation of this paper concerns the acculturation items utilised in both studies. In study 1, we acknowledge that one of the items used to measure acculturation preferences was double-barrelled, and combined the religion, language and clothing domains. In addition, while we were trying to tap into the extent to which individuals maintain or adopt particular traditions and customs associated with the given culture, we acknowledge that the wording of this measure can be considered problematic, e.g. confusion around the meaning of 'taking on' a religion or aspects of a religion (e.g. Christmas trees in Muslim households), and therefore we replaced this item in study 2, where we refer specifically to traditions and customs instead. In addition, in Study 2 the statements used for the acculturation items began with 'ethnic minorities should', rather than 'I would like' (as used in study 1). We would expect this change to potentially affect mean level endorsement, but not the association between variables. Nonetheless, previous studies vary widely in terms of such subtle wording differences (see e.g., Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011; Zagefka et al., 2011), and the consequences of the precise wording of acculturation measures have not been explored systematically. This would be an interesting avenue for future research.

Moreover, there are a number of issues relating to the conceptualisation of essentialism in this paper that should also be addressed. First, as mentioned, this study focussed on biological essentialism, because ideas were based on previous research studying this kind of essentialism in psychology (e.g., Keller, 2005) and the notion of ethnic nationalism. However, it would be interesting to explore essentialism more broadly, or focus on various other conceptualisations of essentialism, e.g. cultural essentialism.

In addition, in this paper perceived British essentialism was considered only for minority groups. We did not have any particular predictions about majority members'

perceptions of British essentialism among minority members. Essentialist discourses of British identity are often utilised by dominant members in society to justify particular attitudes towards immigration and multiculturalism (Modood, 1997), and because minorities as the less powerful group are constrained in their choices by majority preferences, we hypothesised that perceived essentialism would be important for minority participants in particular. However, future research could consider majority members' perceptions of ethnic nationalism among minority members, and how this affects their acculturation preferences.

As well as this, it would be interesting to explore further intergroup and individual difference variables as moderators of the compatibility of the acculturation dimensions for both majority and minority members, such as bicultural identity integration (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005), or social identity complexity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Moreover, clearly essentialism is not the only factor that might moderate the relationship between the two dimensions. Other factors, such as perceive rejection or discrimination from the majority society, could be explored (Neto, 2002; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002).

Finally, we acknowledge that this paper consisted of two cross-sectional survey studies and therefore we cannot infer any causation from the findings discussed. Future experimental or longitudinal would represent a significant advancement. For example, comparing how acculturation orientations change over time among minority members who have more essentialist beliefs about identity and those with less essentialist beliefs, would provide further support for the importance of essentialism in the acculturation process.

The studies presented in this paper have some applied implications. Since essentialist perceptions appear to impact whether one sees heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption as conflicting or not, we argue that in societies where essentialist discourse is salient, a view of incompatibility may be encouraged or amplified. Often, rather than just existing in individuals' minds intergroup ideologies are often institutionalised as policies

(Guimond et al., 2014). Of course, this has implications for the integration of minority members, and subsequently minority-majority group relations. The present findings suggest that alternative 'civic' representations of identity are important to avoid a sense of incompatibility between majority and minority cultures. This is where group membership is seen as a voluntary engagement in some basic ideological principles, and through the lens of common citizenship, rather than a fixed or inherent quality that stems from ancestry (Ignatieff, 1994; Reijerse et al., 2015). Such a 'civic' representation of identity is more inclusive, and therefore encouraging these representations through policy and education may facilitate multiculturalism and the management of diverse identities by all members of society.

To conclude, we acknowledge that any attempt to encourage integration and multiculturalism, and to create a climate where the integration of majority and minority cultures is both encouraged and embraced, will require a wide range of considerations and reforms. Our paper stresses the importance of considering essentialism as one such barrier to integration in the UK. A reduction in essentialist-based conceptions of the British identity may give rise to a greater sense of compatibility of minority and majority cultures, and therefore to greater inclusion of minority groups in British society.

Footnotes

[1] An exploratory factor analysis was initially conducted to explore how the items used in the survey loaded together. Four factors emerged from the analysis. All items from the culture maintenance preference (loadings ranged from .88 to .90), culture adoption preference (loadings ranged from .75 to .90), own British essentialism (loadings ranged from .83 to .85) and perceived British essentialism (loadings ranged from .72 to .84) measures respectively loaded onto their own separate factors, with no substantial cross-loadings.

[2] In study 1, age did not correlate with any of the variables, and of all variables included, gender only correlated with own British essentialism ($r = .20$, $p = .007$), where males were associated with a higher tendency to essentialise British identity than females.

[3] The findings reported here did not change when controlling for whether participants were born in the UK, and length of time spent in the UK.

[4] Similar to study 1, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on items used in the survey. As expected, three factors emerged from the analysis. Items from culture maintenance preference (loadings ranged from .81 to .89), culture adoption preference (loadings ranged from .72 to .87) and own British essentialism (loadings ranged from .52 to .73) all loaded onto their separate respective factors, with no substantial cross-loadings.

[5] In study 2, age and gender did not correlate with any of the variables included in the model.

4.2 Paper 2: Majority group perceptions of minority acculturation

preferences: The role of perceived threat

Abstract

Recently, there has been growing focus on the intergroup influences of acculturation preferences, and in particular majority members' perceptions of how minority members want to acculturate. This paper contributes to this emergent literature by examining the extent to which majority members in the UK perceive that minority members' preferences for heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption are conflicting, and whether this is moderated by perceived threat. One hundred and sixty-three participants who self-reported being white British completed an online survey. Participants were asked about their perceptions of minority acculturation preferences for two target groups living in the UK: Pakistani and German minority groups. Overall, perceived culture maintenance and perceived culture adoption were weakly negatively associated for both groups. Moreover, results confirmed the pre-registered hypotheses, but only for the Pakistani target group. At higher levels of perceived threat, perceived culture maintenance was related to less perceived culture adoption. However, when threat was low, there was no association between perceived heritage culture maintenance and perceived culture adoption. For the German target group, threat did not moderate the relationship between perceived culture maintenance and perceived culture adoption. Findings suggest that depending on levels of perceived threat and the minority group in question, majority members perceiving that minority members maintain their heritage culture has different consequences. Results are discussed in relation to implications for integration, intergroup relations in culturally plural societies, and the need to focus on specific minority groups when studying acculturation processes.

Keywords: acculturation, culture maintenance, culture adoption, majority members, perceived threat.

Introduction

The United Kingdom (UK) is an increasingly multicultural society today. Due to immigration and globalisation processes, many Western societies now include a variety of different ethnic and cultural groups. Such diversity inevitably raises important questions about the presence of different cultures and backgrounds and how these can impact intergroup relations in modern society. There has been much debate on the notion of Britishness, and the effect of immigration, with an increasing number of minority ethnic groups now living in the UK (Shabi, 2019). In particular, questions about whether particular groups can integrate into British society have dominated discourse in the media, and academic literature (Joppke, 2009; Parekh, 2005). This paper adopts an intergroup perspective of acculturation and explores British majority members' perceptions of how minority members living in the UK acculturate, and the intergroup variables that may influence these perceptions. Of particular interest is whether majority members perceiving that minority members want to maintain their original culture leads to majority members also assuming that minority members do *not* want to adopt the British culture. In other words, do majority members who believe that minorities value culture maintenance consequently also believe that minority members *do not* want to adopt the British culture? It is proposed that the relationship between perceived culture maintenance and culture adoption might be moderated by the extent to which majority members feel threatened by the presence of minority members. Another goal was to test whether processes would be similar across different minority target groups, which is why we studied white British majority members' perceptions of both Pakistani and German minority members in the UK.

Acculturation from an Intergroup Perspective

When people migrate to a new country, they undergo a process of change and adjustment, while members of the majority society also have to adapt, which has been

labelled acculturation (Redfield et al., 1936). Although acculturation has been studied in various disciplines and conceptualised in a variety of ways, the most common framework of acculturation within psychology is Berry's (1999) bidimensional framework. According to Berry (1999), two underlying dimensions define how minority members may choose to acculturate into the majority society. The dimensions are a preference for heritage culture maintenance on the one hand, and a preference for intergroup contact on the other hand. In subsequent acculturation models, the dimension of intergroup contact has been replaced with a preference for adoption of the majority culture (also labelled majority culture adoption sometimes) as a more conceptually relevant dimension (Bourhis et al., 1997).

Although initial research in this area focused on minority members' own acculturation orientations and adaptation (e.g., Berry, 1997), there is now a growing interest on investigating the majority society's preferences for how minority members acculturate into the majority society (e.g., Arends-Tòth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Hillekens et al., 2019; Kunst et al., 2015; Tip et al., 2012; Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998; Van Oudenhoven & Esses, 1998; Zagefka et al., 2012) and how this, as well the societal climate, e.g., state policies or school context, can affect the adaptation of minority members and shape relations between majority and minority groups in society (Blinder & Richards, 2020; Bourhis et al., 1997; Grigoryev et al., 2018; Titzmann & Jugert, 2015). Whilst minority members generally prefer integration strategies (see Brown & Zagefka, 2011 for a review), from the perspective of the majority group, we see different patterns emerging. Most commonly, the literature has suggested that majority members prefer minority members to adopt the majority culture as opposed to maintaining their own culture (Arends-Tòth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998).

Of course, from an intergroup perspective of acculturation, it is clear that it is not only actual majority preferences that are relevant, but also how majority members might perceive

the acculturation preferences of minorities. Some past studies have shown that majority members are more likely to show negative intergroup attitudes when perceiving that minority members wish to maintain their own culture (Tip et al., 2012; Van Oudenhoven & Esses, 1998). For example, Tip et al. (2012) showed that perceived culture maintenance led to increased perceptions of threat and consequently less support for multiculturalism in the UK. In addition, studies across Europe have shown that majority members who perceive that minority members maintain their heritage culture are more likely to show negative attitudes towards said minority groups, and expect further mainstream culture adoption, and less culture maintenance as a result (Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011a; Van Oudenhoven & Esses, 1998). The flipside of this is that majority members who perceive that minority members adopt the majority culture are likely to be more accommodating to integration (Zagefka et al., 2012), and think more positively about minority members (Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011a), potentially due to a perception that minority members identify with the national identity (Roblain et al., 2016).

However, despite the studies highlighted above, studying majority members' perceptions of minority members' acculturation preferences remains a largely under-researched area in the acculturation literature. Importantly, sometimes majority groups' perceptions of minority acculturation preferences do not reflect that groups' own attitudes (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998). Such misrepresentations of minority acculturation preferences can affect minority members' well-being and acculturative adaptation (Barreto et al., 2003; Roccas et al., 2000), and perpetuate negative intergroup relations (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2011).

Therefore, given the influence majority members' perceptions can have on not only the acculturative outcomes of minority members, but also intergroup relations between

majority-minority groups, studying the factors that influence how majority members perceive minority members' acculturation preferences is especially important.

Integrating Two Cultures: Compatible or Conflicting

As part of the exploration into majority members' perceptions of how minority members acculturate, a key question relates to the extent to which majority members believe that participants who wish to maintain their heritage culture can also wish to adopt the majority culture.

A number of studies in a variety of different contexts have shown that minority members themselves tend to prefer integration over other strategies (Berry et al., 2006; Ghuman, 2003; Phinney et al., 2001, 2006). Relatedly, studies have also shown that minority members who identify highly with their ethnic group can identify with the national group as well (Nesdale & Mak, 2000) and also support multiculturalism (Verkuyten, 2005). Taken together, this suggests that among minority members, there is a common perception of compatibility between one's heritage culture and the majority culture. Many minority members do not seem to assume that endorsing their minority culture comes at the cost of adopting the majority culture.

But, since majority perceptions of acculturation preferences have an important role to play in intergroup relations, it is also of interest to explore compatibility from the perspective of the majority members. It remains an open question whether majority members perceive that minority members wish to simultaneously maintain their minority heritage culture and adopt the majority culture, or whether majority members by and large assume that these preferences are in fact conflicting.

Some research has already explored the compatibility of majority members own acculturation *preferences* (Hillekens et al., 2019; Moftizadeh et al., 2021), showing that often

majority members find the two preferences as incompatible and see it as an 'either-or' choice. For example, Hillekens et al. (2019) showed that majority group adolescents' preferences for heritage culture maintenance and mainstream culture adoption are conflicting over time. Also, Moftizadeh et al. (2021) found that essentialist beliefs about ethnic groups affect the relationship between own preferences for culture maintenance and adoption for majority members. Such findings of incompatibility between the minority and majority cultures are also corroborated by research on multiculturalism suggesting that majority members tend to show less support for multiculturalism and more support for assimilation (Arends-Tòth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Verkuyten, 2005). Conversely, one study showed that if majority members see majority and minority groups through a 'common ingroup identity' lens, they are more likely to support integration (Kunst et al., 2015), suggesting that majority members can indeed see the heritage and mainstream cultures as compatible.

However, to our knowledge, not many studies have directly explored majority members' *perceptions* of whether acculturation preferences of minority members are conflicting or not. In one study, Van Acker and Vanbeselaere (2011b) showed that Flemish majority members believed that Turkish Muslim minority members who chose to maintain their heritage culture were less likely to adopt the majority culture. However, when majority members assumed that minority members did adopt the mainstream culture, they assumed that minority members were less likely to maintain their heritage culture. These findings suggest that majority members in this study may have had doubts in terms of minority members' integration tendencies. When majority members think that minority members maintain their culture, they assume that minority members do not wish to participate in the majority society. This suggests that majority members may assume some form of incompatibility between maintaining a minority culture and adopting the culture of the majority society. Of course, this is problematic in cases where minority members themselves

see no problem with the combining of cultures, and as Bourhis et al. (1997) theorize, this mismatch may lead to problematic intergroup relations. Therefore, it is important to understand the motivations and drivers of such perceptions of incompatibility of culture maintenance and culture adoption. However, Van Acker and Vanbeselaere's (2011b) study did not consider intergroup factors that may influence such a perception of incompatibility. It may be that majority members perceive culture incompatibility only under particular conditions, or for particular target groups. Such intergroup particularities are important to study in the context of acculturation. Therefore, this present study explored perceived intergroup threat posed by minority members as a possible moderator of the extent to which a perception that minority members want to maintain their culture would preclude a perception that minority members also want to adopt the majority culture.

When considering whether acculturation preferences are seen as conflicting or not, one approach is to consider the correlation between the two (Hillekens et al., 2019; Moftizadeh et al., 2021). If there is a strong negative correlation between the two dimensions, it suggests that the acceptance of one implies the rejection of the other (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006). In contrast, no strong negative correlation, or a positive correlation, implies that the dimensions are not mutually exclusive but possibly complementary or orthogonal to each other. This is the approach taken in the present study: we investigated in a sample of white British majority members whether a perception that minority members maintain their heritage culture is negatively associated with perceptions of mainstream culture adoption, at different levels of perceived threat.

Perceived Threat as a Moderator

According to the integrated threat theory, perceiving an outgroup as threatening is a key antecedent to negative attitudes towards that particular group (Stephan et al., 1998). This

framework presents two key types of threat which may be relevant. On one hand, symbolic threat relates to a perception that the system of values, morals and beliefs endorsed by the ingroup is being undermined by a particular outgroup. The other form of threat concerns realistic threats, whereby outgroup members pose a threat to the power, well-being and resources of the majority group.

Empirical evidence broadly supports the predictions of integrated threat theory, linking threat not only to more negative intergroup attitudes but also – crucial for the present context - showing that threat affects the way outgroup members are perceived (see Riek et al., 2006 for a review). For example, studies across various cultural contexts have shown that majority groups who perceive immigrants as threatening are more likely to think in stereotypical ways and exhibit negative attitudes towards these groups (e.g., Makashvili et al., 2018; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007; Stephan et al., 1998; Velasco González et al., 2008). Perceptions of threat can also impact the ways in which majority members think about minority members' behaviours and attitudes in relation to acculturation. Croucher (2013) showed that when majority members of society perceive threat from Muslim minority members, they are less likely to believe that those minority members assimilate to the majority culture. This work suggests that perceived threat increases 'binary thinking' when it comes to outgroup members who are perceived as a threat, and that it leads to a tendency to stereotype, and think of others in more simplistic and categorical ways.

If feeling threatened prompts people to think of others in stereotypical, simplified, and categorical terms, it should also reduce proclivity to acknowledge that minority members might strive to belong to two groups at the same time, as it prompts 'either-or' thinking. Threat should lead to minority members being perceived as either having a positive orientation towards their heritage culture, *or* towards the mainstream culture. Therefore, if majority members believe that minority members want to maintain their culture, and if they

simultaneously feel threatened, they are liable to concluding that minority members may adopt the majority culture less. In contrast, under low threat majority members will be more amenable to the idea that minority members can belong to two cultures simultaneously, and under this condition perceived culture maintenance endorsement would *not* lead to a perception of less majority culture adoption.

Although on the basis of the above argument theoretically it might be the case that perceived culture maintenance affects perceived culture adoption or vice versa, we chose mainstream culture adoption as the outcome variable for the following reason: theoretically it is more interesting to predict perceived culture adoption rather than perceived culture maintenance, because this is the variable that is more likely to be associated with negative intergroup outcomes and intergroup conflict. We had no particular prediction on how perceived culture adoption would interact with threat and be associated with perceived culture maintenance. As highlighted by the literature above, we predict that a perception of heritage culture maintenance may be the factor that is associated with stereotypical thoughts about a minority group – including the possibility that they may not want to adopt the majority culture.

The UK Context and Choice of Minority Groups

As highlighted previously, when studying acculturation from an intergroup lens, it is important to consider the particularities of the intergroup context when drawing conclusions about how one group might perceive the preferences of an outgroup. The growing diversity of in different societies, and the different nature of various immigrant groups settling in receiving societies calls for context-driven acculturation research that attempts to address the questions arising from such diversity (Titzmann & Fuligni, 2015).

We tested the processes described in this study in the British cultural context. Post-war and EU expansion has led to increased diversity in the UK. Approximately 14% of the UK population is foreign born, and the annual number of babies born in the UK to foreign-born mothers is on an upwards trend (ONS, 2020). In 2019, the three biggest minority groups living in the UK were from India, Poland and Pakistan (Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2020). In the UK, residents with an ethnic minority background often report experiencing discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity (Fernández-Reino, 2020b).

While some studies in the acculturation literature have shown that people can hold acculturation attitudes about minority members in general (e.g., Tip et al., 2012), there is variation in attitudes towards different minority groups, based on their origin (Ford, 2011) and other factors, e.g., whether they are perceived to be a drain or an asset (Savaş et al., 2021), or 'valued' or 'devalued' (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001). To be able to test generalisability of the hypothesised processes across different target groups, this study considered attitudes towards two minority groups in the UK: German and Pakistani minority members.

Pakistani people make up the third largest immigrant group in the UK, with substantial immigration following WWII. This means that not only are there a large number of non-UK born Pakistani people living in the UK, but also 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants (Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2020). This ethnic group also makes up a large proportion of the Muslim community in the UK, and they have often been subject to islamophobia and hate crime (Abbas, 2005, 2019; Ghaffar & Stevenson, 2018; Law et al., 2019). Past research into British majority members' perceptions of Pakistani minority members' acculturation preferences has found that British majority members find Pakistani minority members culture maintenance as threatening (Tip et al., 2012), and that how Pakistani minority members are

perceived to acculturate impacts British majority members' own preferences (Zagefka et al., 2012).

German born people are the 6th largest foreign born minority group (3%) currently settled in the UK (Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2020). This group is of interest as they are white just like white British majority members, with similar cultural values (Ford, 2011). Also, to our knowledge, no prior research on acculturation in the UK has looked specifically at German target groups. However, since Ford (2011) showed that historically immigration from Western Europe had less negative reactions than immigration from Asia, we wanted to explore whether the intergroup processes described in this study are specific to particular target groups or whether they may generalise.

Although often research in the acculturation field looks specifically at first generation 'immigrants' and the 'host' society, there is now research on different types of minority groups, e.g., indigenous groups or second-generation immigrants (Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Brown & Zagefka, 2011). We prefer to use the term 'minority member' over the term 'immigrant' when studying minority populations who might be seen to have a migration background but who might not necessarily have migrated anywhere themselves. In fact, calling a second or third generation immigrant an 'immigrant' might be offensive to some (Fernández-Reino, 2020b), which is why we were keen to use a more neutral label.

