Relationship between perceived acculturation expectations and Muslim minority youth's acculturation and adaptation

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ABSTRACT

Acculturation strategies have frequently been used to describe how members of ethnic minorities reconcile their heritage culture with the culture of their society of residence. Recently, studies have started to pay increased attention to the fact that the choice of acculturation strategy does not take place in a social vacuum. In the present study, we test whether the perception of assimilation expectations held by the societal majority (PSAE) as well as separation expectations held by ethnic peers (PESE) may be related to individuals' own acculturation strategy. Furthermore, we investigate whether these perceived expectations are directly related to stress and indirectly to adaptation, mediated by acculturation strategies. All relationships were investigated using multi-group structural equation modeling with members from three Muslim minority groups: 301 German-Turks, 302 French-Maghrebis and 262 British-Pakistanis. Across the samples, PSAE was associated with higher degrees of stress. PESE was negatively related to integration, while it was positively related to separation. In addition, PESE was indirectly and negatively related with self-esteem and/or socio-cultural adaptation in all samples. The impact of societal assimilation expectation appears to be limited in this regard. In all, the present study suggests that perceived acculturation expectations may influence ethnic minorities' acculturation strategy. The results also suggest that perceived expectations that contrast with individuals' personal acculturation preference could result in higher levels of stress and lower levels of psychological and socio-cultural adaptation, mediated by acculturation strategies.

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1. Research questions

Although it is widely acknowledged that ethnic minorities' acculturation takes place in, and is influenced by, social context (Berry, 2006a), acculturation research has tended to focus on the individual-level perspective, while paying less attention to the group-level and societal factors. It was only in recent years and particularly after the work of Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, and Senecal (1997), that an interest in group and macro-level variables, which arguably are important in the process of acculturation, has emerged. The present study is an attempt to contribute to this burgeoning area of acculturation research by exploring whether perceived acculturation expectations are directly related to acculturation strategy preferences of ethnic minorities. Our study samples comprise members of Muslim minorities, who belong to groups that have faced strong assimilation expectations in their countries public discourse (Bowskill, Lyons, & Coyle, 2007; Fekete, 2008). We were specifically interested in the influence of perceived assimilation expectations in the dominant society and perceived separation expectations among ethnic peers, which can be seen as a reaction to this societal assimilation expectation (see

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Rumbaut, 2008). The study also explored whether perceived expectations are directly associated with stress as well as indirectly related to psychological and socio-cultural adaptation.

2. Introduction

Being a member of an ethnic minority group involves the task of reconciling one's heritage culture with the dominant culture of the society of residence. In his acculturation strategy model, Berry (1997) identified four different ways in which individuals may solve this task. First, individuals may choose to maintain their heritage culture, while rejecting the dominant culture. This strategy is referred to as *separation*. Individuals who give up their heritage culture and adapt to the dominant culture choose the second strategy, *assimilation*. Individuals may choose a third strategy, *marginalization*, which takes place when individuals give up their heritage culture but do not adapt to the dominant culture. Last but not least, the acculturation strategy *integration* involves the adaptation to the dominant culture while maintaining one's heritage culture.

The four acculturation strategies have been linked to psychological outcomes, such as acculturative stress and adaptation (Berry & Sam, 1997). Acculturative stress can be defined as a short-term response to potentially problematic "life events that are rooted in intercultural contact" (Berry, 2006b, p. 43). On the other hand, adaptation can be defined as an umbrella term comprising "relatively stable changes that take place in an individual or group in response to external demands" (Berry, 2006b, p. 52), as a result of moving to, or living in a cultural environment that differs from the heritage culture. Two prominent ways to assess individual's degree of adaptation have been to distinguish between psychological adaptation (e.g., psychological well-being and health) and socio-cultural adaptation (i.e., the acquirement of skills and competence to function in the cultural environment of the host society; Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). Studies have repeatedly shown that, in particular, marginalization and, to some degree, separation and assimilation are negative predictors of ethnic minorities' adaptation and are positive predictors of stress (Berry, 2006b). A possible explanation for this finding is that those who choose separation, assimilation or marginalization receive social support only from one or even none of the two available cultural spheres.

Individuals' choice of acculturation strategy, however, does not take place in a social vacuum. On the contrary, it may be concordant or discordant with acculturation expectations predominant in one's own ethnic group and in the dominant society and its members (Berry, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997; Navas, Rojas, García, & Pumares, 2007; Rohmann, Florack, & Piontkowski, 2006).