This Present Study

Overall, this study explored, among a sample of majority participants, whether a perceived desire on the part of minority members for heritage culture maintenance is negatively associated with perceived majority culture adoption, at different levels of perceived threat. We hypothesized that the association between perceived heritage culture maintenance and perceived majority culture adoption is moderated by perceptions of threat,

such that the more majority members perceive that Pakistani/German minority members want to maintain their own culture, the less they will perceive that Pakistani/German minority members want to adopt British culture, but under conditions of perceived threat. Conversely, when perceived threat is absent, we predicted that there would be no particular association between perceived culture maintenance and perceived culture adoption. This hypothesis was pre-registered on the OSF platform, and is available here: http://bit.ly/3r63Dpx. The open access data can be viewed here: http://bit.ly/37V9wOz.

Method

Participants

Participants were 145 women and 17 men (N=163; 1 participant reported their gender as being neither male nor female) who self-reported being white British. Participants were recruited from a pool of undergraduate students at a single university, using a research participation scheme. Participants were aged from 18 to 59 (M =19.42, SD = 3.42). Ethical approval was obtained by the university ethics committee, and all aspects of the research were in line with BPS and APA ethics guidelines. The number of participants was selected based on a G*Power a-priori power analysis (Faul et al., 2007). Based on small to medium effect sizes found in previous acculturation research in the UK (Tip et al., 2012), and aiming for a power of .8, we aimed for a minimum of 114 participants and a maximum of 200.

Design & Materials

This study was a cross-sectional survey study. Participants were provided with a link to an online survey on the Qualtrics website. To ensure that participants constituted the ethnic majority group in the UK, only participants who self-identified as white British completed the survey. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 ('*strongly disagree*') to 5 ('*strongly agree*'). The measures used in the current study are described below.

Perceptions of Minority Groups' Acculturation Preferences

Items were measured by six items each for both the Pakistani and German minority target groups, and were based loosely on measures from Zagefka and Brown (2002). Participants were asked about the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the following statement 'I think that [Pakistani/German] people in the UK want to…' and presented with three items for perceived culture maintenance, and three items for perceived culture adoption. For perceived heritage culture maintenance, the items were: 'speak their original language often', 'keep as much as possible their culture of origin' and 'maintain their own traditions'. For the questions relating to the Pakistani minority group, $\alpha = .74$, and for the questions relating to the German minority group, $\alpha = .68$. For perceived majority culture adoption, the items were: 'speak English often', 'take on as much as possible the British culture', and 'adopt British traditions'. For the questions relating to the Pakistani minority group, $\alpha = .70$, and for the questions relating to the German minority group, $\alpha = .62$.

Perceived Threat

Perceived threat was measured based on six items used by Velasco González et al. (2008) adapted to the UK context, tapping into both symbolic and realistic threats. Once again, the questions were asked in relation to both the Pakistani and German minority groups. Participants were presented with the following statement: 'Because of the presence of [Pakistani/German] people in the UK…' and were asked to report the extent to which they agree/disagree with the following items. For symbolic threat the items were: 'British identity is being threatened', 'British norms are being threatened' and 'British culture is being threatened'. For the questions relating to the Pakistani minority group, $\alpha = .92$, and for the questions relating to the German minority group, $\alpha = .94$. For realistic threat the items were: 'British people have more difficulties in finding a job', 'British people have more difficulties

in finding a house' and 'Unemployment in the UK will increase'. For the questions relating to the Pakistani minority group, $\alpha = .87$, and for the questions relating to the German minority group, $\alpha = .88$.

As well as the above measures, some demographic questions such as age and gender were included. Some other measures were also included but were not the focus of the current study and so will not be mentioned further. None of these measures were relevant to the present hypotheses, e.g., they are not alternative measurement approaches to tap into the same theoretical constructs.

Data Analysis

The hypotheses were analysed using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression-based path analysis using the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2017). This tool provides a simple way to test and interpret interactions. Model 1 from the macro was used in this study, and continuous variables were mean centred prior to analysis. To interpret any potential interactions, simple slope analysis was conducted (Aiken et al., 1991) at the 16th, 50th and 84th percentiles as recommended by Hayes (2017).

Results

Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations between measures for both Pakistani and German target groups are presented in Table 4.3, along with some exploratory comparisons of the German and Pakistani target groups on the variables included in this study.

Table 4.3

Bivariate Correlations, Means and Mean Differences for Both German and Pakistani Targets

Groups

Variable	Pakistani Minority Mean	Pakistani Minority SD	German Minority Mean	German Minority SD	F(1,162)	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Perceived Culture Maintenance	3.87	0.51	3.55	0.56	41.12**	-	-.18*	.07	.09
2. Perceived Culture Adoption	3.05	0.65	3.30	0.55	21.66**	-.20*	-	-.30**	-.11
3. Symbolic Threat	1.88	0.89	1.76	0.80	6.58**	.04	-.16*	-	.59**
4. Realistic Threat	2.10	0.99	2.10	1.01	.06	.10	-.09	.61**	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. SD = standard deviation. Correlation coefficients above the

diagonal relate to the Pakistani outgroup, and values below the diagonal relate to the German

outgroup. F-scores relate to an exploratory repeated measures ANOVA conducted to test

mean differences between the two minority targets on all variables.

Factor Analysis of Threat Items

First, factor analyses were conducted on the items relating to perceived threat. One

analysis included all threat items pertaining to the German target group, and the other

analysis included all threat items pertaining to the Pakistani target group. The purpose of this

analysis was to decide whether to treat symbolic and realistic threat as separate constructs, or

whether to combine them into an overall measure of threat. Given some previous research has

suggested that symbolic and realistic threat can be treated as one single measure of threat in

research related to immigration (Tip et al., 2012; Verkuyten, 2009), we had no strict prior

predictions on how the items in this study would load. We used Principal Components

Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation.

For items relating to the Pakistani minority group, two factors emerged. The first factor had an eigenvalue of 4.00 and explained 66.69% of the variance. The three items relating to symbolic threat loaded strongly onto this factor, with factor loadings ranging from .83 to .92. The second factor had an eigenvalue of 1.03 and explained 17.15% of the variance. The three items relating to realistic threat loaded strongly onto this factor .84 to .86.

For the second factor analysis that included items relating to the German target group, again, two factors emerged. The first factor had an eigenvalue of 4.13 and explained 68.78% of the variance. The three items relating to symbolic threat loaded strongly onto this factor, with factor loadings ranging from .85 to .93. The second factor had an eigenvalue of 1.01 and explained 16.85% of the variance. The three items relating to realistic threat loaded strongly onto this factor .82 to .88. There were no cross-loadings over the common threshold of .4 for any of the items. Given that for both target groups two clearly distinct factors emerged for type of threat, in subsequent analyses symbolic and realistic threat were treated as separate constructs.
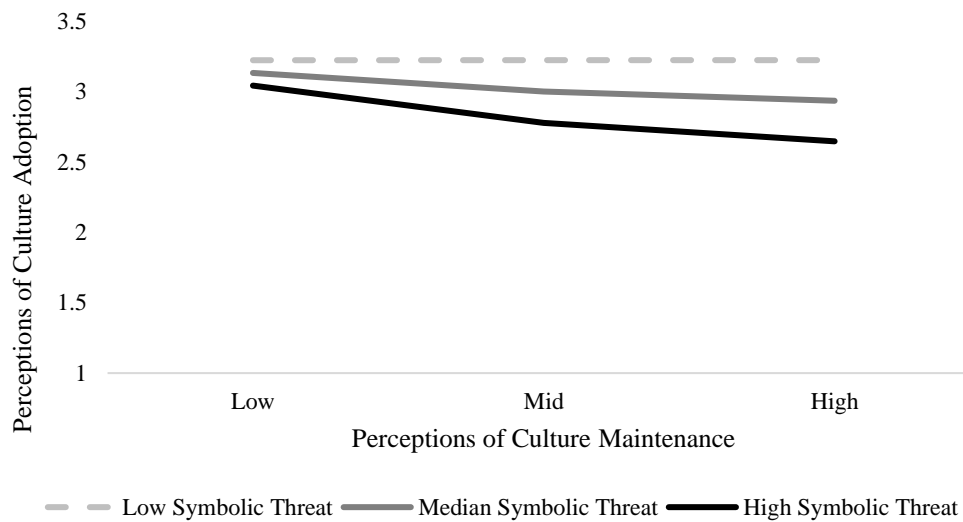
Perceived Threat as a Moderator

Four models were tested with Hayes' (2017) PROCESS Macro on SPSS, using Model 1. Analyses were conducted separately for the two different minority target groups, and separately for each type of threat.

Pakistani outgroup, symbolic threat. First, the responses for the Pakistani outgroup were analysed, using symbolic threat as the moderator. Perceived culture maintenance was entered as the predictor variable, perceived culture adoption was entered as the outcome variable, and symbolic threat was entered as the moderator. The model was significant, F (3, 159) = 8.86, R^2 = .14, $p < .001$. Perceived culture maintenance was not a significant predictor of perceived culture adoption ($B = -.17$, $t = -1.83$, $p = .07$, $SE = .09$), symbolic threat was a

significant negative predictor of perceived culture adoption (B = -.20, t = -3.63, $p < .001$, SE = .05), and the interaction between perceived culture maintenance and symbolic threat was a significant predictor of perceived culture adoption (B = -.20, t = -2.34, p = .02, SE = .08) indicating that a moderation effect was present. In line with the preregistered hypothesis, at low levels of symbolic threat perceived culture maintenance was not a significant predictor of perceived culture adoption (B = .007, t = .06, p = .996, SE = .13), but at the median (B = -.20, t = -2.11, p = .04, SE = .09) and at high levels of symbolic threat (B = -.40, t = -3.17, p = .002, SE = .12), perceived culture maintenance predicted less perceived culture adoption (see Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4

The Relationship Between Perceptions of Minority Culture Maintenance and Perceptions of Majority Culture Adoption at Different Levels of Symbolic Threat for the Pakistani Outgroup

Pakistani outgroup, realistic threat. The second model tested realistic threat as a moderator for the Pakistani outgroup. This model was also significant, $F (3, 159) = 4.32$, $R^2 =$ .08, $p = .01$. Perceived culture maintenance was not a significant predictor of perceived culture adoption ($B = -.19$, $t = -1.92$, $p = .06$, $SE = .10$), and perceived realistic threat was not a significant predictor of perceived culture adoption ($B = -.07$, $t = -1.24$, $p = .22$, $SE = .05$). However, the interaction between perceived culture maintenance and realistic threat was a significant predictor of perceived culture adoption ($B = -.23$, $t = -2.44$, $p = .02$, $SE = .09$), indicating that a moderation effect was present. At low ($B = .07$, $t = .44$, $p = .66$, $SE = .15$) and median levels of realistic threat ($B = -.16$, $t = -1.58$, $p = .12$, $SE = .10$), perceived culture maintenance was not a significant predictor of perceived culture adoption. However, at high levels of realistic threat ($B = -.44$, $t = -3.31$, $p = .001$, $SE = .13$), in line with the preregistered hypothesis perceived culture maintenance predicted less perceived culture adoption (see Figure 4.5).[1]

Figure 4.5

The Relationship Between Perceptions of Minority Culture Maintenance and Perceptions of Majority Culture Adoption at Different Levels of Realistic Threat for the Pakistani Outgroup
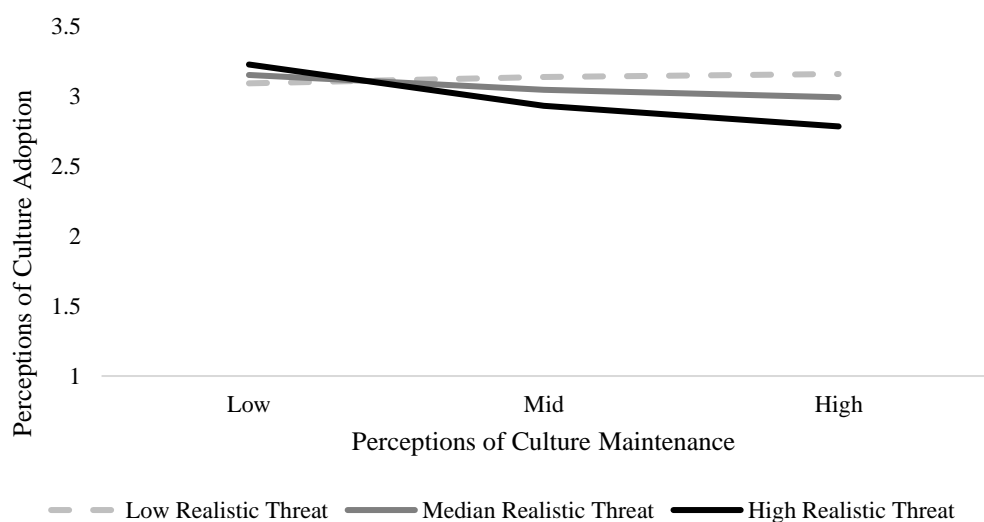
German outgroup, symbolic threat. Next, items relating to the German outgroup were tested. The first model tested moderation by symbolic threat. This model was significant, F (3, 159) = 3.51, R^2 = .06, $p < .02$. Perceived culture maintenance was a significant negative predictor of perceived culture adoption (B = -.18, t = -2.34, p = .02, SE = .08), symbolic threat was a significant negative predictor of perceived culture adoption (B = -.11, t = -2.00, p = .05, SE = .05), but contrary to the hypothesis, the interaction between perceived culture maintenance and symbolic threat was not a significant predictor of perceived culture adoption (B = .03, t = .27, p = .79, SE = .10), indicating that no moderation effect was present.

German outgroup, realistic threat. Furthermore, the second model on the German target group with realistic threat as a moderator was not significant, F (3, 159) = 2.45, R^2 = .04, p = .07. Perceived culture maintenance was a significant negative predictor of perceived culture adoption (B = -.19, t = -2.40, p = .02, SE = .08), but realistic threat was not a significant predictor of perceived culture adoption (B = -.04, t = -.97, p = .33, SE = .04). Finally, the interaction between perceived culture maintenance and realistic threat was not significant (B = .001, t = .01, p = .99, SE = .07), indicating no moderation effect was present.

Discussion

This paper investigated whether majority members think that minority members want to maintain their heritage culture at the same time as also adopting the majority culture, or whether there is a perception that participation in the minority culture might hinder a desire among minority members to adopt the majority culture. In this study, perceived threat was studied as a potential moderator of the relationship between perceived culture maintenance and perceived culture adoption. Results were in line with the preregistered hypotheses in relation to the Pakistani minority group. When participants perceived higher levels of threat from the Pakistani target group, perceived heritage culture maintenance was associated with less perceived majority culture adoption. This finding emerged consistently for both symbolic

and realistic types of threat. The findings are important as they show that majority members may doubt the integration intentions of Pakistani minority members, if majority members perceive that Pakistani people are a threat to British culture.

These findings extend the existing acculturation literature in some important ways. First, they support previous research showing that majority members of a society who perceive Muslim minority members as threatening are more likely to harbour doubts over how minority members intend to acculturate in the majority society (Croucher, 2013). The present findings also build on previous research on perceptions of compatibility of heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption conducted in Belgium with a Muslim minority group (Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011b). This present study investigated the perceived compatibility of culture maintenance and adoption in a novel cultural context, that of the UK, and with two novel minority groups, Pakistanis and Germans. The findings also build on previous work showing that preferences for simultaneous culture maintenance and culture adoption preference are attenuated by third factors (Moftizadeh et al., 2021). The present study goes beyond these previous findings in demonstrating that whether majority members *perceive* minority members' acculturation preferences to be compatible also depend on third factors.

In this study, threat emerged as a significant moderator of the culture maintenance – culture adoption relationship for only the Pakistani target group but not for the German target group, although overall for both groups the direct association between perceived culture maintenance desire and perceived culture adoption desire was weakly to moderately negative (around -.20), which could be argued to point to an incompatibility between perceived culture maintenance and perceived culture adoption for both target groups. Our findings however, highlight the possibility that such a perception of incompatibility might depend on threat for the Pakistani group, but not for the German target group. It is possible that the effect is

further dependent, at higher level, by yet other variables such as perceived cultural similarity or familiarity with the outgroup. Recall that the prediction was that perceived threat would be associated with minority members being perceived in more dichotomous, simplified and categorical terms, rendering an appreciation that people can belong to more than one group or cultures less likely and fostering an 'either-or' mindset. From interpersonal research we know that familiarity with a target makes it more likely that the target will be perceived in more nuanced terms. For example, an established fact is that people are less likely to fall prey to the fundamental attribution bias when it comes to explaining their own behaviour compared to explaining other people's behaviours, because they have greater insights into their own personal circumstances (Ross, 1977). It is possible that the white British participants were (or at least felt) more familiar with German minority members compared to Pakistani minority members, possibly because of greater perceived cultural similarity with that group. In fact, examining the mean differences between the target groups suggests that British majority members perceive that German minority members are less threatening, want to maintain their culture less, and adopt the British culture more, which may be due to more familiarity with this group as opposed to the Pakistani target group. Therefore, it is possible that greater perceived familiarity with an outgroup target overrides the moderating effect of threat on the culture maintenance – culture adoption relationship. It should be acknowledged, however, that these are post-hoc explanations and that evidence would need to be collected to substantiate the idea that the two outgroups differ from each other in terms of perceived cultural similarity or familiarity. Future research could follow up the different patterns found for the Pakistani and German outgroups, and test whether perceived cultural similarity or perceived familiarity with the outgroup plays a role.

One thing this divergent pattern does underscore quite clearly is that it is important to consider different minority groups separately, rather than measure attitudes towards 'ethnic

minority members' in general. This is clearly important, because the psychological processes seem to differ with regard to different minority groups. In this sense, the present findings confirm, and add further weight to, previous contributions which have emphasised the importance of looking at specific minority groups rather than global categories, because there are substantial differences between groups on important dimensions such as the extent to which they are valued (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001) and the extent to which they are seen as a burden or asset (Savaş et al., 2021).

In fact, much of the research on perceptions of acculturation preferences in the past has been conducted with salient minority groups, for instance Muslims living in Western Europe. On the back of our divergent findings, we suggest that future research on intergroup perspectives to acculturation and cultural identity should consider more closely a range of different minority groups, including those that may be seen to be racially and culturally more similar to the majority society. Doing so may shed more light on majority members' reactions to how a wide range of different minority groups acculturate, and the particular drivers behind specific negative attitudes.

Of course, some important limitations of the design used for this present study have to be considered. Firstly, although we were theoretically interested in how perceived culture maintenance is associated with perceived culture adoption, this study was correlational in nature and therefore no causal or directional conclusions can be made. It may be that threat described here as a moderator may also be an outcome variable of particular acculturation perceptions. Therefore, future studies should consider studying compatibility of outgroup acculturation perceptions with experimental manipulations, and moderation via perceived threat within such a design. As well as this, future longitudinal studies exploring how the association between perceived heritage culture maintenance and perceived culture adoption

might change over time; whether this is related to changes in perceptions of intergroup threat would also represent an important advancement in this area.

A further limitation of the study design concerns the acculturation measures used in this present study. Like much of the previous research in the acculturation field (e.g., Tip et al., 2012; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011b; Zagefka et al., 2012; Zagefka & Brown, 2002), the acculturation measures used here captured *overall* acculturation attitudes. However, acculturation preferences might differ depending on context, e.g., for behaviour that is displayed in public and for behaviour that happens in the privacy of one's home (Navas et al., 2005). Moreover, the reliability of the acculturation scales used here were at the lower end of the acceptable range, particularly for the German target group. To our knowledge, the acculturation of Germans in the UK has not previously been investigated. The domains used in this study (traditions, language and culture of origin) may not cluster together as well as for some other minority groups. One reason could be the generally very high English language competence of Germans, which might make this group stand apart from some other minority groups. Indeed, this calls for more comprehensive measures that capture a wider range of domains (e.g., Navas et al., 2005), as such measures might better capture attitudes towards acculturation across various contexts. Going even further than this, qualitative explorations of a particular culture prior to devising a questionnaire can inform the selection of domains to study (e.g., Haugen & Kunst, 2017). This may be useful when studying new target groups. Similarly, some scholars have called for more qualitative explorations of acculturation, in order to better capture a full picture of what is considered a complex and non-uniform phenomenon (Ozer, 2013). Future research in this area should consider such approaches to further enhance understanding of the processes involved in acculturation.

Further, another limitation of the present study concerns the sample that was used. Participants were all recruited from the same university and were mostly female psychology

undergraduates. Therefore, future research should consider more representative samples, perhaps from online platforms (Palan & Schitter, 2018), which could allow access to somewhat more diverse populations. As well as this, some important variables were overlooked in this study, for example the effect of socio-economic status, and existing levels of prejudice – such variables should be considered in future studies.

Another interesting avenue to explore in future research concerns whether identity/culture is essentialised and how this might impact how people think about integrating two different cultures. It may be that majority members' perceptions that minority members wish not to combine their heritage culture with endorsement of the mainstream culture is associated with essentialised representations of identity. Past research has shown that essentialist perceptions of identity may make integration more difficult (Moftizadeh et al., 2021; Verkuyten, 2003; Zagefka et al., 2013). A further interesting question for future exploration would be to probe more specifically, also among minority participants, the distinction between having 'low desire' for culture maintenance/adoption, and 'no desire' for it. It is possible that not caring much about (low desire) something might have quite different consequences to actively rejecting it (no desire). Future research could clarify this distinction further. Finally, another interesting question would be whether the processes replicate in intergroup contexts other than that of the UK. Given that differences were found between the same majority group's views of two different minorities, it stands to reason that differences might also emerge between different majority groups, in different countries.

The findings in this paper are important, as they may have some applied implications for practitioners and policy makers. If majority members have preconceptions over how minority members might choose to acculturate – particularly driven by intergroup threat, then it is important to target heightened perceptions of threat to bypass the potential damaging consequences of such perceptions on intergroup relations. In actual fact, since government

policy is particularly important in shaping acculturation preferences of both minority and majority members in society (Bourhis et al., 1997), sometimes policy and/or media platforms can perpetuate a dualist perspective of majority and minority cultures through discourse, for example by using the term integration to actually refer to assimilation (Bowskill et al., 2007; Lewis & Neal, 2005). Departing from this can be a good starting point in encouraging more compatible perceptions of minority and majority cultures. Additionally, encouraging a common ingroup identity (Dovidio et al., 2007; Kunst et al., 2015), or a 'civic' rather than an 'essentialist' based identity (Pehrson et al., 2009; Reijerse et al., 2015) through policy can have positive implications for minority integration into the wider society (Reijerse et al., 2015).

To conclude, this present study shows that pre-existing beliefs about whether a particular ethnic minority group is threatening is associated with the extent to which minority members are perceived to want to simultaneously maintain their own culture and adopt aspects of the majority culture. However, this only seems to be true for some minority target groups, and further research will need to explore the nuances of this pattern. Of course, perceptions of threat, and indeed perceptions of acculturation preferences, may not reflect reality. Therefore, any society seeking to encourage integration of minority members, and harmonious intergroup relations in society, may need to go beyond just the minority group and consider the intergroup nature of acculturation attitudes. Reducing majority groups' inaccurate or stereotypical perceptions of acculturation attitudes can go a long way to improving relations.

Footnotes

[1] When including age as an additional control variable in the analyses, this did not substantially change the pattern of the pre-registered interaction. No other unreported control variables were included in the analyses presented.

Chapter 5: Exploring intergroup processes of culture change from the perspective of the majority group

5.1 Paper 3: Exploring the intergroup consequences of majority members' perceptions that minority members want majority members to adopt the minority culture

Abstract

There remains an obvious gap in the acculturation literature, which relates to cultural change associated with the majority/dominant group. This paper explores how majority members react to a perceived expectation from minority members that *majority members* should undergo cultural change. A study was conducted exploring how majority members' perceptions of a demand by minority members that the majority should adopt the minority culture affects the majority members' preferences for minority acculturation, and whether effects are mediated by perceptions of symbolic threat. Two hundred and sixty-six participants who self-reported being white British completed an online survey. A model was hypothesized whereby a perception that minority members demand that the majority takes on the minority culture predicted perceived symbolic threat, which was in turn negatively associated with a desire that minority members should maintain the minority culture, and positively with a desire that minority members should adopt the majority culture. Results supported the hypothesized model, with all individual paths and indirect effects significant in the hypothesized directions. Symbolic threat mediated the effect of perceived demand for minority culture adoption on majority preferences for minority acculturation. Findings are discussed in relation to implications for intergroup relations in culturally plural societies.

Keywords: acculturation, culture change, symbolic threat, culture maintenance, culture adoption

Introduction

Due to global migration, many societies are now multicultural. It is important to consider the implications of such cultural change, and the consequences for how different groups interact. The psychology of acculturation and intergroup relations can provide a useful framework to understand the barriers to establishing a harmonious multicultural society, and the antecedents of particular attitudes which may create such barriers. This study follows previous acculturation research (López-Rodríguez et al., 2014; Zagefka et al., 2012) by testing antecedents of majority members' acculturation preferences. In particular, this paper investigates how majority members might react when they perceive that minority members want majority members to adopt the minority culture.

People who migrate to another country undergo a process of change and adaptation labelled acculturation, whilst members of the majority society also adapt to the changes in society (Redfield et al., 1936). According to Berry (1997), two fundamental dimensions underlie the acculturation process. These are the desire for heritage culture maintenance and desire for intergroup contact. In subsequent models, the dimension 'desire for culture adoption' was preferred to 'desire for intergroup contact' (Bourhis et al., 1997). These dimensions can combine to make up four acculturation strategies which detail how minority members adapt to the majority society, but also how majority members want minority members to adapt (Bourhis et al., 1997). The four strategies are 1) integration, where there is a preference for heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption, 2) assimilation, where there is a preference for majority culture adoption but no heritage culture maintenance, 3) separation (from the perspective of the minority group)/segregation (from the perspective of the majority group) , where there is a preference for heritage culture maintenance but no majority culture adoption, and finally 4) marginalisation (from the perspective of the minority group)/exclusion (from the perspective of the majority group), where this is no preference for

either heritage culture maintenance or majority culture adoption. It has been consistently

shown that integration has the best adaptation outcomes, e.g., well-being, for minority

members (Berry, 1997; Berry et al., 2006).

Acculturation and Intergroup Relations

Importantly, acculturation is central to intergroup relations (Brown & Zagefka, 2011).

The social identity perspective suggests that members of dominant and non-dominant groups

are likely to behave in ways to preserve the best interests of their groups, enhance collective

self-esteem and seek positive distinctiveness (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In cases where group

members perceive threat or discrimination to their group or identity, they are likely to show

compensatory responses, for example increased ingroup identification (Branscombe et al.,

1999). Related to acculturation then, minority and majority members are likely to hold

acculturation preferences that they perceive to be best suited to serve the interests of their

group. Accordingly, minority members are more likely to prefer multiculturalism as it allows

them to maintain and protect their heritage culture, whilst also obtaining a higher social status

in society (Verkuyten, 2007). In contrast, majority members may see any form of minority

culture maintenance as a threat to the status and dominance of the majority group, and

therefore endorse assimilation strategies as a way of alleviating such threat (Verkuyten,

2007). This is supported by studies across Europe showing that minority members generally

prefer integration (Berry et al., 2006), whilst majority members prefer that minority members

assimilate to the majority culture (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998).

Furthermore, researchers have argued that acculturation preferences are not

independent of each other, and should be studied as a dynamic intergroup process (Bourhis et

al., 1997; Brown & Zagefka, 2011). In their model of acculturation, Bourhis et al. (1997)

argue that how well acculturation orientations 'fit' together has consequences for the

relations between those groups. If minority members strive for culture maintenance, but

majority members seek majority culture adoption only, 'problematic' or 'conflictual'

intergroup relations are likely (Bourhis et al., 1997). Therefore, it is not just the ingroups'

own preferences that are important to consider, but also the *perceptions* of outgroup

acculturation preferences. Majority members tend to evaluate minority members who seek to

maintain their heritage culture more negatively (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998). In addition,

some studies have shown that perceptions of minority acculturation preferences can impact

majority members' own acculturation preferences, and support for multiculturalism (Tip et

al., 2012; Zagefka et al., 2012).

Mediating Role of Symbolic Threat

When studying why perceptions of particular acculturation attitudes can foster

negative reactions in majority members, the integrated threat theory is helpful (Stephan et al.,

1998). According to this framework, negative attitudes towards an outgroup stem from

various types of threat. One such threat, symbolic threat, relates to a perception from ingroup

members that their system of values, morals and beliefs is being undermined by a particular

outgroup. Of course, as a result of mass immigration and globalisation, many societies now

comprise many groups with a plethora of different value systems. Ethnic and cultural groups

with different worldviews to the dominant majority may be seen as a threat to the majority's

way of life and cultural identity, leading to negative attitudes and prejudice towards the

minority outgroup. Studies have shown that perceived threats to ingroup values by

immigrants and minorities are related to more negative attitudes towards these groups (e.g.,

Stephan et al., 1998; Velasco Gonzalez et al., 2008).

Because certain acculturation orientations suggest a strong commitment by minority

members to their distinct cultural values, norms and cultural practices, they can result in

perceived threat. In line with this, Tip et al. (2012) found that when majority members

perceived higher levels of culture maintenance, they showed less support for

multiculturalism, and the effect was mediated by perceived identity threat. In addition, a perception that minority members desire contact with majority members, or wish to adopt the majority culture, was positively related to support for multiculturalism, and these effects were also mediated by perceived identity threat. As well as this, when majority members perceive that minority members do not seek intergroup contact, they show more negative intergroup attitudes, and this effect was again found to be mediated by symbolic threat (Matera et al., 2015). Finally, López-Rodríguez et al. (2014) studied majority members' acculturation preferences and showed that a perception that minority members adopt the majority culture leads to more positive stereotypes about minority members, which in turn reduces perceived threat. Perceived threat, in turn, was shown to be associated positively with preference for minority members to adopt the majority culture, and negatively with a preference for minority members to maintain their heritage culture. In sum, the above findings show that perceptions of particular acculturation orientations can elicit particular responses in majority members, due to perceptions of symbolic threat.

Majority Culture Change

As highlighted, studies have attempted to model and explore minority acculturation orientations, and how these orientations impact intergroup relations (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). However, there remains an obvious gap in the acculturation literature which relates to cultural change associated with the majority/dominant group. Much of the focus has been on minority groups: how they acculturate in the dominant society, and how majority members may want them to act. Going forward, an important question to address relates to the extent to which *majority members* perceive or go through culture change *themselves*, and how this may impact intergroup relations. Redfield et al.'s (1936) classic definition of acculturation very clearly highlights cultural change in *both* groups that come into contact with one another. It is surprising, then, that this bidirectional aspect has been almost entirely

overlooked in the decades of acculturation research that have bloomed since then. It is therefore an urgent matter for further investigation to address this gap in research, and study potential culture change within the majority group.

To our knowledge, only few studies have explored opinions regarding culture change of the majority group (e.g., see Haugen & Kunst, 2017; Lefringhausen & Marshall, 2016, for some examples). One study showed evidence that majority culture change is also underpinned by the same two acculturation dimensions: a desire for majority culture maintenance, and a desire for immigrant culture adoption (Haugen & Kunst, 2017). However, these studies reviewed above investigated majority members' ideas and attitudes about culture change in the majority group. In this contribution, what will be highlighted is not actual culture change or culture change that the majority group themselves wish to undergo, but *perceptions* by majority members that minority members want the majority culture to change. In particular, this study explores the dimension of perceived demand for minority culture adoption from the point of view of majority members. It is important to distinguish between this variable and symbolic threat. These are conceptually independent variables. The former pertains to the metacognitions of acculturation preferences regarding the majority culture, whereas the latter directly addresses whether ethnic minorities are seen as a threat to the majority group.

Relevant to this is research on cultural change through a 'culture inertia' lens. This research suggests that individuals seek stability in their identity and cultures and will react with resistance to change or perceived change (Zárate et al., 2012). For members of majority groups, assimilation of the minority implies that majority members will be able to maintain their norms, values and customs without the need to change in order to accommodate other groups. Any perception from majority groups that culture change is occurring may lead to intergroup prejudice (Zárate et al., 2012). Moreover, fears that minority groups aim to change

the essential character of a certain homeland are frequently stoked by right wing political groupings, and some media outlets. An example of this is a fear that certain groups aim to build a 'state within a state' (e.g., by answering to Sharia law rather than national law) with the goal of eventually imposing those rules on the majority group also (Hall, 2016). Beliefs in majority members that minority members demand culture change from majority members have not been studied, and the present research will therefore address this important gap.

It is worth noting that in this study, the term minority member encompasses both immigrants, and citizens from an ethnic minority background. Although it is important to distinguish between the two, we sought to explore intergroup relations with majority members by considering both minority groups as non-dominant groups in the UK, compared to white British majority members. This is because research on the acculturation framework has also been applied to indigenous minority groups, as well as immigrants (see Brown & Zagefka, 2011 for a review). Also, second generation immigrants may still perceive discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity (Fernández-Reino, 2020b).

Overall, this present study explores how perceptions of a demand by minority members that the majority should pursue minority culture adoption will be associated with majority members' perceptions of threat and own acculturation preferences. Based on the literature reviewed above, it was hypothesized that a perception by majority members that minority members demand that the majority should adopt the minority culture would lead to perceived symbolic identity threat. In turn, perceived threat was expected to decrease support for the idea that the minority group should maintain their original culture, and it should increase demands that the minority group should adopt the majority culture. A path model was hypothesized where perceived demand for majority members to adopt the minority culture predicts greater symbolic threat among majority participants, which in turn predicts

greater desire for minority members to adopt the majority culture, and less desire that minority members maintain their heritage culture.

The processes described above are expected to be generic, but in this investigation we tested them in the British cultural context. About 14% of the UK population is foreign born, with additional sections of the population being 2nd generation immigrants who were born in the UK but whose parents hail from elsewhere (Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2020). In 2019, the three biggest minority groups living in the UK were from India, Poland and Pakistan, respectively (Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2020). There has been much discussion on the issue of immigration and discrimination of minority members (Fernández-Reino, 2020a, 2020b). Therefore, there is an increasing need to further understand the nature of intergroup relations in the UK.

Method

Participants

Participants were 186 females and 76 males, recruited online from Prolific.ac ($N = 266$; 4 participants reported their gender as being neither male nor female). Participants were aged from 18 to 75 ($M = 35.57$, $SD = 13.13$). To ensure that participants constituted the ethnic majority group in the UK, pre-screening ensured that all participants included in the study had self-reported their current place of residence, and most time spent before the age of 18, as the United Kingdom, and their ethnicity as white British. Participants received £0.50 for their participation. Ethical approval was obtained by the university ethics committee, and all aspects of the research were in line with BPS and APA ethics guidelines. The number of participants was selected based on the recommendation that models with a moderate amount of parameters are typically stable around $N = 200$ (Kline, 2016).

Design and Materials

This study was a cross-sectional online survey study. All items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree'). The measures used in the current study are highlighted below.

Perceived demand for majority members to adopt the minority culture

A number of previous studies on acculturation from an intergroup perspective measured acculturation attitudes in quite general terms (e.g., Tip et al., 2012; Zagefka et al., 2012). In an attempt to use a broader and potentially more informative measure, this present study assessed acculturation attitudes in six specific domains: work, education, language, social relations, family life, and values (Navas et al., 2005).

Participants were asked about the extent to which they agree/disagree with the statement 'Ethnic minority members living in the UK want us to adopt their culture in the following parts of life…' and the six domains listed above were presented, $\alpha = .93$.

Symbolic threat

Symbolic threat was measured based on three items used by Velasco González et al. (2008) adapted to the UK context. Participants were presented with the following statement 'Because of the presence of ethnic minorities in the UK…' and were asked to report the extent to which they agree/disagree with the following items 'British identity is being threatened', 'British norms are being threatened' and 'British culture is being threatened', $\alpha = .97$.

Majority members' preferences for minority members to maintain the minority culture

Participants reported the extent to which they agree/disagree with the statement 'I would like ethnic minority members living in the UK to keep their culture of origin in the following parts of life...' and were presented with six acculturation domains as before, $\alpha = .89$.

Majority members' preferences for minority members to adopt the majority culture

For culture adoption preference, the statement read 'I would like ethnic minority members living in the UK to take on the British culture in the following parts of life…' and the same six domains as above were presented, α = .85.

As well as the above measures, some demographic questions such as age, gender and ethnic group (to confirm that the pre-screening was successful) were included. Some other measures were also included but were not the focus of the current study and so will not be mentioned further. The data for the study presented in this paper is available on the OSF platform with this link: http://bit.ly/3bph8LS.

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

Means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations of all variables are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations across variables

	Means	SD	1	2	3
1. Perceived demand that majority members adopt the minority culture	2.66	0.77	-		
2. Perceived symbolic threat	2.14	1.07	.17**	-	
3. Majority members' preferences for minority members to maintain the minority culture	3.46	0.71	.03	-.37**	-
4. Majority members' preferences for minority members to adopt the majority culture	3.33	0.66	.17**	.33**	-.08

*Note.* * significant at *p* < .05, **significant at *p* < .01

First, principal components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was conducted for perceived demand for majority members to adopt the minority culture adoption, majority members' preferences for minority members to maintain the minority culture and majority members' preferences for minority members to adopt the majority culture. The goal was to see if separate factors would emerge for public and private domains, given the suggestion in the literature that this might be an important distinction, and the debate around which spheres belong to each type (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006; Haugen & Kunst, 2017; Navas et al., 2005). In each of the analyses, only one factor emerged. For 'perceived demand for majority members to adopt the minority culture', the factor had an eigenvalue of 4.43 and explained 73.78% of the variance, and factor loadings ranged from .81 to .90. For 'majority members' preferences for minority members to maintain the minority culture', the factor had an eigenvalue of 3.94 and explained 65.63% of the variance, and factor loadings ranged from .75 to .87. For 'majority members' preferences for minority members to adopt the majority culture', the factor had an eigenvalue of 3.50 and explained 58.29% of the variance, and factor loadings ranged from .68 to .83. These results suggest that attitudes are similar across public and private domains, and hence acculturation indices were calculated averaging across all items, rather than for public and private domains separately.

To test the hypothesized path model, SPSS AMOS 25 was utilised. In the hypothesized model, perceived demand for majority members to adopt the minority culture was specified as a predictor of symbolic threat, which in turn was specified as a predictor of both majority members' preferences for minority members to maintain the minority culture and majority members' preferences for minority members to adopt the majority culture. The hypothesized model provided good fit for the data, as shown by the non-significant chi-squared test, $\chi^2 (3) = 6.74$, $p = .081$, and other indices of model fit: RMSEA = .07, CFI = .95,

SRMR = .05. Kline (2016) recommends reporting these indices when assessing model fit,

with an RMSEA value lower than .08, CFI greater than .90, and SRMR value lower than .08

commonly used as thresholds for model fit (Hooper et al., 2008). All individual paths were

significant, in the hypothesized directions (see Figure 5.1). Perceived demand for majority

members to adopt the minority culture was positively associated with perceived symbolic

threat (β =.23, t = 2.77, p = .006, 95% CI [.05, .43]), and symbolic threat was a significant

positive predictor of majority members' preferences for minority members to adopt the

majority culture (β = .20, t = 5.68, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.14, .27]), and a significant negative

predictor of majority members' preferences for minority members to maintain the minority

culture (β = -.24, t = -6.49, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-.32, -.17]).

Figure 5.1

Path Model With Unstandardized Path Coefficients

Note. * significant at $p < .01$, ** significant at $p < .001$
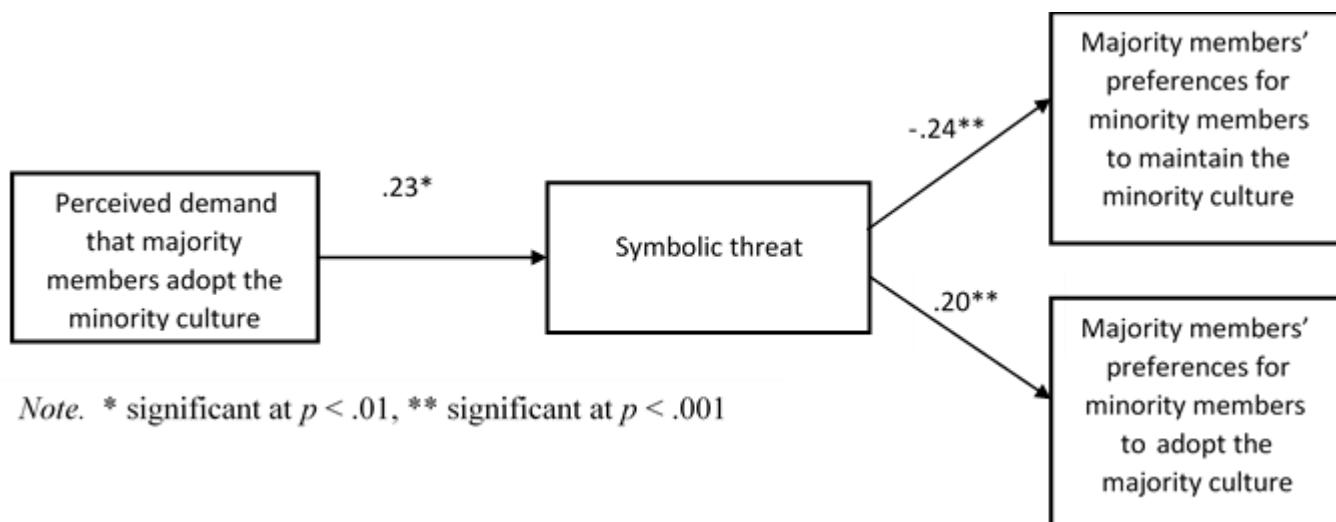
The hypothesized indirect effect was tested using 5,000 bootstrapping samples, at

95% bias corrected confidence intervals. Perceived demand for majority members to adopt

the minority culture had a significant indirect effect on both majority members' preferences

for minority members to maintain the minority culture, -.06, 95% CI [-.11, -.01], and majority

members' preferences for minority members to adopt the majority culture, .05, 95% CI [.01,

.10].