2.1. Societal acculturation expectations

One's ethno-cultural background becomes particularly salient for individuals that live in societies that comprise more ethnic groups than their own (Phinney, 1990). Because members of ethnic groups have a tendency to show in-group favoritism or ethnocentrism (Ward & Leong, 2006), both ethnic majority and minority group members might show attitudes and behavior that preserve their ethnic culture. Focusing on the majority side, this in-group bias may influence how individuals belonging to the dominant group expect ethnic minorities to acculturate. These conceptions are termed *acculturation expectations* in this study. Research indicates that members of majority populations in multicultural societies ideally prefer ethnic minorities to choose integration as an acculturation strategy, while others desire assimilation for them (see, for instance, Barrette, Bourhis, Personnaz, & Personnaz, 2004; Bourhis, Barrette, El-Geledi, & Schmidt, 2009; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Horenczyk, & Schmitz, 2003; Ljujic, Vedder, Dekker, & van Geel, 2010). For devalued minority group members, majority members, however, seem to be more inclined to prefer separation or assimilation than for valued minority groups (Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; Safdar, Dupuis, Lewis, El-Geledi, & Bourhis, 2008). For instance, in a study by Bourhis and Dayan (2004), Israeli participants were more likely to expect the Arab minority to assimilate or separate, than they expected this from Jewish immigrants from Russia or Ethiopia. This finding has also been replicated for expectations toward Muslims in Canada (Safdar et al., 2008).

Societal acculturation expectations can be concordant or discordant with ethnic minorities own acculturation preferences (Bourhis et al., 1997). For instance, the acculturation strategy of integration might be concordant with the acculturation expectation in a society that promotes cultural diversity. A mismatch or discordance, however, occurs if the minority group prefers an acculturation strategy that is different from the strategy expected by the majority population. For instance, individuals may prefer integration, while the society expects them to assimilate. Such a discrepancy has been related to negative psychological outcomes (Pfafferott & Brown, 2006; Roccas, Horenczyk, & Schwartz, 2000).

2.2. Ethnic-peers' expectations

Just like the members of the dominant group, ethnic minority members may be motivated to maintain their ethnic culture. Research shows that members of ethnic minority groups mostly choose integration as an acculturation strategy (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012), which ensures the maintenance of their ethnic culture while adapting to the dominant culture. This choice, in turn, may be discordant or concordant not only with the expectations of people belonging to the dominant group, but also with those of ethnic peers (e.g., friends, relatives, etc.). For instance, an individual may prefer integration as an acculturation strategy, while most of his or her ethnic peers may indeed prefer separation.

According to Social Identity Theory, norms are a central and defining part of a group's social identity and group members are likely to conform to these norms (Hogg & Turner, 1987). One reason for this is that other group members may perceive deviance from the group's norms as a threat to the group's distinctiveness and respond with social sanctions toward the deviant individual. This phenomenon can also be applied to acculturation. Individuals who, for instance, adapt to the host society to a degree that exceeds the norm in their ethnic group, may experience intragroup marginalization (Castillo, Conoley, Brossart, & Quiros, 2007). Intragroup marginalization involves the "rejection from members of one's heritage culture group" (Castillo, 2009, p. 247) and can be seen as a social sanction for being, for instance, "too white" or "too western". This rejection has been negatively associated with psychological adaptation and positively with stress (Abouguendia & Noels, 2001; Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Castillo, Cano, Chen, Blucker, & Olds, 2008).

2.3. Perceived acculturation expectations as direct predictors of acculturation and indirect predictors of adaptation

In contrast to previous studies, we argue that in particular ethnic minorities' subjective *perception* of acculturation expectations may have an influence on their personal acculturation. The reason for this is that acculturation expectations actually held by, for instance, the dominant group not necessarily needs to resemble how ethnic minorities experience these acculturation expectations. However, at the end of the day, especially this subjective perception, which can be seen as an accumulation of experiences from various sources, such as daily life experiences and the media, may play a role for the acculturating individual.

Studies that have investigated the effects of acculturation expectations on ethnic minorities' lives are based on the assumption that a mismatch between personal acculturation strategies and expected acculturation strategy by the societal majority negatively affects psychological adaptation. In this study, we assume that perceived acculturation expectations in addition may have the potential to influence individuals' choice of acculturation strategy, which in turn is related to individuals' psychological and socio-cultural adaptation. We use perceived societal assimilation expectations and ethnic peers' separation expectations to elucidate our theory.

To start with, cultural assimilation, in its most extreme form, implies the abandonment of one's heritage culture. Thus, the perception of a strong *societal assimilation expectation* (PSAE) may induce an ethnic identity threat among ethnic minorities. There are various ways individuals cope with identity threats (see Major & O'Brien, 2005 for a brief overview). Given that members of most ethnic minority groups express a higher ethnic than national identity (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006b), it is plausible that they will engage in coping strategies that protect their heritage culture. One possible way of doing this is to disengage from the identity threatening domain (i.e., withdraw from the national assimilative culture; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Solheim, 2009). Another way is to increase the engagement in their heritage culture (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999). This may have certain ramifications for ethnic minorities' choice of acculturation strategy. As a counter-reaction to the larger society's assimilation expectation, individuals may be more inclined to choose acculturation strategies that involve the maintenance of their heritage culture (e.g., separation; Rumbaut, 2008), while they may be less inclined to choose a strategy that involves the adaptation to the dominant culture, which more or less demands them to integrate or even to assimilate (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001).

As previously indicated, acculturation expectations are also present among the members of the acculturating ethno-cultural group. For instance, it may be that this ethno-cultural group considers some forms of acculturation strategies (e.g., toning down one's involvement in one's own heritage culture), as inappropriate or unacceptable. An extreme version of this acculturation expectation is referred to in this study as *perceived ethnic peers' separation expectations* (PESE), the norm of the ethno-cultural group to reject the dominant culture, and regard this strategy as an appropriate choice of acculturation. Such a norm may be a reaction to the abovementioned assimilation pressure (Rumbaut, 2008). Given that individuals are committed to their ethnic group, they can be expected to conform to this norm by choosing a respective acculturation strategy.

As noted earlier, the different acculturation strategies are associated with psychological and socio-cultural adaptation. Building on our first assumption, namely that acculturation expectations predict the different acculturation strategies, one can assume that expectations have indirect effects on adaptation. For instance, PESE may negatively predict integration, which, in turn, will positively relate to adaptation. In this case, PESE would have an indirect and negative effect on adaptation.

2.4. Comparison of the study populations

We examined our broad hypothesis among three different ethnic minorities living in the three largest European countries by population, namely German-Turks, French-Maghrebis and British-Pakistanis. Besides having similar immigration histories and lower socio-structural status than many other minority groups in their societies of residence (see, e.g., Algan, Landais, & Senik, 2010; Connor, Tyers, Modood, & Hillage, 2004; Haug, Müssig, & Stichs, 2009), all groups share one distinct characteristic making them especially suitable for testing the aforementioned hypothesis. The Islamic belief is the predominant religion of all three groups, which makes them a particularly devalued group in their country of residence.

In particular, following the terror attacks 2001 in New York, 2004 in Madrid and 2005 in London, negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration in general seem to have manifested themselves in form of anti-Muslim prejudice (Poynting & Mason, 2007). In both mass media and political discourse of European countries, Islam has frequently been displayed as a threat to the Western cultural value system and life in general, and Muslims as a group have been portrayed as unwilling
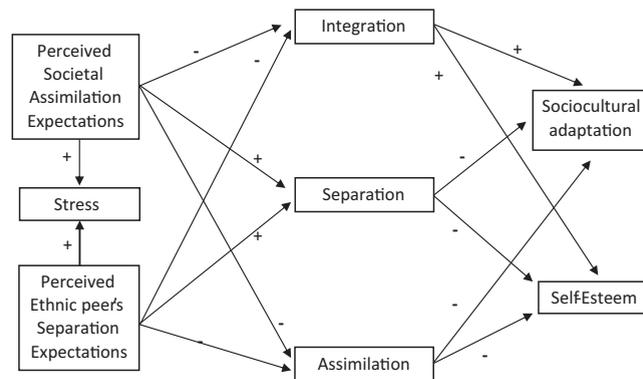
Fig. 1. Hypothesized relations between the study variables.

to integrate to their societies of residence (see, e.g., Betz & Meret, 2009; EUMC, 2006; Field, 2007; Saeed, 2007; Shadid & van Koningsveld, 1996). These sentiments also seem to be prevalent at the grass root of several Western societies, including Germany, France and the UK. For instance as Bleich (2009) states, "there is overwhelming evidence that Muslims are the most disliked group in both Britain and France when compared to other religions" (p. 391). Similarly, another study showed that in Germany and France attitudes toward Muslims were the most negative compared to other religious groups (Pollack, 2010).

Taking the minority perspective, studies have shown that Muslims in various Western countries experience high degrees of religious stigma in their daily lives (Holtz, Dahinden, & Wagner, 2013; Johnston & Lordan, 2011; Kunst, Tajamal, Sam, & Ulleberg, 2012; Sirin et al., 2008; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). This finding also applies to the minorities of interest in this study (Kunst, Sam, & Ulleberg, 2013). In addition, while one may observe a general shift toward an assimilation expectation in the Western World (Brubaker, 2001), in particular, Muslim minorities are confronted with public pressure to assimilate. Politicians in various Western European countries (that often are Christian by constitution) have, more or less explicitly, prompted Muslim minorities to assimilate to the dominant culture of their countries of residence (Fekete, 2008). Moreover, especially with regard to Muslims, the term 'integration' has often been used interchangeably with, or at least with an undertone of, assimilation in public discourse (Bowskill et al., 2007; Fekete, 2008). Therefore, we were in particularly interested in the PSAE in the present study.