Discussion

This study explored the extent to which majority members perceive that minority members want them to adopt the minority culture, and how this relates to perceptions of symbolic threat, and majority members' own acculturation preferences for minority members. Findings showed that a perception by majority members that minority members demand culture change of the majority group was associated with greater feelings of symbolic threat, and therefore a greater desire that minority members adopt British culture, and less of a desire that minority members maintain their own culture.

These findings add to the existing literature on the relationship between perceived outgroup acculturation preferences and own acculturation preferences (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). In addition, this is the first study to suggest that majority members' own acculturation attitudes are not only associated with how minority members choose to navigate their own cultures, but also with perceptions that minority members want culture change from majority members themselves. These findings can be understood from an intergroup lens, using the social identity and intergroup threat frameworks (Stephan et al., 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Majority members are motivated to defend their identity and maintain dominance in society, and as a result may find multiculturalism a threat to their identity (Verkuyten, 2007). Therefore, any perceptions that minority members seek some sort of majority culture change in the majority society can be considered as a threat to the majority culture. As a result, majority members are likely to react in ways designed to defend their identity, i.e showing a greater desire for majority culture adoption and less minority culture maintenance from minority members, as this study shows.

Of course, a number of limitations of this study must be considered. First, this present study was correlational in nature, and therefore causal inferences cannot be drawn from this study. Future experimental or longitudinal research would represent an important

advancement on the current findings. In addition, we did not control for existing levels of prejudice in this present study, and future research in this area should account for this, due to the potential relationship between prejudice and majority members' acculturation attitudes (Zagefka et al., 2012).

Another limitation to consider is that this study focused only on the perceived demand for majority members to adopt the minority culture. Future research should consider studying the parallel dimension of perceived demand for majority members to maintain their national culture to build a more complete picture of the intergroup processes involved when considering culture change from the majority perspective. As well as this, it may also be of interest to test intergroup contact to see if the effects found here apply to this acculturation dimension.

Further, the sample in this study was obtained online, using the platform Prolific.ac. There have been concerns in the past regarding such online crowdsourcing platforms (Chmielewski & Kucker, 2019). However, Prolific.ac has been shown to be superior to other online platforms in terms of data quality and diversity of participants (Palan & Schitter, 2018). Nevertheless, the lack of control over the sample obtained may raise issues related to generalizability, and this should be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

Another point of discussion relates to the methods used in the study. This study relied solely on quantitative data obtained through surveys, in line with most previous studies in the field of acculturation. However, acculturation is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, and reducing it to a single measurable variable can be considered problematic (Ozer, 2013). In particular, although this present study attempts to cover a range of different acculturation domains, each domain was still only measured by a single survey item. Therefore, future research could consider mixed method approaches when studying acculturation to overcome

this limitation and allow for more in-depth understanding of how people think about and understand these concepts.

Finally, this study shows that future research further considering majority culture change is beneficial to an understanding of acculturation and intergroup relations. Future research should consider particular individual or group level moderators of the effects found in this present study. For example, political orientation might be a variable of interest when considering attitudes towards majority culture change. Further, this study conceptualized the outgroup at a more abstract level, i.e. using the term 'minority member' more generally. Although previous studies have shown that particular acculturation attitudes may generalize to minority members in general (e.g. Tip et al., 2012), some minority groups are evaluated more negatively than others (Ford, 2011). Therefore, future research should focus on examining how the attitudes found in this paper might differ for particular minority groups.

Importantly, findings from this study have some important implications for intergroup relations in multicultural societies. Studies on majority culture change have shown that majority members who adopt aspects of minority culture show more positive adaptation responses (Haugen & Kunst, 2017), therefore, it is important to focus interventions on altering perceptions of threat from minority cultures and encouraging intergroup contact and cultural diversity.

Of course, the findings in this study should be understood in relation to the UK context. The UK is a multicultural society with a history of significant post-war, and EU enlargement immigration. The extent to which these findings generalize to other countries and cultures remain an open question, and future research should explore such findings in other countries and cultures, particularly those where the understanding of multiculturalism is different.

To conclude, this study presents some findings which aim to build a more complete picture of the acculturation story from an intergroup perspective. While most studies in this area have been focussed on culture change solely in the minority group, it has been argued that majority culture change is important in the acculturation process (Redfield et al., 1937). This study has supported this idea, showing that when majority members perceive that minority members expect them to adopt aspects of minority culture, they are likely to show heightened perceptions of threat and therefore show a preference for minority members' assimilation towards the majority culture. Therefore, exploring the acculturation model from a majority culture change perspective can also shed light on particular barriers to multiculturalism and intergroup relations in society.

5.2 Paper 4: Perceived culture change is associated with prejudice

Abstract

This paper presents two studies which draw on the theory of cultural inertia to explore how majority members might react to perceptions of majority and minority culture change in society. A path model was hypothesised whereby a perception that the British (study 5, N=275) and English (study 6, N=300) cultures are changing due to the presence of ethnic minority cultures was positively associated with symbolic threat, and through this with greater prejudice towards ethnic minorities living in the UK/England. However, a perception that ethnic minority cultures are changing due to influence from mainstream society was negatively associated with symbolic threat, and through this with less prejudice towards ethnic minorities. For both studies, results supported the hypothesis even when adding majority members' perceptions of minority members' acculturation preferences to the models. Findings call for a greater focus on studying the intergroup consequences of perceived culture change.

Keywords: acculturation, cultural change, cultural inertia, symbolic threat, intergroup relations

Introduction

Mass immigration and accelerated globalisation has led to increased diversity in many Western societies. Such diversity of cultures has brought to the fore increasing debate on immigration, prejudice and the perceived impact of cultural diversity on the culture of the ethnic majority. In the UK for example, there is often debate in the British media on qualifiers of Britishness and/or 'Englishness' (Hancock, 2021), and voting for 'Brexit' in the EU referendum in 2016 was shown to be driven strongly by attitudes towards immigration (Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017). As well as this, in recent years, England and Wales have seen an increase in race-related hate crime (Home Office, 2020), and a higher proportion of British born ethnic minorities experiencing discrimination (Fernández-Reino, 2020b). This calls for continued exploration into the social psychological mechanisms which drive intergroup conflict and prejudice towards ethnic minorities. Specifically, this paper presents a unique contribution to the existing literature on intergroup relations by directly addressing perceptions of culture change within British society. More specifically, we explore the extent to which majority members perceive that the cultures of the majority and minority groups are changing as a result of the presence of the other, and how these perceptions may shape perceptions of threat, and subsequent prejudice towards ethnic minorities. We consider insights from cultural inertia theory (Zárate et al., 2012, 2019) and acculturation research (Berry 1997; Kunst et al., 2021; Lefringhausen et al., 2021) in an attempt to identify the most important potential predictors of intergroup outcomes.

Acculturation of minority and majority groups

When culturally distinct groups come into contact with one another, acculturation occurs (Redfield, 1936), and this is where groups might adapt aspects of each other's cultures. According to the classic acculturation framework devised by Berry (1997), two fundamental dimensions underlie the processes of culture change: the desire for heritage

culture maintenance, and the desire for intergroup contact, or in recent advancements of this framework, a desire for majority culture adoption (Bourhis et al., 1997). Initial research on this framework was focused on how immigrants choose to adapt to the majority society, but the model has also been applied to majority members' own preferences for which strategies they might want immigrants to choose (Bourhis et al., 1997). These strategies are (a) integration, where there is a preference for heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption; (b) assimilation, where there is a preference for majority culture adoption but no heritage culture maintenance; (c) separation (from the perspective of the minority group)/segregation (from the perspective of the majority group), where there is a preference for heritage culture maintenance but no majority culture adoption; and finally (d) marginalisation (from the perspective of the minority group)/exclusion (from the perspective of the majority group), where this is no preference for either heritage culture maintenance or majority culture adoption.

According to the classic definition of acculturation by Redfield et al. (1936), it is clear that some degree of adaptation and/or culture change is also expected to occur in the majority group. However, classic acculturation models such as those from Berry (1997) and Bourhis et al. (1997) often place the onus on the minority culture and overlook this integral part of the acculturation process. Due to greater ethnic diversity which has led to more multicultural societies, it is important to understand the ways in which the national majority group is also subject to culture change. To address this issue, some recent studies have applied the bi-dimensional acculturation framework to the majority culture to explore how majority members acculturate towards minority cultures (Kunst et al., 2021, Lefringhausen et al., 2021). These studies have shown that majority members' preferences for their own acculturation can fit a similar bi-dimensional framework as the one predominantly used for immigrants. Some majority members believe they can maintain their national culture, and

also adopt the culture of immigrants in their country (integration), and this has positive

psychological outcomes for host nationals, e.g., self-esteem and life statisfaction

(Lefringhausen & Marshall, 2016; Lefringhausen et al., 2021). Importantly then, it is not only

immigrants that acculturate and change in response to outgroups, but majority groups too can

acculturate in response to exposure to ethnic minorities.

Taking an intergroup perspective of acculturation

Group members do not only have ideas about what they want for their own group, but

also on what they want for the outgroup. The preferences that majority or minority groups

have for how the outgroup should acculturate can also impact intergroup relations (Brown &

Zagefka, 2011). Indeed, we know from the social identity perspective that groups are likely to

behave in ways to preserve their best interests (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Where groups

perceive threat or discrimination to their collective identity, they are especially likely to react

in ways to preserve their collective self-esteem, such as enhanced in-group identification

(Branscombe et al., 1999). Related to acculturation, then, minority and majority members are

likely to hold acculturation preferences that they perceive to be best suited to serve the

interests of their group. Accordingly, majority members may see any form of minority culture

maintenance as a threat to the status and dominance of the majority group, and therefore

endorse assimilation strategies as a way of alleviating such threat (Verkuyten, 2007). Past

studies have shown that majority members often react negatively to minority members'

heritage culture maintenance (Tip et al., 2012; Van Acker & Vanbeselare, 2011; Van

Oudenhoven & Eisses, 1998; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002), and this tendency for majority

members to react negatively to heritage culture maintenance on the part of the minority, or

more positively to adoption of the majority cultures, is often shown to be mediated by

symbolic threat (López-Rodríguez et al., 2014; Tip et al., 2012). Symbolic threats represent a

perception that the norms, values and meanings that particular groups live by is being

compromised by other groups, and threat typically leads to prejudice towards these groups (Stephan et al., 1998; Velasco González, 2008).

Recent developments in acculturation research have also shifted the focus to how majority members might react to expectations of culture change on their part, i.e., majority members' thinking or assuming that minority groups want or expect the majority group to adopt minority cultures. Moftizadeh et al. (2021) showed that when majority members perceive that the minority expect majority members to adopt the minority culture, they are more likely to feel threatened. This suggests that majority members tend to react in negative ways when they perceive that they are expected to acculturate and assimilate to the minority culture. However, existing research on how majority members react to a perceived expectation to assimilate remains limited, so one of the aims of this paper is further contribute to this area. In line with previous findings, meta-perceptions that the minority outgroup wants the majority ingroup to adopt the minority culture was expected to be associated with more threat and more prejudice. In contrast, meta-perceptions that the minority outgroup wants the majority ingroup to maintain the majority culture would be associated with less threat and less prejudice.

Cultural inertia theory and perceptions of culture change

As we have highlighted, acculturation research typically captures preferences or strategies related to acculturation, but it does not capture perceptions of wide scale societal change, and how such change might impact on intergroup relations in society. It may be that perceptions of whether society is *actually* changing is a more influential driver of prejudice than just outgroup expectations of change.

This paper draws on the theory of cultural inertia devised by Zárate and colleagues (2012) to enhance our understanding of how perceived culture change can impact intergroup relations. According to this theory, groups are generally resistant to culture change and prefer

societal climates that preserve the stability of their groups. Therefore, perceived change to one's culture as a result of other cultural groups can represent a threat to the group and foster negative reactions, such as prejudice (Zárate et al., 2019). This theory has also allowed for a greater focus on culture change from the majority perspective, by exploring how dominant members react to a perception that the majority society is changing as a result of the presence of minority cultures. In a series of experimental studies, perceptions of culture change were manipulated and in the conditions where majority members were led to believe they had to change culturally to accommodate a minority group, they exhibited greater levels of prejudice (Zárate et al., 2012).

It is clear, then, that ideologies of multiculturalism and assimilation have different implications for the majority and minority groups in terms of how much culture change is expected from them. In a multicultural society more so than an assimilationist society, minority cultures play a more influential roles in the wider societal climate, and this requires some degree of change from the majority society in order to accommodate the minority influence. Moreover, fears of diminished group status can sometimes and instil a sense of threat to the status and dominance of the majority group (Verkuyten, 2007), which is why some majority groups show a preference for minority group assimilation as opposed to multiculturalism (Verkuyten, 2005, 2007), as this represents a climate in which the dominant culture is stable and the status quo is preserved.

As highlighted above, the theory of cultural inertia suggests that majority members are not in favour of culture change which diminishes the status of their ingroup, especially if they perceive that the change is not already occurring. However, to our knowledge no studies have addressed this issue by directly measuring the degree to which majority members believe that the culture of both majority and ethnic minority groups is undergoing change, and to the effects of this on intergroup outcomes. Therefore, this study focuses on majority

members' perceptions of the degree to which the mainstream culture, and ethnic minority cultures are changing in society, and whether these perceptions are antecedents of prejudice. A perception that ethnic minority members are changing the mainstream culture implies that the majority group have to give up aspects of their culture to accommodate minority cultures, disrupting the stability and status-quo of society. This is likely to be associated with perceived threat, and therefore more prejudice towards ethnic minority members. On the other hand, a perception that majority members are changing ethnic minority cultures implies that the societal climate has remained stable, and that ethnic minority cultures are somewhat assimilating to the majority culture, and this should therefore be associated with less perceived threat, and less prejudice.

Moreover, we simultaneously explored the effects of perceived culture change and majority members' meta-perceptions regarding minority members' acculturation towards the majority culture. Within the acculturation literature measures of acculturation strategies, orientation and preferences typically tap into what participants want in terms of acculturation, either for themselves or the outgroup, and what participants think the respective outgroup wants. In contrast, within the literature on cultural inertia the theoretical focus has been on whether or not culture change is already occurring. In the present studies, we will combine our understanding from both literatures to simultaneously consider both issues as predictors of intergroup outcomes.

The simultaneous focus on perceived culture change and meta-perceptions of acculturation preferences aimed to achieve the following objectives. First, the effects of perceived culture change on intergroup outcomes has previously been demonstrated mainly using experimental methods, and mainly focussing on a US context (Zárate et al., 2012). The present research tested whether similarly strong effects of perceived culture change on intergroup relations would emerge when using self-reports and naturally occurring rather than

experimentally manipulated perceptions of culture change, and whether they would emerge also in a European context, i.e. that of British and English society. Supportive results could be interpreted as additional support for cultural inertia theory.

Second, acculturation research hitherto has studied the effects of acculturation preferences for the ingroup, preferences for the outgroup, and perceptions of what the respective outgroup wants with regards to the acculturation of the ingroup and the outgroup. Measures of all these constructs typically focus on what people expect, prefer, desire or demand, but they do *not* focus on the outcomes of such choices for culture change. Measures typically ask whether one *wants* the culture to change, rather than whether the culture is *actually* changing. However, one important insight from cultural inertia theory is that a perception that cultural change is occurring can have strong effects. Therefore, a further objective of this work was to test whether each type of variable would remain a significant predictor if the respective other variable is controlled for.

The present studies

While we anticipate that the underlying psychological mechanisms explored in this paper are generic, it is nonetheless important to set out the cultural context in which this study took place. In the UK, 14% of the population are foreign born, and there is also a large proportion of people who were born in the UK but whose parents were born elsewhere (Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2020). The UK is widely regarded as a multicultural society, with a history of post-war immigration, but some scholars have argued that sometimes the discourse around integration actually mirrors assimilation ideologies (Bowskill et al., 2007), and that the wider societal climate and government policy have become increasingly assimilationist over the years (Back et al., 2002; Lewis & Neal, 2005). For these reasons, British society is an interesting context through which to explore the drivers of white British majority members' feelings towards ethnic minorities, and how this might be related to a perception of culture change.

Overall, the two studies presented in this paper aim to advance the understanding of intergroup consequences of perceived culture change. In particular, the extent to which majority members perceive that their culture is changing as a result of the presence of minority cultures, and that minority cultures are changing as a result of the mainstream culture, was explored in relation to perceptions of intergroup threat and prejudice. For study 5, a path model was hypothesised whereby majority members' perceptions that British culture is changing as a result of ethnic minorities is associated with more feelings of threat, and therefore heightened prejudice towards ethnic minorities. On the flip side, a perception that ethnic minority cultures are changing due to exposure to the majority culture was hypothesised to be associated with less feelings of symbolic threat and thus less prejudice towards ethnic minorities. In addition, it was predicted that perceptions of British and ethnic minority culture change will remain significant predictors of symbolic threat, and prejudice, even when controlling for perceptions of minority members expectations for how the majority group should acculturate.

Study 5

Participants

The total sample consisted of 275 respondents recruited online from Prolific.ac (85 men and 184 women; 2 participants reported their gender as neither male nor female, and 4 participants did not report their gender at all) between the ages of 18 and 81 ($M = 36.12$, $SD = 13.18$). As the study was interested in views of ethnic majority members in the UK, pre-screening ensured that all participants who self-identified as white British, had spent the majority of their lives before the age of 18 in the UK, and were current UK residents at the time of the study. Participants were paid the equivalent of £8/hour for their participation. Ethical approval was obtained from the university ethics committee, and all aspects of the research were in line with BPS and APA ethics guidelines. The minimum number of participants was determined based on the recommendation that models with a moderate

number of parameters are typically stable around $N = 200$, using the rule of thumb of at least 20 cases per parameter (Kline, 2015). In order to achieve best possible power, we attempted to exceed the minimum N as much as possible with the available budget, and therefore 275 participants were obtained.

Design & Materials

This study was cross-sectional, and participants were presented with an online survey on the platform Qualtrics. All items, unless otherwise stated, were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree', unless stated otherwise. The following measures were used in this study.

Perceptions of culture change

Perceptions of culture change were measured using six items, three of which were related to British culture, and the other three related to the culture of ethnic minorities living in the UK. Participants were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following three items for perceptions of British culture change: 'I think British culture is changing due to increasing ethnic diversity in Britain', 'I think the British culture is being influenced by ethnic minority members in Britain', and 'I think the British culture is morphing into something new due to ethnic minority influence', $\alpha = .85$.

For perceptions of ethnic minority culture change the following items were used: 'I think the culture of ethnic minorities in the UK is changing due to influence from mainstream British culture', 'I think the culture of ethnic minorities in the UK is being influenced by mainstream British culture', and 'I think the culture of ethnic minorities in the UK is morphing into something new due to influences from mainstream British culture', $\alpha = .86$.

Perceptions of symbolic threat

Perceptions of symbolic threat were measured using three items from Velasco Gonzalez et al. (2008), but applied to the British context. Participants were asked about the

extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following three items: 'British identity is being threatened because there are too many ethnic minority group members living in Britain', 'British norms and values are being threatened because of the presence of ethnic minorities', and 'Ethnic minorities are a threat to the British culture', α = .96.