2.5. The present study

Ethnic minorities' own acculturation preferences can stand in contrast to the acculturation expectations held by both the members of the dominant cultural group and the ethno-cultural group the minority group member belongs to. Studies have shown that both types of discrepancies can have a negative influence on ethnic minorities' adaptation (e.g., Abouguendia & Noels, 2001; Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Roccas et al., 2000). In the present study, we tested out an alternate model that assumes that acculturation expectations predict stress and ethnic minorities' choice of acculturation strategy, which in turn is associated with adaptation. We were particularly interested in the situation, in which participants perceived the acculturation expectations of the dominant society and of the ethno-cultural group as being different from their personal acculturation strategy or preference. In contrast to earlier studies, we were interested in the relationship between individuals' *subjective perceptions* of societal assimilation and ethnic peers' separation expectations. Because in particular disparaged social groups face strong assimilation pressure in their host societies, the study was conducted with participants from three different Muslim minorities, more specifically, German-Turks, French-Maghrebis and British-Pakistanis. In line with our broad research question (i.e., in what ways do perceived acculturation expectations of members of the majority society and their own ethno-cultural group relate to minority members' acculturation strategy and adaptation?), we tested four hypotheses (the hypothesized relations are displayed in Fig. 1):

1. PESE is negatively related to acculturation strategies that involve the adoption of the dominant culture (i.e., integration and assimilation) and positively related to separation.
2. PSAE is positively related to separation and negatively related to assimilation and integration. We expect that participants will choose separation as a counter reaction to the perception of a society that expects them to give up their heritage culture. Moreover, we expect them to be less inclined to choose a strategy that involves the adoption of the dominant society.
3. Both types of perceived acculturation expectations (i.e., PSAE and PESE) are directly and positively related to stress. The majority of the participants are expected to display a preference for integration as an acculturation strategy. This personal preference is discordant with PESE as well as PSAE, which therefore may be a straining experience.

Table 1
General characteristics of the population.

Characteristic	German-Turks (n = 301)	French-Maghrebis (n = 302)	British-Pakistanis (n = 262)
Age $M(SD)$[a]	25.3 (5.5)	25.1 (5.0)	24.7 (7.0)
Gender in female %	47.2	49.3	41.2
2nd generation immigrants %	88.7	56.3	46.2
Education in %			
Secondary school	79.7	30.5	42.0
University degree	20.3	69.2	58.0
Reason for own or family's migration			
Work	79.4	45.4	39.3
Family reunion	9.6	14.6	11.5
Studies	2.0	21.2	22.9
Political reasons/asylum	0.7	6.6	5.3
Foreign citizenship	42.5	33.4	30.2

Missing percentage corresponds to "other".

4. Both types of perceived acculturation expectation will indirectly and negatively be related to adaptation (i.e., socio-cultural adaptation and self-esteem), mediated by the different acculturation strategies. The different acculturation strategies have been found to predict adaptation in earlier studies. Thus, given that acculturation expectations are related to those strategies, they may have an indirect effect on adaptation.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants

The study sample comprised 301 German-Turks, 302 French-Maghrebis and 262 British-Pakistanis. The majority of the participants were young adults, M_{age} = 25.60, SD = .82. Among German-Turks the age ranged from 18 to 42, among French-Maghrebis from 18 to 39 and among British-Pakistanis from 18 to 45. In the German-Turkish and French-Maghrebi sample, both genders were equally distributed, whereas the majority of the British-Pakistanis were male (see Table 1). Most of the German-Turks and French-Maghrebis were second generation immigrants, whereas the British-Pakistanis belonged mostly to the first generation.

3.2. Procedure

Questionnaires were translated from English to German and French by bilingual teams using forward-and-back translation. The data for the present study was collected through online questionnaires during the period of February and March 2012. We recruited respondents through cultural organizations, relevant online websites and magazines, personal contacts, research assistants in the respective countries and social online networks. Each participant received information about the study's purpose, its confidentiality and his or her right to withdraw from participation. To encourage participation, a financial incentive was given: each participant had the possibility of winning a voucher of 50 Euros.