Prejudice

A feeling thermometer was used to explore prejudice towards ethnic minority members living in the UK. This is a well-known method of looking at prejudice, and has been used in past research on feelings towards minority members (e.g., Velasco Gonzalez et al., 2008). The participants were given the following instructions: 'Using the below feeling thermometer, please indicate whether you have positive or negative feelings towards ethnic minorities living in the UK'. This 100-point thermometer was measured on a scale of 0 'very negative' to 100 'very positive'. Markings above 50 indicated positive or warm feelings, and markings below 50 indicated negative or cold feelings. For the purpose of the analysis, the scale was recoded so that higher scores represented more prejudice.

Meta-perceptions of acculturation preferences

Majority members' perceptions of minority members' preferences for whether majority members should maintain the majority culture or adopt minority cultures was measured using six items based on research on majority members' proximal acculturation preferences by Lefringhausen et al. (2021). Participants were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following three items for meta-perceptions regarding culture maintenance: 'Ethnic minority group members living in the UK would like British people to take part in British traditions', 'Ethnic minority group members living in the UK would like British people to hold on to our British characteristics', and 'Ethnic minority group members living in the UK would like British people to do things the British way', α = .83.

For meta-perceptions regarding culture adoption, the following items were used: 'Ethnic minority group members living in the UK would like British people to take part in traditions of ethnic minorities', 'Ethnic minority group members living in the UK would like British people to become more similar to ethnic minorities' and 'Ethnic minority group members living in the UK would like British people to do things the way ethnic minorities do', $\alpha = .78$.

In addition to the measures above some demographic information was also collected such as age, gender and education level. As well as this, two attention checks were included throughout the survey, but no participants failed both questions so there was no subsequent exclusions. The data for both studies presented in this paper can be accessed via the following OSF link: https://osf.io/h3rqn/?view_only=2cc3b2833146491e840cc5fb4d4f862c

Results

Means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations are presented in Table 5.2. For all structural equation modelling reported below, the indices RMSEA, CFI, SRMR are used to assess model fit, as recommended by Kline (2015), with an RMSEA value lower than 0.08, CFI greater than 0.90, and SRMR value lower than 0.08 commonly used as thresholds for acceptable model fit (Hooper et al., 2008). To test the models, AMOS 25 was used. The final sample used in the analysis was N=266 because listwise deletion was necessary to test indirect effects using bootstrap samples.

Table 5.2

Bivariate Correlations and Means for Study 5

Variable	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Perceived British culture change	3.70	0.69	-					
2. Perceived ethnic minority culture change	3.26	0.76	.10	-				

3. Symbolic threat	1.94	1.16	.28**	−.30**	-		
4. Feeling thermometer	24.53	21.16	.17**	−.23**	.80**	-	
5. Meta-perceptions about culture maintenance	3.06	0.71	−.20**	.25**	−.22**	−.19**	-
6. Meta-perceptions about culture adoption	2.99	0.74	.26**	.02	.24**	.18**	−.12*	-

Note. * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01. SD = standard deviation.

Confirmatory factor analysis

First, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to test whether the constructs of British culture change and ethnic minority culture change are independent from the meta-perceptions about culture maintenance and culture adoption. Given that we were interested to compare the potential predictive power of these constructs with each other, it seemed appropriate to first establish that they are truly empirically independent from each other. We therefore aimed to distinguish them from each other to establish them as separate constructs. We devised a model with four latent variables, one each for perceived British culture change, perceived ethnic minority culture change, perceived desire for culture maintenance, and perceived desire for culture adoption. The three items for each construct were specified to load on the corresponding latent factor, and latent factors were allowed to covary. The overall model had a good fit, RMSEA = .07, CFI = .96, SRMR = .07. From this, we can conclude that as expected perceived culture change was empirically, as well as theoretically, distinct from meta-perceptions about acculturation preferences.

We also conducted a second confirmatory factor analysis to confirm that perceptions of culture change and perceptions of symbolic threat are independent constructs. Although we hypothesize a strong correlation between these constructs, we argue that they should be treated as conceptually distinct concepts, as a measure of perceptions of broader societal change should not be considered to have inherently negative or threatening connotations.

Therefore, we wanted to test this empirically. We devised a model with three latent variables, one each for perceived British culture change, perceived ethnic minority culture change and symbolic threat. The three items for each measure were specified to load onto the corresponding latent factor, and the latent factors were allowed to covary. The overall model was a good fit, RMSEA = .06, CFI = .99, SRMR = .03. From this we conclude that threat and perceptions of culture change are empirically distinct measures, and thus exploring how they relate to each other is theoretically interesting.

Perceived culture change and prejudice

Next, we present a path model to test the hypothesised process. Perceived British culture change and perceived ethnic minority culture change were specified as predictors (which were allowed to covary) of symbolic threat, which in turn was specified as a predictor of prejudice[1]. The model provided a good fit to the data, $\chi^2 (2) = 2.95$, $p = .23$, RMSEA= .04, CFI = .99, SRMR = .02. All individual paths were significant in the hypothesised directions, for standardised path coefficients see Figure 5.2. Perceived British culture change was positively associated with symbolic threat ($B = .54$, $t = 5.81$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.35, .71]), perceived ethnic minority culture change was negatively associated with symbolic threat ($B = - .51$, $t = - 6.00$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [− .69, − .30]), and symbolic threat was positively associated with prejudice ($B = 14.39$, $t = - 21.06$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [12.71, 16.02]). These results suggest that, in line with the hypotheses, perceived culture change was a significant predictor of intergroup outcomes.

Figure 5.2

Study 5 Path Model With Standardised Coefficients
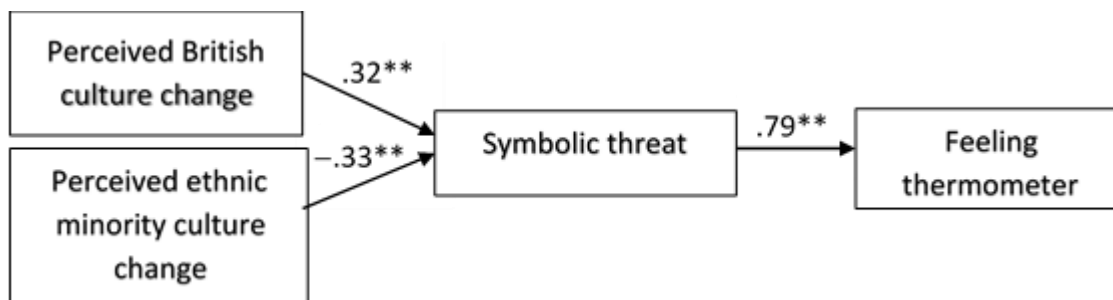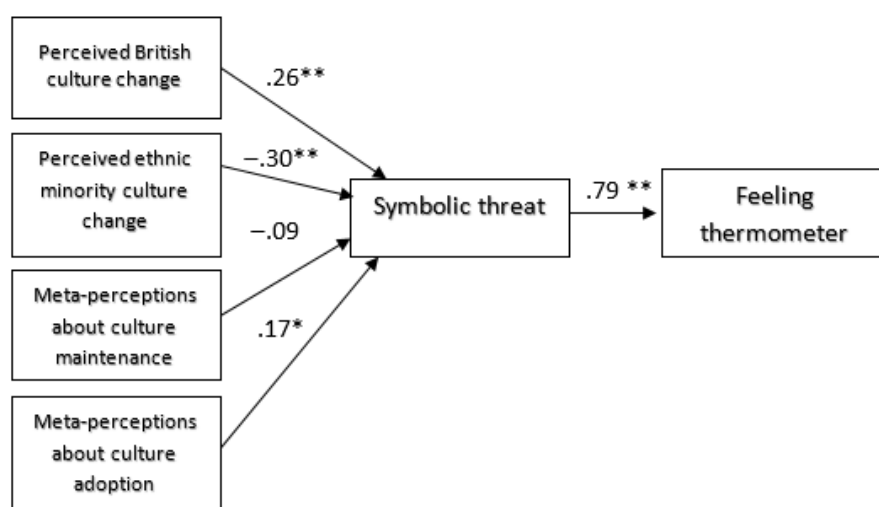
Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

To test the hypothesised [standardised] indirect effects, we used 5000 bootstrap samples at 95% bias corrected confidence levels. Perceived British culture change had a significant indirect effect on prejudice, through symbolic threat, .26, 95 % CI [.17, .33], and perceived ethnic minority culture change also had a significant indirect effect on prejudice, through symbolic threat, − .26, 95 % CI [− .36, − .15].

To examine whether the patterns found above persist when controlling for perceptions of acculturation preferences, we ran the same model but this time added perceived desire for majority culture maintenance and perceived desire for minority culture adoption to the model as predictor variables (see Figure 5.3 for standardised path coefficients). Again, all predictor variables were allowed to covary. The model provided an excellent fit to the data, χ^2 (4) = 3.26, $p = .52$, RMSEA= .001, CFI = .99, SRMR = .01. British culture change was positively associated with symbolic threat ($B = .43$, $t = 4.44$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.23, .61]), perceived ethnic minority culture change was negatively associated with symbolic threat ($B = - .47$, $t = - 5.38$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [− .66, − .27]), perceived desire for majority culture maintenance was not significantly associated with symbolic threat ($B = - .15$, $t = - 1.53$, $p = .13$, 95% CI [− .35, .05]), perceived desire for minority culture adoption was positively associated with symbolic threat ($B = .27$, $t = 2.97$, $p = .003$, 95% CI [.05, .50]), and finally symbolic threat was positively associated with prejudice ($B = 14.39$, $t = - 21.06$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [12.71, 16.02]). These results show that in line with the hypotheses, perceived culture change still

had a significant effect on intergroup outcomes even when meta-perceptions regarding

acculturation were controlled for. In fact, the effects of the culture change predictors on

symbolic threat were stronger than the effects of meta-perceptions about acculturation,

further underlining the importance of perceived culture change in informing intergroup

outcomes.

Figure 5.3

Study 5 Path Model Including Meta-perceptions of Acculturation with Standardised Coefficients

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Discussion

This study showed that a perception that British culture is changing as a result of

ethnic minority cultures is associated with greater levels of threat, and therefore more

prejudice towards ethnic minority members living in the UK. However, a perception that

ethnic minority cultures are changing as a result of mainstream British culture is associated

with fewer feelings of threat, and less prejudice towards ethnic minority members. These

findings were evident even when meta-perceptions of acculturation preferences were

controlled for, and culture change predictors appeared to have stronger effects than

acculturation meta-perceptions, showing that perceptions of culture change might in fact be

an important antecedent of intergroup outcomes which merits more attention going forward.

One limitation of this first study relates to the measures used. A standard 'feeling thermometer' was used to measure prejudice, as this measure has often been utilised as a measure of feelings of prejudice, particularly in research on feelings towards minority groups and immigrants (Kunst et al., 2019; Louis et al., 2013; Velasco Gonzalez et al., 2008). However as there is no standard measure of prejudice, it may be better to adopt multiple indicators to obtain a more reliable and robust measure.

In a second study (study 6), we attempted to replicate the findings highlighted in study 5. In this study, we tested the processes described in this paper more specifically in relation to 'English' society and culture. This was done because 'British' and 'English' can denote different identities and have different implications for exclusivity and inclusivity (Kumar, 2003; Fenton, 2007). Therefore, we wanted to see if the processes outlined in the study above can not only be replicated but also applied across contexts. As well as this, in this follow-up study we used other indicators of prejudice to see whether the pattern would replicate to other facets of this overall construct. In sum then, the same path model was predicted, whereby majority members' perceptions that English culture is changing as a result of ethnic minorities is associated with more feelings of threat, and therefore heightened prejudice towards ethnic minorities. On the flip side, a perception that ethnic minority cultures are changing due to exposure to the majority culture was hypothesised to be associated with less feelings of symbolic threat and thus less prejudice towards ethnic minorities.

Study 6

Participants

The total sample consisted of 300 respondents (82 men and 218 women) recruited online from Prolific.ac between the ages of 18 and 70 ($M = 33.88$, $SD = 12.41$). Because the study was interested in views of ethnic majority members in England, pre-screening ensured

that all participants self-identified as white English, had spent the majority of their lives before the age of 18 in England, and lived in England at the time of the study. Participants were paid the equivalent of approximately £6/hour for their participation. Ethical approval was obtained from the university ethics committee, and all aspects of the research were in line with BPS and APA ethics guidelines. We used recommendations from Kline (2015) and additionally an a-priori G*Power calculation (Faul et al., 2009) to obtain .95 power based on small to medium effect sizes, to identify a minimum *N* of 262. We attempted to exceed this as much as possible in line with our budget, and therefore obtained 300 participants.

Design & Materials

This study was cross-sectional, and participants were presented with an online survey on the platform Qualtrics. All items, unless otherwise stated, were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree', unless stated otherwise. The following measures were used in this study.

Perceptions of culture change

Perceptions of culture change were measured using six items, three of which were related to English culture, and the other three related to the culture of ethnic minorities living in England. Participants were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following three items for perceptions of English culture change: 'I think English culture is changing due to increasing ethnic diversity in England', 'I think the English culture is being influenced by ethnic minority members in England', and 'I think the English culture is morphing into something new due to ethnic minority influence', α = .78.

For perceptions of ethnic minority culture change the items were the following, 'I think the culture of ethnic minorities in England is changing due to influence from mainstream English culture', 'I think the culture of ethnic minorities in England is being influenced by mainstream English culture', and 'I think the culture of ethnic minorities in

England is morphing into something new due to influences from mainstream English culture', α = .89.

Perceptions of symbolic threat

Perceptions of symbolic threat were measured using three items from Velasco Gonzalez et al. (2008), but applied to the English context. Participants were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following three items: 'English identity is being threatened because there are too many ethnic minority group members living in England', 'English norms and values are being threatened because of the presence of ethnic minorities', and 'Ethnic minorities are a threat to the English culture', α = .95.

Prejudice

We used two different measures to assess prejudice. First, we used a social distance scale based on Bogardus (1933), which has been used in the past as measures of prejudice in acculturation research (e.g., Zagefka et al., 2012). Participants were asked to answer the following questions on a scale from 1 'Very uncomfortable' to 5 'Very comfortable': 'How would you feel about having people from ethnic minority backgrounds as neighbours?', 'How would you feel about having people from ethnic minority backgrounds as work colleagues?', 'How would you feel about a family member marrying someone from an ethnic minority background?'. Scores on this measure were also reversed so that higher scores denoted more prejudice, α = .93.

Moreover, negative affect towards ethnic minorities was measured using items from Zagefka et al. (2012). Participants were asked to rate how often they felt the following emotions towards ethnic minorities, on a scale of 1 'Never' to 5 'Always': hate, contempt, envy, fear, resentment, rage, α = .84.

Meta-perceptions of acculturation preferences

Similar to study 5, participants were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following three items for meta-perceptions regarding culture maintenance: 'Ethnic minority group members living in England would like English people to take part in English traditions', 'Ethnic minority group members living in England would like English people to hold on to our English characteristics', and 'Ethnic minority group members living in England would like English people to do things the English way', α = .86.

For meta-perceptions regarding culture adoption, the following items were used: 'Ethnic minority group members living in England would like English people to take part in traditions of ethnic minorities', 'Ethnic minority group members living in England would like English people to become more similar to ethnic minorities' and 'Ethnic minority group members living in England would like English people to do things the way ethnic minorities do', α = .71.

In addition to the measures above some demographic information was also collected such as age, gender and education level. As well as this, two attention checks were included throughout the survey, but no participants failed both questions, so there were no subsequent exclusions.

Results

Means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations are presented in Table 5.3. Similar to study 5, AMOS 25 was used to test the hypothesised models. Missing data was treated with listwise deletion leaving the final sample in which all reported analysis was conducted on as *N*=292.

Table 5.3

Bivariate Correlations and Means for Study 6

	Variable	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1.	Perceived English culture change	3.83	0.64	-						
2.	Perceived ethnic minority culture change	3.46	0.84	.17**	-					
3.	Symbolic threat	1.93	1.17	.21**	−.32**	-				
4.	Social distance	1.51	0.86	.04	−.22**	.51**	-			
5.	Negative affect	1.41	0.55	.19**	−.19**	.58**	.35**	-		
6.	Meta-perceptions about culture maintenance	3.38	0.81	−.11	.10	−.20**	−.17**	−.17**	-	
7.	Meta-perceptions about culture adoption	2.81	0.76	.39**	.04	.36**	.11	.25**	−.13*	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. SD = standard deviation.

Confirmatory factor analysis

Again, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to test whether the constructs of English culture change and ethnic minority culture change are independent from the meta-perceptions about culture maintenance and culture adoption. We devised a model with four latent variables, one each for perceived English culture change, perceived ethnic minority culture change, perceived desire for culture maintenance, and perceived desire for culture adoption. The three items for each construct were specified to load on the corresponding latent factor, and latent factors were allowed to covary. The overall model had a good fit, RMSEA = .06, CFI = .97, SRMR = .07. From this, we can conclude that as expected

perceived culture change was empirically, as well as theoretically, distinct from meta-perceptions about acculturation preferences.

Similar to study 5, we also conducted a second confirmatory factor analysis to confirm that perceptions of culture change and perceptions of symbolic threat are independent constructs. We devised a model with three latent variables, one each for perceived English culture change, perceived ethnic minority culture change and symbolic threat. The three items for each measure were specified to load onto the corresponding latent factor, and the latent factors were allowed to covary. The overall model was a good fit, RMSEA = .01, CFI = .99, SRMR = .03. From this we conclude that threat and perceptions of culture change are empirically distinct measures, and thus exploring how they relate to each other is theoretically interesting.

Perceived culture change and prejudice

Next, we present two path models to test our hypotheses. First, perceived English culture change and perceived ethnic minority culture change were specified as predictors (which were allowed to covary) of symbolic threat, which in turn was specified as a predictor of prejudice. Both indicators of prejudice were included, i.e. the social distance measure and the negative affect measure (see Figure 5.4 for paths with standardised coefficients). The model fit was good, χ^2 (5) = 8.36, p = .14, RMSEA= .05, CFI = .99, SRMR = .03. Perceived English culture change was positively associated with symbolic threat (B = .48, t = 4.94, p < .001, 95% CI [.28, .68]), perceived ethnic minority culture change was negatively associated with symbolic threat (B = $-$.51, t = $-$ 6.72, p < .001, 95% CI [$-$ .67, $-$ .34]), symbolic threat was positively associated with social distance (B = .37, t = 10.03, p < .001, 95% CI [.29, .45]), and finally symbolic threat was also positively associated with negative affect (B = .27, t = 12.00, p < .001, 95% CI [.22., .33]).

Figure 5.4

Study 6 Path Model with Standardised Coefficients
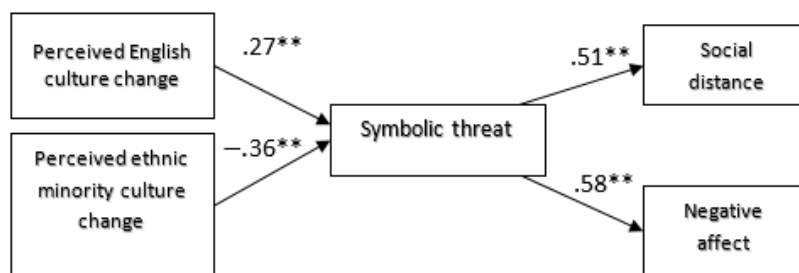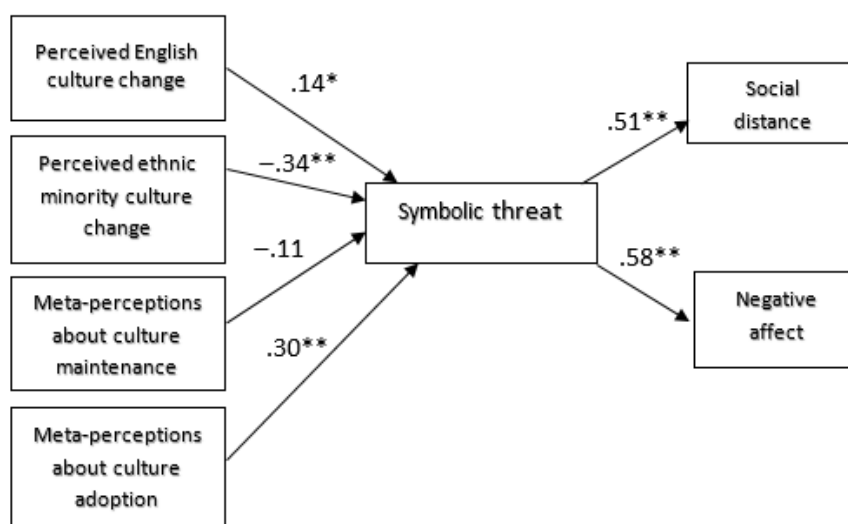

Note. * *p* < 0.05, ** *p* < 0.01

To test the hypothesised [standardised] indirect effects, we used 5000 bootstrap samples at 95% bias corrected confidence levels. Perceived English culture change had a significant indirect effect on social distance, .14, 95 % CI [.08, .21] and negative affect, .15, 95% CI [.09, .23], through symbolic threat. Perceived ethnic minority culture change also had a significant indirect effect on social distance, −.18, 95 % CI [−.27, −.11], and negative affect, −.21, 95% CI [−.29, −.13].