3.3. Instruments

3.3.1. Demographics

Several questions assessed demographic information about the participants. The respondents were asked to indicate their age, gender and education. Moreover, questions assessed their ethnicity, reason for migration, generational status and nationality.

3.3.2. Acculturation strategies

Twenty-one items inspired by Berry, Phinney, Sam and Vedder's (2006a) work were used to assess participants' preferences of the acculturation strategies in different areas of life. These were cultural habits, socialization, language, identity and news. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with statements, such as "I think that Pakistanis should adapt to British cultural traditions and not maintain those of their own" (assimilation), "I think that Pakistanis should maintain their own cultural traditions but also adapt to those of the UK" (integration) and "I think that Pakistanis should maintain their own cultural traditions and not adapt to those of the UK" (separation). Responses were rated on 6-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 6 (*totally agree*). Items measuring marginalization preference were not included in the study, since the construct has been regarded as conceptually questionable (see Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001; Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008). This is in line with recent research omitting the construct (Safdar, Calvez, & Lewis, 2012; Safdar, Struthers, & van Oudenhoven, 2009; also see Kunst & Sam, submitted for publication for a general and conceptional critique of marginalization).

Table 2

Psychometric properties and structural equivalence for the study variables.

Scale	Items	α			CFA unconstrained				CFA constrained[a]			
		GT	FM	BP	χ^2	CFI	RMSEA	sRMR	$\Delta\chi^2$	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA	ΔsRMR
1. Separation	7	.82	.82	.81	93.00	.968	.040	.043	28.81[*]	.009	−.001	.007
2. Assimilation	7	.78	.75	.76	77.91	.961	.047	.043	36.08[*]	.011	−.008	.008
3. Integration	7	.63	.68	.62	54.45	.961	.034	.023	49.73[*]	.038	.002	.031
4. Assimilation expectations	7	.85	.88	.89	71.60	.987	.040	.029	21.90	.001	−.008	.007
5. Separation expectations	7	.87	.90	.92	69.03	.977	.069	.032	13.63	.001	−.014	.008
6. Stress	6	.83	.83	.88	47.79	.986	.043	.029	24.47[*]	.005	−.008	.024
7. Self-esteem	5	.81	.83	.82	15.47	.995	.067	.003	45.73[*]	.017	−.008	.049
8. Socio-cultural adaptation	5	.87	.84	.92	53.77	.981	.064	.031	9.77	<.001	.017	.004

GT, German-Turks (n = 301); FM, French-Maghrebis (n = 302); BP, British-Pakistanis (n = 266); CFI, Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; sRMR, standardized Root Mean Square Residual.

[a] Measurement weights and covariances were constrained.

[*] p < .05.

Exploratory factor analyses supported a 3-factor solution in each study sample, with the factors representing the different acculturation strategies. Three indices each consisting of 7 items, were coded that represented each one of the strategies. Cronbach's alpha estimates ranged from acceptable to satisfactory (see Table 2).

3.3.3. Perceived acculturation expectations

Based on Roccas et al. (2000), each seven items assessed the degree to which the participants perceived that the dominant group expected them to assimilate, and the extent to which they perceived that their ethnic peers expected them to separate. The items assessed the same acculturation domains as the instrument measuring the individual choice of acculturation strategy and were scored on the same type of 6-point Likert scale. Respondents had to indicate their agreement with items such as "Most Britons would like Pakistanis to adapt to British cultural traditions and not maintain those of their own." (i.e., PSAE) and "Most Pakistanis would like us to maintain our own cultural traditions and not adapt to those of the UK." (i.e., PESE). Reliability coefficients were satisfactory across the samples (see Table 2).

3.3.4. Psychological adaptation

3.3.4.1. Stress. The Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983) was used to measure how often participants had experienced stress during the last month. On a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*), participants responded to ten items, such as "In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and 'stressed'?" Exploratory factor analysis of the ten initial items yielded a two-factor solution in each sample. The first factor represented six items that indicated the presence of stress, while the remaining four items loaded on a second factor representing control over stressing events. Since we were interested in the degree to which participants experienced stress in their lives, a scale was computed based on the six items loading on the first factor. The latter scale yielded satisfactory reliability across the samples (see Table 2).

3.3.4.2. Self-esteem. Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was used to assess participants' self-esteem. Participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with ten items on 6-point Likert scales. A sample item is "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself." Factor analysis gave favor of a two-factor solution in all study samples. While the five positively worded items clearly loaded on the first factor without any cross-loadings, several of the five negatively worded items showed loadings on both factors above 3. Based on these results, a sum score with the five items that unanimously loaded on the first factor were computed. The resulting scale obtained satisfactory reliability across the samples (see Table 2).

3.3.5. Socio-cultural adaptation

Based on the revised socio-cultural adaptation scale (Wilson & Ward, unpublished manuscript), seven items were used to measure the degree to which the participants experienced difficulties adapting to social norms and attitudes during social interactions. On a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*very difficult*) to 6 (*very easy*) the participants rated their experienced difficulty with items, such as "Changing my behavior to suit social norms, rules, attitudes, beliefs, and customs". The scale obtained satisfactory reliability across the samples (see Table 2).

3.4. Analysis

In research that analytically compares between different groups, but particularly in cross-cultural research where groups can differ markedly along a wide range of characteristics, structural equivalence is a crucial prerequisite for making comparisons between different cultural groups (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997). As Cheung and Rensvold (2002) point out, "this is of particular concern in cross-cultural research when the cultures speak different languages, and researchers use translated versions of a survey instrument" (p. 234), which applies to the present study. In the present study
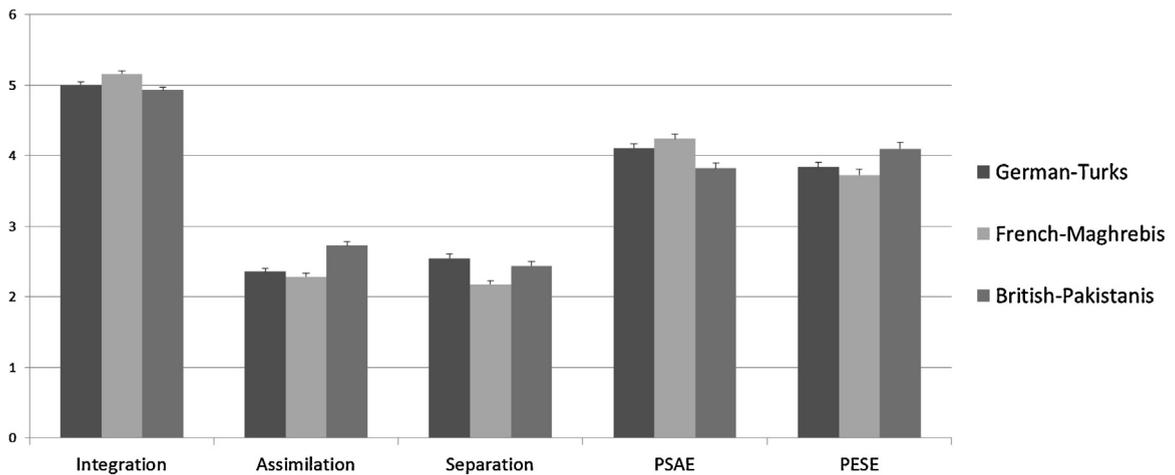
Fig. 2. Preferences for acculturation strategies for each sample. PSAE = Perceived Societal Assimilation Expectation, PESE = Perceived Ethnic Peers' Separation Expectation.

we investigated the structural equivalence of the study variables using the following procedure. First, separate exploratory factor analyses were conducted for each scale and for each sample. Second, confirmatory factor models were tested using multi-group structural equation modeling. More specifically, for each scale, we compared an unconstrained factor model (i.e., a model that allows the parameter values to vary freely) with a constrained factor model (i.e., a model that forces the structural weights and covariances to be equal across the samples) on different fit indices. Following the recommendations of Chen (2007), in addition to the chi-squared test, we assessed the Root Mean Square of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (sRMR). Here, the difference between the RMSEA, CFI and sRMR values between the constrained and unconstrained models indicate whether the underlying factors structures of the measure are comparable across the samples.

Multi-group structural equation modeling was also used to test the hypotheses. In the initial stage of the analysis, paths between the dependent (i.e., ethnic peers' separation expectation and societal assimilation expectation), mediating (i.e., acculturation strategies) and outcome variables (i.e., stress, self-esteem and socio-cultural adaptation) were drawn in accordance with the hypothesized relations displayed in Fig. 1. Next, paths that were insignificant across the samples were deleted to increase model-fit. In the final step, we compared the model fit of constrained versions of the model with an unconstrained version and a reversed version of the model in order to gather information about its appropriateness and cross-cultural generalizability. All indirect effects were tested using a Bootstrap sample of 2000.

4. Results

4.1. Structural equivalence

Although chi-squared tests indicated a better fit for the unconstrained models, the ΔRMSEA, ΔCFI and ΔsRMR estimates in general supported measurement invariance based on the cutoff recommendations given by Chen (2007; see Table 2). In particular the ΔCFI estimate for the integration measure and the ΔCFI and ΔsRMR measure for the self-esteem measure however, somewhat nuanced this picture, pointing toward less satisfactory structural equivalence for these measures. Nevertheless, all in all, the fit of the constrained models could still be regarded as acceptable, indicating a certain comparability of the measures between the samples.