To examine whether the patterns found above persist when controlling for perceptions of acculturation preferences, we ran a second model which mirrored the first model but this time we added perceived desire for majority culture maintenance and perceived desire for minority culture adoption to the model as predictor variables (see Figure 5.5 for paths with standardised coefficients). Again, all predictor variables were allowed to covary. The model provided good fit to the data, χ^2 (9) = 12.53, *p* = .19, RMSEA = .04, CFI = .99, SRMR = .03. Perceived English culture change was positively associated with symbolic threat (*B* = .24, *t* = 2.43, *p* = .02, 95% CI [.02, .24]), perceived ethnic minority culture change was negatively associated with symbolic threat (*B* = − .47, *t* = − 6.65, *p* < .001, 95% CI [− .46, − .23]), perceived desire for majority culture maintenance was negatively associated with symbolic threat (*B* = − .16, *t* = − 2.09, *p* = .04, 95% CI [− .23, .01]), perceived desire for minority

culture adoption was positively associated with symbolic threat ($B = .46$, $t = 5.50$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.19, .42]), symbolic threat was positively associated with social distance ($B = .37$, $t = 10.03$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.29, .45]), symbolic threat was also positively associated with negative affect ($B = .27$, $t = 12.00$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.22., .33]). These results show that in line with the hypotheses, perceived culture change still had a significant effect on intergroup outcomes even when meta-perceptions regarding acculturation were controlled for.

Figure 5.5

Study 6 Path Model Including Meta-perceptions of Acculturation with Standardised Coefficients

Note. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

Discussion

In study 6, we found that the findings in study 5 replicated to the context of 'England' and 'English culture'. We showed that a perception that English culture is changing as a result of ethnic minority cultures is associated with greater levels of threat, and therefore more prejudice towards ethnic minority members living in England more specifically. However, a perception that ethnic minority cultures are changing as a result of mainstream English culture is associated with fewer feelings of threat, and less prejudice towards ethnic

minority members. Again, these findings were evident even when meta-perceptions of acculturation preferences were controlled for. In this study we also used different indicators of prejudice and found that the findings in study 5 extended across a single measure.

General Discussion

In this paper, two studies exploring majority members' perceptions that mainstream culture and ethnic minority members' cultures are undergoing change due to influences from one another was explored in relation to perceptions of threat and prejudice. The first study explored this in relation to British culture, while a second study replicated the findings in the more specific context of English culture. Although 'English' and 'British' identity and culture can sometimes be represented in different ways in relation to levels of exclusivity or inclusivity, we have shown that the processes described in this study can apply in these different cultural contexts. In line with the theory of cultural inertia, we show that majority members tend to resist culture change which may disrupt the stability of the dominant society (Zárate et al., 2012). Indeed, as this study also shows, a society which has changed to endorse more multicultural values, and accommodate minority groups can often be experienced as representing a threat to the majority group (Verkuyten, 2007). Conversely, if change is operating in a direction beneficial to the majority group, which does not disturb the status quo, i.e., assimilation, then majority members are more likely to be receptive to this.

These findings represent important advancements in the literature on culture change in several ways. First, this study adds to the emerging literature that emphasises the importance of exploring potential culture change from the majority perspective, e.g., cultural inertia theory (Zárate et al., 2012), and majority members' acculturation orientations towards the minority culture (Lefringhausen et al., 2021), in order to paint a more complete picture of the intergroup consequences of culture change, as it was initially defined by Redfield et al. (1936). We build on Moftizadeh et al. (2021) by showing that majority members react

negatively to perceptions that minority members want them to change their culture, or perceive that the majority culture is already being influenced by ethnic minorities. This adds further weight to our understanding of how perceived culture change might affect intergroup relations within the context of British society. Second, the findings in this study proposes a shift away from using the acculturation dimensions, culture maintenance and culture adoption as measures of *preferences* about culture change, in favour of measures that tap into perceived *actual* culture change. Although acculturation dimensions remain relevant in understanding how groups might react to the ways in which outgroups choose to acculturate, this study shows that designing measures based on the theory of cultural inertia (Zárate et al., 2012) which highlight the degree to which people perceive that societal culture change is occurring or has occurred, can potentially be a more powerful antecedent of prejudice. Whilst the studies in this paper are not sufficient to come to any firm conclusion on this, they help pave the way for future work to directly compare these sets of variables and their effects on intergroup outcomes.

Of course, this study has some important limitations that need to be discussed. Firstly, the two studies can only be considered exploratory analyses and therefore future pre-registered studies should corroborate the findings. Further, the study was cross-sectional in nature, and one therefore cannot infer any directional causality from the results. For example, described in this study as a mediator, it may be that symbolic threat can also be an antecedent of perceived culture change, just as it has been previously shown to be an antecedent of attitudes to multiculturalism and assimilation (Badea et al., 2018; Tip et al., 2012). In order to establish directionality, it will be useful to conduct more longitudinal and experimental research (Kunst, 2021). Future studies could use experimental manipulations similar to Zárate et al. (2012) to further explore the intergroup consequences of perceived culture change. Having said this, we would maintain that it is still of value to demonstrate that perceptions of

cultural change actually matter, and have demonstrable effects, when they are naturally occurring in people's thoughts and impressions. Although the present results cannot conclusively speak to causality (unlike Zárate's experimental designs), they do demonstrate the ecological validity and importance of some key assertions of cultural inertia theory. Experimental manipulations are never able to demonstrate the extent to which certain perceptions are subjectively psychological relevant compared to other perceptions. Hence, while an experimental approach can answer questions about causality, the present approach can answer questions about the ecological validity and importance of culture change to people's lived experiences. The present survey approach therefore makes an important contribution to the literature of established experimental effects.

A further limitation in this study relates to the sample used across both studies. Participants were recruited using the online platform Prolific.ac. There have been concerns in the past, particularly around obtaining low quality data when using crowdsourcing platforms (Chmielewski & Kucker, 2020). Having said that, some studies have argued that, relative to other online platforms, Prolific.ac may in fact be one of the best in terms of data quality and diversity of participants (Palan & Schitter, 2018; Peer et al., 2017). Additionally, we tried to bypass potential sample issues by using specific pre-screening questions, and attention check measures. Nonetheless, the lack of control over who partakes in the studies may raise issues around the extent to which the sample can be considered representative and this should be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

According to the theory of cultural inertia, perceived culture change is likely to impact intergroup relations when there is a perception that change is not already occurring. Although we measured perceptions of degree to which the majority/minority cultures in the UK are changing, no variable in this study explicitly measured whether this change is more recent, and thus more likely to be considered a threat, or whether British/English society has

been changing at a steady motion (Zárate, 2019). Future research should consider this in relation to perceived change in British/English society to shed further light on the intergroup consequences of perceived culture change. As well as this, the processes in this study were studied in relation to ethnic minorities in general. While this is useful to gain insight into an *overall* sense of majority-minority group dynamics, it may be of value to study particular minority groups in the UK in future research, or compare how majority members react to different minority groups (Moftizadeh, Zagefka & Barn 2021). Indeed, it may be that some groups are seen to change British culture more than others.

On the back of the findings presented in this paper, there are some other interesting avenues for further research. First, the relationship between perceived culture change and some alternative intergroup variables should be explored to understand other mechanisms which may drive prejudice towards ethnic minorities, such as a sense of angst over the future of British society (Wohl et al., 2010), or disruptions to perceived cultural continuity (Sani et al., 2007). As well as this, exploring intergroup moderators of this relationship can shed light on the instances where perceived change may be more likely to have an impact on perceptions of threat and prejudice. For example, high identifiers often show stronger reactions to any threat to their ingroup than low identifiers, so identification should be explored as a potential moderator in future research. Similarly, how majority members react to perceived change might also relate to the extent to which they themselves may be invested in the majority and/or minority cultures, and thus it may be also insightful to explore own acculturation preferences as moderators of the relationship between perceived culture change and intergroup prejudice.

This paper presented two studies exploring whether perceptions of culture change can predict perceptions of threat, and subsequent prejudice towards ethnic minorities. On the one hand, it was shown that a belief that British culture is being changed by ethnic minorities is

associated with more perceptions of threat, and therefore more prejudice towards ethnic minorities. On the other hand, a belief that the culture of ethnic minorities is being changed by British mainstream culture was associated with fewer perceptions of threat and less prejudice towards ethnic minorities. This has important implications in an increasingly globalised world, where culture change as a result of numerous factors including migration is inevitable. This study showed that perceptions of symbolic threat resulting from perceptions of that minority members have influenced the majority culture are a potential driver of prejudice towards ethnic minorities. In order to promote harmonious multicultural societies, policy and interventions should be tailored to breaking this link between threat and the role of minority cultures in majority societies, so that any societal change which brings to the fore the culture of minority groups does not increase the possibility of more prejudice towards ethnic minorities and subsequent conflict between different groups.

Footnotes

[1] For both studies, when age and gender were entered into the model as controls, there was no substantial impact on overall model fit or on any of the paths reported in the models. Therefore, because these variables were not central to our research question, nor were they included in the hypothesis, we decided not to include them in the final reported model to avoid over complication.

Chapter 6: A qualitative exploration of cultural identity of second generation immigrants

6.1 Paper 5: Negotiating social belonging: A case study of second-generation Kurds in London

Abstract

This qualitative study aims to contribute to our understanding of how second-generation immigrants negotiate their multiple identities, and construct their feelings of belonging. We focus on second-generation ethnic Kurds, a stateless ethnic group with a complex political and social history, who have seldom been investigated in a UK context. Drawing on data from interviews with fourteen Kurds living in the UK, this paper outlines the tensions in Kurds' lived experiences of Kurdish and British identity; in particular, experiences of feeling 'othered' and how this manifests in relation to their identities. We found that Kurds most commonly dealt with some of the tensions they experienced from not belonging or feeling like an 'other' by constructing new identities with more permeable boundaries of belonging; in this study, this was achieved through a 'place-based' identity. In sum, this paper offers a novel contribution to discourses of belonging, by demonstrating how the nuances of belonging and its lived complexities manifest in the experiences of UK based second-generation Kurds, and the resultant strategies that they adopt to navigate tensions.

Keywords: second-generation, Kurdish identity, British identity, belonging, culture

Introduction

Growing diversity in British society poses questions about how minority members can effectively combine their national and ethnic cultures (Nandi & Platt, 2015). Among British born ethnic minorities there remains a perception of discrimination and prejudice (Fernández-Reino, 2020b). This calls for a greater understanding of how second-generation immigrants construct their feelings of belonging within the socio-political context of the UK. In this qualitative study, we draw on principles of belonging to explore the lived experiences of second-generation Kurds – an under-researched minority group, with a complex social and political history. We explore how participants negotiate their identities, the tensions associated with them, and the strategies they deploy to alleviate these tensions.

Feelings of belonging among second-generation immigrants

Belonging to a group is a dynamic process that extends beyond mere membership of a social category and concerns the emotional, affective, and relational ties that allow someone to feel connected to others (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In this way, belonging is constructed not just in terms of where one feels one belongs, but also in relation to the 'other', that is, where one *does not* or *cannot* belong (Anthias, 2008). This makes the notion of belonging especially pertinent for migrants and their descendants where they are visibly/audibly different from majority members, as they are regularly faced with questions like 'where are you really from?' (Anthias, 2002, 2008). The 'dirty work of boundary maintenance' plays a major role in emergent feelings of belonging/not belonging (Crowley, 1999), as where one belongs is often contingent on issues to do with access, exclusion, and inclusion, i.e., whether one is accepted by the dominant society, and the extent to which minority members are presented as the 'other' (Anthias, 2008). Understanding belonging in this way is also important as it puts emphasis on the intersectional ties that define the ways in which individuals belong. This is

especially important in a society where people of different social locations, e.g., gender, class, race, all have varying (and unequal) access to power (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Previous research on second-generation immigrants has highlighted how belonging manifests, and some of the complexities involved in their construction of belonging. While some people have no problem expressing multiple senses of belonging, sometimes second-generation immigrants might feel stuck between worlds, and are seen as the 'other', in the contexts of both their country of residence and homeland (Anthias, 2002; Brocket, 2020; Eliassi, 2013; Potter & Phillips, 2006; Toivanen & Kivisto, 2014). It is important, then, to consider some of the factors which have been shown to instil this sense of 'in-betweenness' and complicate feelings of belonging among second-generation immigrants.

Firstly, past studies have shown that second-generation immigrants tend to feel alienated upon their return to the homeland due to cultural differences and feelings of unfamiliarity (Brocket, 2020; Teerling, 2011). Such cultural differences can often lead them to feel like outsiders, especially in case where locals referred to them as guests or foreigners (Brocket, 2020). As well as this, fundamental differences in the values and cultural practices across generations of immigrants, i.e., those who have migrated from their homelands and those born or raised in a new society, can often lead to conflict (Foner & Dreby, 2011). This is particularly apparent in relation to issues to do with sexual freedom, respect, and expectations of marriage (Foner & Dreby, 2011). Such generational conflict can also shed light on why second-generation immigrants may feel like outsiders in relation to their heritage culture, as they feel a disconnection from particular values and cultural practices they associate as integral to that identity.

Another key issue that has frequently emerged in the literature on identity and belonging is the racialisation of national identity by the majority society which often leads to

rigid boundaries defining who belongs. For instance, minorities often feel like they are excluded, from an imagined homogenous British national community, which is often defined by 'whiteness' (Dwyer, 2000; Khan, 2000; Shazhadi et al., 2018). In response to such feelings of exclusion, sometimes there is a 'reactive' shift towards the heritage identity or culture (Çelik, 2015; Nandi & Platt, 2020), or a disillusionment and shift away from the national identity (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Indeed, the complex nature of identity among second-generation immigrants can also pave the way for more complex and hybrid forms of belonging, which are affirmed against essentialist conceptualisations of identity and exclusionary discourses (Brocket, 2020; Dwyer, 2000; Waite & Cooke, 2011). That is, minority members are active agents in the construction and positioning of their own belongings in the face of exclusionary discourses. For instance, experiences of discrimination do not necessarily always lead to alienation from the national identity (Shazhadi et al., 2018). Some people might construct and articulate their own sense of Britishness, and see their attachments to various locally oriented identities, e.g., identification as a British Muslim, as compatible with British identity (Shazhadi et al., 2018; Waite & Cook, 2011).

Because there are multiple ways in which minority members can resolve identity conflict, the strategies that will be chosen by any one group cannot be easily predicted from the choices of another group. Uncritical generalisations from one group to another run the risk of ignoring the psychology and lived experience of comparatively powerless and understudied groups. It harbours the risk of intellectual colonialism through reproducing repressive power-relations by ignoring the perspective of comparatively powerless groups. Kurds are different from many other minorities in important ways that will be outlined below, and the ways in which identity conflict is negotiated by this unique group therefore merits attention.

The Kurdish diaspora and context of this research

This paper is interested in the specific experiences of UK-born/raised Kurds. Kurds are widely considered to be the largest stateless ethnic group in the world, with estimations of above 30 million people residing primarily in the Kurdish regions, referred to as 'Kurdistan', in the majority nation-states of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria (Hassanpour & Mojab, 2005). Although they are grouped under the same ethnicity, Kurds are a heterogeneous group, divided internally along a multitude of dimensions including religion, class, gender, dialect, and alphabet (Mojab & Gorman, 2007). Nevertheless, for the most part, Kurds share an overarching sense of common ethnic identity and have been embroiled in various conflicts with their respective majority governments, and this has been the main contributor to the large-scale migration out of the Middle East in the 1970s and beyond (Wahlbeck, 1998).

Kurds make for an interesting minority group to explore issues of identity and belonging with. Unlike many other ethnic groups often studied within the belonging literature, Kurds do not have their own specific nation-state and therefore originate from spaces where their own identities are less concrete, and often disputed. As such, it would be valuable to explore how a stateless group such as Kurds adopt different mechanisms for establishing collective unity and belonging. There has already been some research on the Kurdish diaspora, but the past studies on Kurds in Europe have mainly focused on first-generation migrants, issues relating to transnational ties to the homeland (Wahlbeck, 1998, 2002), and fighting for the Kurdish cause (Baser, 2011; Demir, 2012). However, with a few exceptions, not many studies have focused on how second-generation Kurds construct their belonging, not just in relation to their Kurdish identity but also in relation to the society they were born and/or raised in. Where this has been studied, it has been shown that Kurds in Nordic contexts often experience ambivalent and complex forms of belonging or not belonging, i.e., feeling stuck and 'in-between' (Eliassi, 2013; Toivanen & Kivisto, 2014).

However, it is of interest to understand how the aforementioned issues manifest in the British context for a number of reasons. The 2011 census estimated around 49,000 Kurds living in the UK, although this is believed to be a significant underestimation (Office for National Statistics, 2020). Of this number, almost half reported living in London, and around 40% were believed to be aged under 24 years of age, indicating that there is a substantial number of second-generation Kurds living in London (Office for National Statistics, 2020). Yet, within this context, Kurds have not been a particularly salient group for researchers and have been largely invisible in relation to policy (King et al., 2008).

Moreover, comparisons between the Nordic countries and the UK have shown that there is variation in the social and economic positions Kurds may take up post-migration (Wahlbeck, 2002), and therefore their lived experiences might vary considerably. In particular, this paper builds on previous studies by exploring issues of identity and belonging within the multicultural metropolis that is London. Features of the place, such as whether it is considered multicultural or more ethnically homogenous, play a key role in the way feelings of belonging might manifest in minorities (Nayak, 2017). So-called 'global cities' (Sassen, 1991), and neighbourhoods considered super-diverse (Vertovec, 2007), are of interest as past research has shown that first-generation migrants report more inclusive common neighbourhood identities that are grounded on diversity and difference (Pemberton & Phillimore, 2018). It has been shown that migrants might report better social interactions in public space, and an overarching sense of feeling accepted (Wessendorf, 2019). However, how such global cities might impact the belonging and social identities of second-generation immigrants raised in said environments, has not been studied extensively. Taking into account the London context specifically, this paper aims to enhance our understanding of how belonging manifests in Kurds, within a melting pot context where diversity and difference is emphasised.

Methods

Participants

Fourteen participants aged between 18 and 29 took part in the study. Participants all self-identified as ethnic Kurds with roots in Turkey, Iran, or Iraq. The focus of this paper is on second-generation Kurds who were born in the UK but whose parents had migrated to the UK. Note, four participants were not born in the UK, but had relocated at a very young age. According to Anthias (2009), migrant experiences are strongly linked to different stages in the life cycle. Therefore, these four participants were included despite not being born in the UK, because they had been schooled and socialised in the UK for a significant proportion of their lives.

Participants were all British citizens, and the majority either resided in London at the time of the interview, or had been raised in London, with only one participant being born and raised elsewhere in the UK. The participants were recruited through active University Kurdish societies in London, and using snowball sampling starting from the lead researcher's own community connections. Of the fourteen Kurdish participants, six were from Turkey, three were from Iran, and four were from Iraq, and one was mixed from Iran and Iraq. The researchers were not able to reach any Kurds from Syria for this study. There was a mixture of undergraduate, postgraduate, and employed participants. All aspects of this study were in line with APA and BPS ethical guidelines, and ethical approval was obtained from the university ethics committee. All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.