4.2. Differences in the means for the major study variables

Multivariate analyses of variance showed significant group differences for all study variables (see Table 3). Moreover, differences for the acculturation strategies could be observed in all samples, German-Turks: Wilks' Lambda = .15, $F(2, 299) = 884.37$, $p < .001$, est $\eta^2 = .86$; French-Maghrebis: Wilks' Lambda = .12, $F(2, 300) = 1104.06$, $p < .001$, est $\eta^2 = .88$; British-Pakistanis: Wilks' Lambda = .17, $F(2, 260) = 639.74$, $p < .001$, est $\eta^2 = .83$. Across the samples, the mean for integration (see Table 3 and Fig. 2) was significantly higher than for the other strategies at $p < .001$ significance level. A significant difference between the means for assimilation and separation was only observed in the British-Pakistani sample, $p < .01$.

Second-generation German-Turks showed a stronger preference of integration ($M = 5.04$, $SD = .67$) than their first-generation immigrants counter parts ($M = 4.75$, $SD = .79$; $t(299) = 2.48$, $p < .05$, est $\eta^2 = .02$). The opposite was found in the French-Maghrebi sample, where first-generation immigrants displayed a higher integration preference ($M = 5.26$, $SD = .54$) compared to second-generation immigrants ($M = 5.08$, $SD = .74$; $t(298.78) = -2.29$, $p < .05$, est $\eta^2 = .02$). In the

Table 3

Means, standard deviations and correlations between the study variables.

Variable	M	SD	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Separation									
German-Turks	2.55	1.03	−.04	−.50***	.14*	.24***	.12*	−.10	−.14*
French-Maghrebis	2.18[a]	.92	−.01	−.48***	.13*	.34***	.16**	−.20***	−.26***
British-Pakistanis	2.44	.95	.10	−.28***	.07	.20**	.08	−.17**	−.31***
2. Assimilation									
German-Turks	2.36	.89	–	.01	−.03	.18**	.02	−.26***	−.10
French-Maghrebis	2.28	.85	–	−.14*	−.02	.10	−.10	−.09	−.06
British-Pakistanis	2.73[b]	.90	–	−.17**	.18**	.16*	.03	−.04	.05
3. Integration									
German-Turks	5.00	.70		–	.03	−.19**	−.05	.07	.15**
French-Maghrebis	5.16[c]	.67		–	.01	−.17**	−.04	.17**	.09
British-Pakistanis	4.93	.63		–	.03	−.09	.04	.19**	.24***
4. Assimilation expectations									
German-Turks	4.11	1.07			–	.29***	.14*	.05	−.08
French-Maghrebis	4.24	1.17			–	.33***	.28***	−.01	.00
British-Pakistanis	3.82[d]	1.16			–	.50***	.23***	.07	.00
5. Separation expectations									
German-Turks	3.84	1.18				–	.16**	−.12*	−.02
French-Maghrebis	3.73	1.32				–	.23***	−.18**	−.15*
British-Pakistanis	4.10[e]	1.38				–	.26***	−.09	−.12
6. Stress									
German-Turks	3.34[f]	.81					–	−.26***	−.16**
French-Maghrebis	3.15	.86					–	−.32***	−.18**
British-Pakistanis	3.10	.92					–	−.13*	−.08
7. Self-esteem									
German-Turks	4.90[g]	.82						–	.31***
French-Maghrebis	4.76	.85						–	.37***
British-Pakistanis	4.65	.93						–	.31***
8. Socio-cultural adaptation									
German-Turks	4.80[h]	.97							–
French-Maghrebis	4.64	.94							–
British-Pakistanis	4.54	1.09							–

German-Turks: $n = 301$; French-Maghrebis: $n = 302$; British-Pakistanis: $n = 262$. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

[a] The mean for French-Maghrebis was significantly lower than for the other samples, $F(2, 864) = 11.55$, $p = .000$, est $\eta^2 = .03$.

[b] The mean for British-Pakistanis was significantly higher than for the other samples, $F(2, 864) = 20.09$, $p = .000$, est $\eta^2 = .04$.

[c] The mean for French-Maghrebis was significantly higher than for the other samples, $F(2, 864) = 8.77$, $p = .000$, est $\eta^2 = .02$.

[d] The mean for British-Pakistanis was significantly lower than for the other samples, $F(2, 864) = 10.00$, $p = .000$, est $\eta^2 = .02$.