Table 6.1

List of participants with pseudonyms that were interviewed

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Born in UK	Kurdish region	Profession	Current Place of Residence
Rezan	Female	20	YES	Turkey	Student	London
Rizgar	Male	20	YES	Turkey	Student	London
Agrin	Male	18	YES	Turkey	Student	London
Daran	Male	27	YES	Turkey	Professional	London
Pelin	Female	21	YES	Iran	Professional	Southampton
Gizem	Female	18	YES	Turkey	Student	London
Lawin	Male	22	YES	Iraq	Professional	London
Azad	Male	23	NO	Iraq	Professional	London
Ferhad	Male	25	YES	Iran/Iraq	Professional	London
Berivan	Female	24	NO	Iraq	Professional	London
Mizgin	Female	19	YES	Turkey	Student	London
Akam	Male	28	YES	Iran	Postgraduate	London
Avesta	Female	24	NO	Iraq	Professional	Southend
Dilnaz	Female	29	NO	Iran	Professional	London

Procedure

Data was collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted online using Zoom, over a two-month period in 2020. Video was enabled to maintain some of the interpersonal aspects of interviews usually captured in face-to-face interactions. Interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes. Permission was obtained by participants to record the interviews, and they were transcribed verbatim. All interviews were conducted in English. Participants were asked a range of open questions about their upbringing, what

Kurdish/British identity and culture means to them, and their feelings of belonging (see Appendix). Some example questions included: 'How Kurdish/British do you feel', and 'Where do you feel you belong'. Although some of the main questions highlighted above were pre-determined, the semi-structured nature of the interview allowed it to resemble a conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), and promoted an informal and non-threatening style of dialogue.

Data analysis

The data was analysed using thematic analysis (TA), drawing specifically on the principles of reflexive thematic analysis as conceptualised by Braun and Clarke (2019). This inductive approach follows social constructionist principles in emphasising the subjective, flexible, and interpretive nature of qualitative analysis. In addition, Braun and Clarke (2019) emphasise the active role of the researcher in producing knowledge as a key element of the reflexive TA approach. The first author was responsible for the analysis and interpretation of the data. In keeping with principles of reflexive TA, we reflect on some important issues around how the researchers' own position might have impacted the data in the discussion. Following initial transcription, the data was again thoroughly inspected, and analysed using NVivo 12 to create initial codes. These codes were carefully grouped into sub-themes and the relevant sub-themes were grouped around a 'relative core commonality' (Braun & Clarke, 2019), and then examined again in detail for consolidation purposes.

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

We identified three overarching themes throughout the data. The first theme related to being an 'other' in relation to the minority group identity (Kurdish). The second theme related to being an 'other' in relation to the mainstream identity (white British). Finally, the third theme identified within the data related to the importance of place-based identities as a

way of reducing some of the tensions associated with belonging. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of belonging highlighted above, we emphasise the situated nature of belonging. We draw attention to the importance of the socio-political context, and the intersecting nature of gender and race in the ways in which Kurds constructed their belonging (Anthias, 2008).

Being the 'Other' within the minority group

The second-generation Kurds in this study expressed a sense of being an 'other' in relation to Kurdish identity. Having been raised and socialised in a different society to first-generation Kurds and Kurds in their homeland, some of the participants emphasised that their differences to other Kurds were often profound, rendering it more difficult for them to be seen as Kurdish, and therefore impacting their own belonging.

In Kurdistan and being with Kurdish people, you're never seen as fully Kurdish […], you never feel yourself as fully Kurdish either 'cos of this British side. So you're almost left in this limbo, where you don't feel either (Akam).

One of the participants, Avesta, who was born in Iraqi Kurdistan but migrated to the UK at a very young age, describes how upon going back to her homeland she felt a disconnection with what it meant to be 'Kurdish' in the homeland. This case also lends weight to the significance of schooling and place of socialisation in affecting feelings of belonging, over and above place of birth (Anthias, 2009).

When I do go to Kurdistan, it's obvious that I'm not Kurdish […] that I wasn't brought up here basically. So I would say just too Kurdish for England, and too English for Kurdistan (Avesta).

Many of the second-generation Kurds claimed they had different values to Kurds 'back home' or the first-generation Kurdish community in the UK (their extended family and wider community), and rejected many of the cultural norms they identified as 'Kurdish

values'. One participant (Berivan) described some Kurdish values as "shackles of Kurdishness… holding me back".

Such experiences of feeling disconnected as a result of underlying cultural and value differences were also evident in those who spoke about returning to the homeland specifically.

When I'm there, I'd be wearing shorts, […] and my aunty would be like no you can't […] and she was like why are you wearing that inside the house and stuff, I was like oh it's like warm, she's like no you can't wear that, inside the house […] and like I'd step out in shorts, […] and the looks, the stares you get and stuff, and I understand that's their culture, that's how they think, they've never really seen that […] they're not like us they haven't been in Britain for example, and I understand. But then it sort of, it sort of makes you not want to go back […] It's basically like sexism, the Kurdish guys that I know, they didn't go through that, they're not told to do that […] and I think maybe that's one of the things that pushes me towards like a British identity, just because of like, just how much freer it is for women especially (Mizgin).

We can see that Mizgin's experiences in her homeland lead her to feel like an 'other', due to different clothing preferences. She talks about her wider family and the Kurdish culture in 'us vs them' terms, with phrases like 'they're not like us', and examples of being stared at by locals, indicating a clear sense of separation from the people and culture of her hometown. This affects her feelings of belonging and leads to a preference to not go back. This adds further weight to previous findings on the second-generation Kurdish diaspora, where it has been argued that Kurds may feel a sense of disappointment when going back to the homeland (Alinia & Eliassi, 2014).

The above quote from Mizgin also illustrates the ways in which this disconnection from Kurdish identity she experienced is something born out of the intersecting role of her gender identity. Yuval Davis et al. (1989) argue that ethnic ties alone cannot lead to belonging given that they are intersected with other social relations, such as those governed by gender norms. In the case of the second-generation female Kurds in this study, the importance of gender in the participants' constructions of belonging was clear – just as in previous research on female British Muslims (Dwyer, 2000), and in first-generation female Kurdish migrants (Alinia, 2004). There are important differences in the ways in which young women and men report prescribed gendered behaviours they must adhere to in Kurdish culture. E.g., one female participant claimed that women have to act 'proper' and behave in certain ways (Rezan). The women reported greater expectations, and different standards to which their behaviour is judged, compared with Kurdish men. In the above excerpt, Mizgin goes on to explain how ascribed gender roles, and attitudes towards women in Kurdish culture, push her more towards the British identity, where she can exercise more freedom as a woman. Therefore, we can see that in the case of second-generation Kurdish women, gender becomes a further dimension through which women feel 'othered' in Kurdish culture. Western cultures are often seen as more progressive in relation to gender issues than cultures which are rooted on Islamic norms and values (Yeğenoğlu, 1998). In our study, this was apparent through the representation of Kurdish and British culture as 'traditional' (and a number of participants also used the term 'backwards') and 'progressive', respectively. Issues relating to gender norms, sexual freedom, virginity, and expectations of marriage came up in many of the interviews as aspects of Kurdish culture that differed markedly from British culture.

Being the 'Other' within the majority group

In terms of the national identity, many participants expressed a limit to the extent they could qualify in the eyes of others as 'British'. This can be highlighted by the following quote: 'I think another thing is whiteness, you have to be white to be British' (Mizgin). We can see that Mizgin experiences essentialist and racialised representations of 'Britishness' in society, something which has been highlighted by scholars who argue that Britishness is often racialised (Gilroy, 1987). Racist discourse in the UK often emphasises fixed and immutable cultural, racial and ethnic differences, leading to the inevitable exclusion of anyone who does not fit into the rigidly defined boundaries (Gilroy, 1987; Modood, 1997). Not only do such exclusionary discourses present a barrier to the extent to which people belong to a 'British' identity and see it as home, but it can also foster an 'us vs them' mentality. In the below quote, Gizem echoes Mizgin's sentiments and emphasises that she will never be seen as a true Brit in the eye of the 'other'.

> I feel like, even though we still have our British passports […] they will never see us as like the true Britain […] I feel like I'm just a guest in Britain, British people see me and they think, White British people sorry, they see me and they think immigrant or foreigner, like they don't see me as British (Gizem).

Even in cases where participants may ascribe to hybrid identities and stake a claim to 'Britishness' through citizenship or birth right, as was the case with some of the participants, ultimately their belonging was still very much impacted by the perceptions of the dominant group, and the extent to which they are 'othered' (Anthias, 2001). Recent research has shown that second-generation immigrants report subtle everyday racism in the UK (Hirsch, 2019), and this present study shows that Kurds in this study also felt excluded and 'othered'. As we see in the quote below, this had a significant impact on their own feelings of belonging to the British identity as well.

But also it's quite sad, because like I'm of colour they feel threatened […] it is quite sad, but racism does exist because at the end of the day even though I was born here, this will never be my home, this will never be my country (Pelin).

In cases where participants did not report personally experiencing discrimination or exclusion, they still showed an awareness of the extent to which other Kurds are often excluded from British society through exclusionary discourses.

So I fit in in the sense that I am white passing […] so that's why I fit in, I don't feel like I have been subject to racism or to any attacks, or to criticism based on my physical appearance […] However my Kurdish friends or my other friends who are not as white passing as I am, they have had problems. (Berivan).

For Berivan, her appearance as 'white passing' has often protected her from experiencing racism, because the physical markers are subtle. In her case, this also precludes her from 'sticking out' and feeling like she does not fit in. However, she remains aware of the lived experiences of those around her, the degree to which her fellow Kurds are 'othered' and how it affects their ability to fit into British society.

The role of place-based identities in shaping belonging

In the final theme reported in this paper, we found evidence that participants embraced multiple and hybrid forms of belonging and often adopted particular strategies to 're-construct' their feelings of belonging in new and more locally oriented terms to reconcile some of the tensions they experienced with dominant notions of Kurdishness and Britishness. Here, the importance of place-based identities was emphasised through a specific belonging to London.

Interviewer: What would you class your culture?

> Rizgar: London Kurd, basically. Because, erm, if you look at the Kurds in London, most of them are very similar, like a very similar culture. It's different from the one there, but it's also not British culture, like, that's why I feel like we kind of have started creating our own culture.

Although Rizgar identified as a Kurd throughout the interview, and strongly engaged in Kurdish cultural practices, he acknowledged that sometimes he has difficulty belonging with the Kurdish culture - particularly on return to the homeland, due to cultural differences. To reconcile this, Rizgar 're-categorises' his own identity as a 'London Kurd', representing a new place-based and localised hybrid identity with its own boundaries and cultural norms.

Indeed, the participants who lived in London consistently referred to a 'London culture' and being a 'Londoner', and described London as more ethnically diverse and tolerant than the rest of the UK. Environments that foster diversity can increase a sense of belonging to a more localised, neighbourhood identity (Pemberton & Phillimore, 2018; Wessendorf, 2019). Of course, it was often claimed that stepping outside of London provides an entirely different lived experience of 'Britishness'.

> You feel maybe more accepted and at home [in London] until you realise that it's actually just because of how multicultured it is, that even the white people within London are different to the white people outside of London, it's only when you step outside of that, that actually you feel even more isolated, segregated, it feels, just something within you, it's a discomfort, I'm not as comfortable (Dilnaz).

Going even further, in some cases, re-constructed the meaning of 'Britishness' to represent the London climate, further emphasising the importance of place in their constructions of identity.

> See I say, if I was to say, what is the British identity I'd say London, I'd say look at
> London if you want to see the British identity, because of its multiculturalism and
> how you have so many different people from different backgrounds, living together
> (Lawin).

Within the London context, the representation of Britishness is one that fosters multiculturalism and diversity, but participants felt that this may not be the case beyond London, and that the likelihood of sticking out and being 'othered' elsewhere is heightened. Although all but one of the participants in this study had at least some experience of living in London, the importance of place is also apparent in the experiences of Pelin, who had no experience of living in London, having been born and raised in Southampton. As we can see from her quote in the above section, her position living in what she believed was a more ethnically homogenous setting led to a greater inclination to reject Britishness outright due to her experiences of racism and exclusion. For Pelin, the lack of affiliation to a multicultural place-based identity with inclusive boundaries had profound implications for her sense of connectedness and belonging to a British identity, where she would often have to "force herself to fit in". Compared to the London residents, she indicated a greater sense of ambivalence in relation to her identity, and proclaimed that she did not belong anywhere.

Past scholars have argued that boundaries of belonging that are defined through variables such as citizenship, democracy, and common values are the most permeable and least rigid (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Place-based identities such as a 'London' identity that are defined by common values, diversity and difference can therefore be beneficial in fostering a sense of connectedness and belonging among minority members. Accordingly, our participants who lived in London had no issue displaying a sense of belonging with this local identity, and calling London home.

Discussion

This present study builds on previous work on feelings of belonging among second-generation immigrants and is one of the first studies to investigate second-generation Kurds living in the UK. In this study, we showed that some of the tensions that Kurds experience with their belonging is similar to previous research with other minority groups, but also highlighted some themes specific to the Kurdish experience in London. Throughout the interviews, participants self-identified as 'Kurdish', but provided complex and ambivalent accounts of their sense of belonging to both the Kurdish identity and Britishness. We found that Kurds predominantly expressed their sense of belonging against what they considered, through their own experiences, as the typical or prototypical Kurd and Brit. This often led to tensions in their sense of belonging, as their own feelings of and entitlement to 'Britishness' was often compared to a heavily racialised and essentialist definition of what Britishness is. Indeed, this struggle to be accepted as a Brit due to racialised notions of Britishness is something that has also been shown among various other minority groups in the UK (Hirsch, 2019; Shazhadi et al., 2018), and this study is one of the first to demonstrate that Kurds in the UK have similar experiences. When considering Kurdishness, differences in cultural values were key in driving how participants felt. It seems the participants are engaged in an ongoing negotiation of insider/outsider status. This sometimes contributed to a sense of exclusion for some of the participants in this study, and there was a general sense of feeling in between cultures or in 'limbo' (a word which Akam used in his response shown above). As Avesta said, she felt 'too Kurdish for England, and too English for Kurdistan'. Again, these insights are in line with previous work on second-generation immigrants showing feelings of 'in-betweenness' and conflict in their feelings of belonging to their national and ethnic identities (Brocket, 2020; Eliassi, 2013; Toivanen & Kivisto).

Throughout all interviews, participants spoke about their feelings of belonging in relation to how others portrayed them, and the extent to which they could be in- or excluded from particular groups (Anthias, 2008). Being 'othered' either through direct exclusion or own feelings of difference is one of the key factors which shaped the ways in which Kurds *do* or *do not* belong. We also showed that such processes of belonging are also heavily dependent on other social locations one may occupy in society, e.g., race or gender (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In the case of many of the females in our sample, belonging was negotiated in relation to their gender identity, and the struggles they experience as a female. This is in line with previous research showing the intersecting role of gender on the construction of belonging among British-born minorities (Dwyer, 2000).

Furthermore, this paper shows the importance of the social context, and place-based identities in shaping how people might react to some of the identity related tensions they experience. Our findings are in line with past research showing that migrants often thrive in super-diverse contexts where a common neighbourhood identity is emphasised (Pemberton & Phillimore, 2018). In this present study, we show that London Kurds are often actively reconstructing their identities, and attaching to more place based, local and inclusive identities. Our findings highlight the potential benefits of developing such identities for one's sense of connectedness and well-being, and also a means through which 'Britishness' can be represented that encourages integration and diversity. In cases where more local, and inclusive place-based identities cannot be developed among second-generation immigrants, there may be negative consequences for one's sense of connectedness and their subsequent well-being.

Limitations

It is important to reflect on some issues that may have influenced the research conducted in this paper. First, the majority of participants with the exception of one, were all either residents of London at the time of the study or had been raised in London. Future studies should focus on recruiting more Kurds living in other areas of the UK, to allow for a better comparison of different place-based identities.

Secondly, we argue that the first author's role as a Kurd can be considered a valuable asset as it allowed for access to a relatively 'invisible' community (King et al., 2008). Moreover, the cultural similarity resulting from the 'insider' status of the researcher can break down barriers and allow for a more comfortable and intimate conversation. By the same token, this may also present potential barriers, as participants shield their true thoughts due to fear of judgement from someone from the same community, or in the case of the Kurdish diaspora, politicise the ethnicity of the interviewer. As well as this, insider status as a researcher poses methodological risks, including the withholding of information assumed to be 'common knowledge' by participants. In the case of the first author, this might have manifested both in terms of commonalities as a general 'Kurd' but also as a 'Kurd from Iran', which was the identity position reported by some participants. Additionally, as a male interviewer, the effects of gender on the dynamics of the interview must also be considered. As Herod (1993) argues, the gender of the interviewer can shape the course and content of the interviews. We are fairly confident that this was not a major obstacle in this research, because the female participants often freely initiated and addressed sensitive issues such as relationships, virginity, and sexual freedom – although it is possible these interactions may have taken an even more insightful trajectory with a female interviewer.

In this study we treated Kurds as a single collective ethnic minority group, and sought to understand their feelings of belonging as a unified group. However, due to their very diverse and multifaceted history, a more nuanced analysis of Kurds from the different regions

of Kurdistan is necessary to further entangle some of the tensions that are associated with Kurdish identity. Additionally, it might be interesting to explore the dynamics *within* Kurds from the different majority nation states. For instance, some research on Kurds has already shown that there may be some internal divisions and 'othering' among Kurds themselves (Demir, 2012; Alinia & Eliassi, 2014). It is therefore important to consider these questions in any future research on Kurds. As well as this, future studies could also incorporate the ways in which Kurds feel about and negotiate the identities of their majority nation states in the Middle East and Asia, because a proportion of Kurds also hold the citizenship of these countries. This could yield a more complete picture of cultural identity and feelings of belonging.

Conclusion

In sum, this paper adds to our understanding of second-generation belonging, by exploring an under-researched group in a novel context. That is, second-generation Kurds living in the UK. The struggle of the Kurdish participants to belong, and a feeling of 'in-betweenness' was apparent, and this was exacerbated by feeling 'othered' in relation to both British society and other Kurds. Interestingly, the potential for Kurds to deal with some of these predicaments played out in this study in a novel manner, through emphasising the importance of a multicultural London identity. London remains a multicultural and diverse metropolis capable of offering 'psychological refuge' to those who may experience tensions in their belonging. Although it is not appropriate to generalise beyond the context of this paper, there may be important lessons here on the tensions experienced by second-generation immigrants and how these tensions are resolved by emphasising place-based identities that are inclusive in nature. Researching how far these processes might play out in the same way for other ethnic minorities would be a fascinating endeavour.

Chapter 7: General Discussion

7.1 Summary of main findings

In this thesis, I have presented five papers with the overarching aim to shed further light on the formation and intergroup dynamics of cultural identity. In particular, this thesis aimed to build on previous research exploring an intergroup perspective to understanding how people choose to acculturate, and how this affects intergroup outcomes (Bourhis et al., 1997; Brown & Zagefka, 2011). However, drawing on alternative perspectives and different means of inquiry in my qualitative study, I also aimed to present a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the formation of cultural identities and issues related to acculturation, in order to help build an overarching understanding of these concepts that goes beyond one discipline and theoretical outlook.

The first two research papers in this thesis (chapter 4) focus on the notion of compatibility of acculturation preferences. Although there has been some exploration of compatibility of preferences, or similarly the bi-dimensionality of acculturation orientations (e.g., Demes & Geeraert, 2014; Hillekens et al., 2019; Ryder et al., 2000), this has remained a largely under-researched area in the acculturation literature. In particular, where this has been explored, the studies have overlooked potential moderators that could influence whether the two dimensions are significantly correlated or not. I outline two papers concerned with the extent to which heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption are compatible or conflicting acculturation preferences. The first paper (paper 1) presents two studies exploring whether this compatibility of preferences, in both majority members and minority members, is influenced by essentialist notions of identity. In the first study (study 1), Somali minority members living in the UK showed a greater incompatibility of acculturation preferences when they themselves held essentialist notions of British identity, but also when they perceived that British people held essentialist notions of British identity. That is, a preference for heritage culture maintenance among the Somali participants was associated with a

preference for less British culture adoption when (perceived) essentialism was high. There was no such incompatibility when participants showed low essentialist beliefs about British identity. In the second study of the first paper (study 2), I focussed on white British majority members' preferences and found the same pattern. The relationship between a preference for minorities to adopt British culture and maintain their own heritage culture was negative when the majority members held essentialist beliefs about British identity, but there was no such incompatibility when essentialist beliefs were low. Overall, this paper emphasises the importance of how identity is defined when considering perceptions of cultural compatibility. Therefore, the politics of group boundaries and issues to do with exclusionary identities in society have to be considered when understanding acculturation preferences of both majority and minority groups.

Paper 2 (study 3) shifts the focus to majority members' *perceptions* of minority members' acculturation preferences; that is, how do majority members perceive the ways minority members choose to acculturate, and what factors might influence this. Findings demonstrated that white British majority members who perceive ethnic minorities as threatening to the British culture were more likely to perceive that these minority groups' preferences for heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption are not compatible. Importantly, this effect was only found for a Pakistani minority target group, and not for a German target group. In this paper, one of the key conclusions was the importance of studying intergroup processes of acculturation of a wide range of different minority groups in order to gain further insight into the contexts in which some of these intergroup processes might play out.

In the next section, the focus of the thesis shifted to another under-researched element of the intergroup dynamics of acculturation. Typically, acculturation literature is centred on the minority or immigrant group's culture and change is emphasised as a process primarily

occurring among minorities. Change from the majority group in order to accommodate minority groups is also an important part of the acculturation process as conceptualised by some (e.g., Redfield et al., 1936). Indeed, in today's increasingly globalised world it is important to pay attention to change from the majority perspective. Chapter 5 built our knowledge on majority culture change, particularly from an intergroup lens, by presenting two papers exploring how majority members react to a perception that their culture is changing due to minority members, or that minority members want them to change their culture.

In paper 3 (study 4), I showed that a perception from majority members that minority groups demand adoption of the minority culture is associated with perceptions of symbolic threat, which in turn is associated with majority members' own preferences for minority members to acculturate in a way that resembles assimilation to the majority culture (more British culture adoption and less minority culture maintenance). Paper 4 presents two studies (study 5 & 6) which corroborate the above findings but also go further to show the importance of focusing on perceptions of *actual* culture change, as opposed to minority expectations or preferences for change, as these variables remained strong predictors of intergroup outcomes even after controlling for perceptions of acculturation preferences. A perception that the 'British' and 'English' cultures are changing due to the presence of ethnic minority cultures was positively associated with symbolic threat, and through this with greater prejudice towards ethnic minorities living in the UK/England. However, a perception that ethnic minority cultures are changing due to influence from mainstream society was negatively associated with symbolic threat, and through this with less prejudice towards ethnic minorities.

To understand the above findings, it is helpful to link back to principles of SIT. Since groups are motivated to act in ways to primarily serve their group interests and achieve

positive distinctiveness, particular acculturation strategies that champion and preserve aspects of the minority culture may be seen as occurring at the expense of the majority group (Norton & Sommers, 2011), and therefore are likely to invoke feelings of threat by majority groups. In such cases, majority groups are more likely to exhibit prejudice and discriminatory attitudes towards an outgroup or expect them to assimilate to the majority society to reduce the threat associated with their cultural group, as seen in papers 3 and 4. Such reactions can be understood as a mechanism through which the higher status majority group can maintain their groups' distinctiveness, and preserve the status-quo (Verkuyten, 2007).

The final section of the thesis aimed to present an in-depth exploration into how minority members negotiate their cultural identities in Britain. Due to the complex and dynamic nature of cultural identities of minority groups in globalised societies, it was of value to pursue an analysis which relied less on static models which are often accused of being grounded on essentialist and dualist conceptualisations of culture and identity. For this reason, the final paper presented in this thesis shifted away from utilising acculturation frameworks as they have been defined in social psychology, in the study of cultural identity (e.g., Berry, 1999; Bourhis et al., 1997; Brown & Zagefka, 2011). Instead, the final paper adopted qualitative methods to provide a more in-depth account of the complexities involved in the negotiation of minority members' identities.

In this study (study 7), ethnic Kurds living primarily in London (but also elsewhere in the UK) were interviewed in order to understand their lived experiences of negotiating multiple identities and cultures. Participants' experiences were mostly framed through a lens of belonging (or not belonging), and they detailed not only some of the factors integral to their belonging but also some of the tensions they experienced as a result of their hybrid identities. Key to this study was the concept of being the 'other'. I found that the Kurds interviewed not only associated this feeling with their British identity, but also their ethnic

Kurdish identity. This was either born out of feelings of explicit exclusion by majority members, or their own feelings of disconnection and difference from the culture as they experienced it. In this study, the importance of place-based identities emerged, participants found it easy to belong to London, because the boundaries associated with being a Londoner were largely defined through residency and sharing common values, e.g., multiculturalism, and by virtue of this were permeable and open in nature (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

7.2 Limitations

In each chapter, I have highlighted the specific limitations of the individual studies presented in this thesis. However, it is also important to consider some of the broader issues related to the theoretical approach, and assumptions underlying the studies that I have presented in this thesis, as well as further elaborating on some of the methodological and design issues that were common across a number of the studies presented.

First, as highlighted in the methodology chapter, this thesis is largely based on the psychological framework of acculturation. I have used the dimensions of heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption as the primary means of assessing cultural identity. Of course, the measures associated with these cultural orientations, particularly those adopted in my studies, are limited to the domains of cultural practice and cultural values, but not so much the *cultural identification* domain (Schwartz et al., 2014), and the implications of this must be considered in relation to the findings presented in this thesis. On the one hand, both group identification and acculturation orientations reflect commitment to particular groups, and therefore the processes and social psychological mechanisms driving these are expected to be similar. On the other hand, an individual's subjective attachment and emotions towards a particular group are not necessarily bound to their practices and explicit behaviours and values, but may manifest more in 'symbolic' means. The concept of 'symbolic ethnicity' presented by Gans (1979), for instance, refers to this sense of nostalgia and personal

allegiance towards one's ethnicity. For this reason, while the dimensions used in this thesis sheds light on the factors that influence *cultural orientations,* it must not be conflated with subjective identification towards one's ethnic group; one cannot assume that how an individual rates their orientations towards a particular culture corresponds to their identification with this culture. This is important to emphasise as the lack of a clear distinction between identification and acculturation orientations has been previously flagged as an issue when considering how acculturation is assessed (Demes & Geeraert, 2014). In some cases, minorities (particularly born in the majority society) who do not participate in distinctive cultural practices still identify with their ethnic group (Modood, 2003). Modood (2003) argues that ethnic identity and group membership has to be understood not just in terms of cultural practices, but through an 'associational identity' which emphasises pride in one's origins, adherence to particular group labels, and sometimes a political assertiveness. The qualitative paper in this thesis does shed some light on the complex and situated ways in which cultural practices and belonging might interact together. Nevertheless, future work should explore the processes investigated in papers 1-4, such as notions of compatibility of cultural identity and majority culture change, using qualitative methods to unpack the complexities involved. Alternatively, future studies should focus on the processes explored in this thesis but using dependent variables that capture *identification* instead of *cultural orientation,* i.e., applying the bi-dimensional framework of acculturation to the principle of ethnic and national identity, as some scholars have done (Hutnik, 1986; Phinney, 1990).

A further issue with using the bi-dimensional framework of acculturation in the studies across this thesis relates to the internal reliability of the measures used. In a number of the studies reported, the dimensions culture maintenance and culture adoption typically showed mediocre levels of reliability, though in others they were often at an acceptable range (α ranging from .6 to .8). Lower scores on internal reliability could reflect the complexity of

trying to measure acculturation using broad and rather general survey questions. It may be that the items in some of the studies used were not particularly unidimensional and were instead capturing a range of different issues i.e., attitudes towards 'overall culture' and particular specific 'traditions' or cultural aspects may not be synonymous. Throughout the studies, the acculturation dimensions were often measured using a limited number of items (maximum 3 for each) in order to remain within budget but also keep surveys relatively concise. However, future research should consider using a multitude of survey measures of cultural identity, instead of only relying on the dimensions of heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption.

Moreover, throughout the studies in this thesis, there were some subtle wording differences in the ways that acculturation was referred to or measured. Although I do not anticipate these differences to greatly affect the findings, it is important to outline these to ensure the findings are interpreted correctly. First, as mentioned in the discussion section of paper 1, the statements used for the acculturation items were slightly different across study 1 & 2. The items in study 2 began with 'ethnic minorities should', rather than 'I would like' (as used in study 1). Secondly, as briefly outlined in the Methods chapter, papers 3 and 4 differ in their labels of the variables related to meta-perceptions of acculturation preferences despite denoting the same measure. In paper 3, I used the term 'demand' to refer to the variable which measured the extent to which majority members thought minority members wanted them to adopt the minority culture, but changed this to 'desire' as a more suitable label in the next study (paper 4). Such inconsistencies in the ways that the measures were worded in the survey or labelled in this paper could lead to confusion in the interpretation. Previous studies in acculturation that looked at similar processes also vary widely in terms of such subtle wording differences (see e.g. Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011b; Zagefka et al., 2011), and the consequences of the precise wording of acculturation measures have not been explored

systematically. As well as this, it would be of value to explore differences between variables such as 'demand for culture adoption' and 'desire for culture adoption'. It may be that the former is more closely related to the concept of symbolic threat than the latter, and this should be tested empirically.

Another important limitation of the research on acculturation presented in this thesis relates to its applicability to specific groups and contexts. The findings must be considered on a broad scale, as the majority of the studies bar one (paper 2) focus on ethnic minorities in general as a target group. The primary reason for doing this is because many of the research questions explored in this thesis are novel and therefore it is important to understand them within a broad context first. However, this may also be problematic when trying to understand the nuances associated with the intergroup process of acculturation. It may be that majority members' attitudes towards ethnic minorities *overall* are driven by particular characteristics that are salient in their representation of some ethnic minorities or that they are only thinking about particular ethnic minority groups. For instance, Kunst et al. (2016) showed that islamophobia or perceived islamophobia is the key factor prompting the acculturation attitudes of majority and particular minority members to clash, potentially hindering mutual integration. Studying broad target groups like 'immigrant' or 'ethnic minority' does not allow for such nuances to be captured. As I argue in the conclusions of paper 2, it is important to study and compare the findings across specific target groups. As well as this, future research should consider factors such as religion, intergroup similarity, and political motivations, to shed further light on majority and minority members' acculturation perceptions and attitudes.

Further, it is important to acknowledge that the studies reported in this thesis are all limited to correlational designs. Of course, in some cases, this was the most practical and appropriate method to investigate some of the novel ideas examined in this thesis. As well as

this, time and budget constraints associated with conducting experiments with effective manipulations led me to commit to cross-sectional designs. However, this means that the findings emerging from this thesis have to be considered as associational only and not causal. Direction cannot be inferred with such methods. The use of correlational designs contributes to what some scholars have called a 'causality crisis' in acculturation research, where there is a significant lack in the number of findings which allow for causal inferences in acculturation research (Kunst, 2021). Indeed, this has implications for the theories and frameworks on which the main insights about acculturation are built on, as it could be argued that they have not been causally verified to an adequate degree. This could be improved with greater emphasis on experimental or longitudinal (e.g., cross-lagged panel analysis) designs. Related to this thesis, then, future experimental inquiry, such as exploring potential moderation through experimental means, or more complex manipulations of acculturation orientations, are essential to test whether the relationships reported in this thesis may be causal in nature (Kunst, 2021).

Similarly, many of the studies in this thesis were limited in the number of participants that could be recruited due to budget constraints. In many cases, G*Power analysis (Faul et al., 2009) allowed me to identify the minimum number of participants for well-powered studies, and I was able to maintain this standard across the studies. However, this meant I was limited in the extent to which I could complicate my analysis, e.g., latent modelling or using multiple mediation/moderation models. Some of the suggestions for future research in my studies involve more complex analyses such as moderated moderation (Hayes, 2017), which would require larger samples. I was unable to explore these processes in this thesis for the reasons outlined above; future research should consider these more complex models of analysis to shed more light on the context-specific intergroup processes involved in acculturation.

7.3 Future directions

Majority culture change

One of the three main focuses of this thesis was to explore the new and under-researched concept of majority culture change. In particular, this thesis focused on the intergroup consequences of majority members' perceptions that they should change their culture to accommodate minority members, using both an bidimensional acculturation framework (Lefringhausen et al., 2021) and principles from the theory of cultural inertia (Zárate et al., 2012, 2019). I argue that future research should continue the exploration into majority culture change using a variety of different frameworks and methodological designs. It has recently been emphasised that majority members also have preferences for how they wish to acculturate, e.g., whether they wish to maintain their national culture, and/or adopt immigrant cultures (Haugen & Kunst, 2017; Lefringhausen et al., 2021). Through the studies in this thesis, it has become apparent that some of the key findings on intergroup processes of acculturation can also be applied to majority culture change, such as the role of symbolic threat as a mediator in the relationship between perceptions of outgroup preferences and own preferences. It is important to continue to understand change from the majority group perspective and with a focus on the majority culture as well as the well-studied minority culture, especially because majority members' own acculturation preferences for their *own* culture has been found to be a stronger antecedent of intergroup attitudes than preferences for the minority group (Geschke et al., 2010).

Some suggestions for future research on the topic of majority culture change are listed below. First, it is important to build on the studies in this thesis in exploring the consequences of a perception from majority members that minority members want to, or have already started to, change the majority culture. Secondly, a neglected area in relation to majority culture change relates to minority members' own expectations of what majority members

should do. In papers 3 and 4, *majority members' perceptions* were the key focus. However, future research on minority members should attempt to shed light on a number of areas that have insofar not received any attention at all in the literature on acculturation and intergroup relations. For example, research could attempt to uncover the behavioural correlates of minority members seeking the majority group to change or not change, and also explore how meta-perceptions of wanting culture change can affect minority members' attitudes towards majority groups.

Qualitative methods

Also, more qualitative or mixed-methods investigations of acculturation would represent an important advancement from current thinking; it is important to lay the foundation for the quantitative work, and ensure that the cultural domains explored in surveys are informed by research (Haugen & Kunst, 2017; Ozer, 2013). Overall, while there was value in adopting the acculturation framework to shed further light on majority members' acculturation attitudes, future research should use more qualitative explorations of people's feelings and thoughts around diversity in society. For example, a qualitative exploration of whether white British majority members construe that society is changing due to minority members, the reasons behind this, and how this affects their own attitudes would provide some more in-depth insight into the impact of majority culture change.

Exploration of moderators

Moreover, one of the central findings of the studies in this thesis is that often how majority members think about acculturation, and the intergroup consequences of this in terms of feelings of threat, depends on third factors. Indeed, the variation in acculturation attitudes between different contexts points to some important third factors that might drive relationships between intergroup vaiables (Brown et al., 2016). It is not necessarily a given that majority members react negatively, or think in particular ways about the ways in which

minority members acculturate. In this thesis, essentialism (paper 1) and perceived threat (paper 2) were examples of some variables that act as moderators of the *compatibility* between perceptions of, or preferences for, heritage culture maintenance and majority culture adoption preferences. It would be interesting to further understand the ways in which essentialism can influence the acculturation process. For instance, future research could look at whether essentialist views of identity and culture can moderate the relationships found in paper 3 and paper 4; where the focus was on how majority members react to perceptions of an *ongoing* or *expected* shift towards the minority culture.

Other potential moderators could be explored, such as political orientation, as liberals may be more sympathetic towards societies that encourage and foster the growth of minority cultures (Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2020b). Another factor that could be explored as a third factor involved in the intergroup process of acculturation is social identity complexity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002), because the extent to which people believe that one can successfully integrate two cultures might depend on their representations of the interrelations between various social identities (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012b). Many other intergroup variables could also be at play which could receive future attention, such as collective ownership threat (Nijs et al., 2021), collective angst (Wohl et al., 2010), perceived similarity, perceived cultural distance (Mahfud et al., 2018), and level and valence of intergroup contact (Barlow et al., 2012; te Lindert et al., 2021).

Importantly, this thesis has focussed on acculturation and identity largely in plural terms, and as primarily a group process from the perspective of a majority-minority dichotomy in society. However, taking an individual difference approach and focussing more on individually oriented processes might also inform some of the key drivers of particular acculturation attitudes. For instance, some research has considered some individual difference variables, such as self-protection and growth values, which predict whether majority

members are likely to acculturate towards the minority culture or prefer to maintain their own culture (e.g., Lefringhausen et al., 2020). Future research can enhance this literature by exploring whether these particular individual differences variables might moderate how majority members perceive or react to minority members' acculturation preferences.

Beyond bi-dimensional acculturation frameworks

The findings in all papers demonstrate the importance of the outgroup, or the 'other', in the formation of cultural identity. However, adopting a qualitative approach as I have done in paper 5 allows for a more in-depth understanding of some of the complexities associated with minority members' cultural identity construction. This last paper focused on the ways in which second generation minority members, specifically a sample of ethnic Kurds, construct and negotiate their sense of belonging to their various identities. This includes, but as shown in my study is not exclusive to, particular cultural orientations. Through the studies in my thesis, I contribute to the argument that limiting our understanding of acculturation to two fundamental cultural orientations disregards the complexities of cultural identities in a global age. Therefore, looking beyond these classic frameworks of acculturation provides a greater platform to increase our understanding of how minority members might negotiate their various identities and cultures, and majority members' own perceptions and expectations regarding this.

7.4 Implications for society

The studies presented in this thesis, as well as the suggestions for future research outlined above, all form a body of research that is intended to further our understanding of how the intergroup nature of acculturation processes has an instrumental role in relations between various groups of different origin and power positions in society. Often in the media and political discourse, right-wing groups and commentators attempt to stoke fears that minority groups are attempting to change the essential character of a particular nation or

culture (Esses, et al., 2013). Examples include claims by senior politicians that Britain is losing its culture (Newton Dunn, 2018), outrage at practices tailored to particular minority groups, e.g., distribution of halal meat (Stephenson, 2014), and terms coined such as 'Londonistan' and 'Eurabia' to refer to the growing population of Muslim minority members (Carr, 2016; Phillips, 2007).

For this reason, it is important to understand the intergroup consequences of such perceptions, and the social psychological mechanisms that drive particular attitudes. The studies on acculturation in this thesis have shown that perceptions of threat play an instrumental role in forming majority members' acculturation preferences for minority members. Of course, meta-perceptions of negative attitudes and feelings that a group is being discriminated can foster separation on the part of minority members (Robinson, 2009), decrease their attachment to the national identity (Badea et al., 2011; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007), and even contribute to extreme political views against the majority society (Obaidi et al., 2018). As well as this, paper 2 showed that feelings of threat are associated with stereotypical views of how minority members acculturate, and such perceptions often do not correspond to reality for the minority members (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998). This discrepancy between imputed opinions and real opinions can also fuel negative majority-minority relations. Therefore, this thesis shows that understanding the ways in which perceptions of threat can be negated, and tailoring policy and governmental interventions to mitigate against threat, may go a long way in reducing tensions between different majority and minority groups in society.

Importantly, one key finding throughout this thesis was that particular representations of identity and the boundaries through which identities are defined are central to intergroup relations and acculturation attitudes. When the boundaries that define membership of a particular group are based on impermeable traits, and are exclusionist in nature, it is harder

for people to universally claim that identity (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Essentialist perceptions of identity might encourage a belief that people cannot have hybrid and integrated cultural identities (paper 1), and such feelings of exclusion can affect belonging of second generation minority members who have been born in the UK (paper 5). Importantly, rather than solely existing in the minds of individuals, intergroup ideologies are often institutionalized as policies (Guimond et al., 2014). Undoubtedly, then, this can have implications for the integration of minority members and the intergroup climate. The findings in this thesis, e.g., the tendency for minority members to distinguish between a British and a 'London' identity, and to identify largely with the latter, suggests that policies should encourage 'civic' representations of identity, which are defined by inclusive and permeable boundaries (Ignatieff, 1994). Encouraging this representation through policy, education, and media campaigns may facilitate multiculturalism, make it easier to celebrate diversity, and encourage more positive attitudes towards policies that endorse migration (Reijerse et al., 2015).

7.5 Concluding remarks

In sum, then, I present five papers in this thesis broadly designed to further our understanding of the role of intergroup relations in the acculturation process. The first section focused on the idea of combining cultural orientations towards one's heritage culture and the majority culture, with particular reference to the factors that may influence how *majority* and *minority* members think about this. Then, I turned my attention to majority culture change (i.e., majority members' own cultural orientations towards their heritage culture or minority cultures) and built on the emerging literature by introducing two studies designed to understand the intergroup consequences of majority members' *meta-perceptions* of what minority members want them to do. Finally, to further understand the lived complexities associated with cultural identity, I turned to qualitative methods to understand identity

negotiation within second generation Kurds living in the UK, and again showed that among other important factors, intergroup relations remain a key driver of the ways in which their identity is negotiated. Understanding how particular intergroup and identity related variables can influence how majority and minority groups think about culture is instrumental to understanding the drivers of prejudice and negative attitudes in society, and can go a long way in informing the ways in which research can help different groups to come together in harmonious, multicultural societies.

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