[e] The mean for British-Pakistanis was significantly higher than for the other samples, $F(2, 864) = 5.94$, $p = .003$, est $\eta^2 = .01$.

[f] The mean for German-Turks was significantly higher than for the other samples, $F(2, 864) = 6.16$, $p = .002$, est $\eta^2 = .01$.

[g] The mean for German-Turks was significantly higher than for British-Pakistanis, $F(2, 864) = 6.17$, $p = .002$, est $\eta^2 = .01$.

[h] The mean for German-Turks was significantly higher than for British-Pakistanis, $F(2, 864) = 4.96$, $p = .007$, est $\eta^2 = .01$.

British-Pakistani sample, first-generation immigrants displayed a higher separation preference ($M = 2.59$, $SD = .93$) than second-generation immigrants ($M = 2.26$, $SD = .95$; $t(260) = −2.85$, $p < .01$, est $\eta^2 = .03$). Across the samples, but in particular among British-Pakistanis, second-generation immigrants (German-Turks: $M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.01$; French-Maghrebis: $M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.15$; British-Pakistanis: $M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.05$) showed stronger PSAE than first-generation immigrants (German-Turks: $M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.34$, $t(46.10) = 2.12$, $p < .05$, est $\eta^2 = .01$; French-Maghrebis: $M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.15$, $t(300) = 3.25$, $p < .01$, est $\eta^2 = .03$; British-Pakistanis: $M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.16$, $t(260) = 5.22$, $p < .001$, est $\eta^2 = .15$). Second-generation immigrants (French-Maghrebis: $M = 3.28$, $SD = .90$; British-Pakistanis: $M = 3.23$, $SD = .88$) experienced higher degrees of stress, compared to their first-generation counterparts in the French-Maghrebi and British-Pakistani sample (French-Maghrebis: $M = 2.98$, $SD = .78$, $t(296.24) = 3.16$, $p < .01$, est $\eta^2 = .03$; British-Pakistanis: $M = 2.98$, $SD = .93$, $t(260) = 2.30$, $p < .05$, est $\eta^2 = .02$).
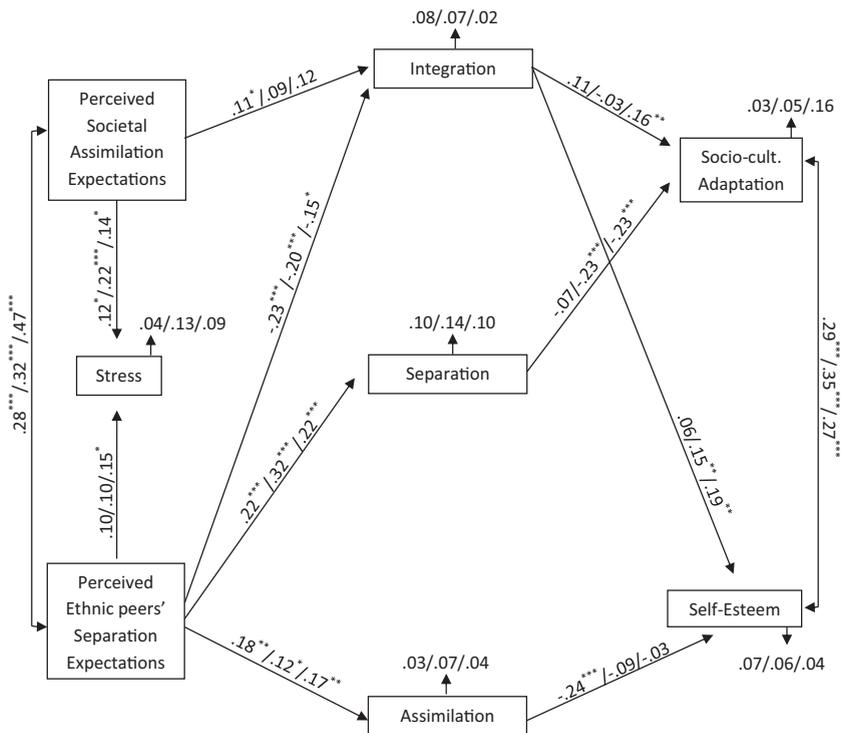
4.3. Structural equation model

Correlations between the study variables are displayed in Table 3. Across the estimates, the unconstrained structural equation model showed better fitness to the data than the constrained model (see Table 4). While the chi square value, χ^2 (78, $N = 865$) = 96.29, $p = .078$, indicated a good fitting model, the RMSEA value even demonstrated a very close fit, RMSEA = .016, 90% CI [.008, .027]. We compared the hypothesized model with an alternative model, where the relations between the acculturation expectations and the acculturation strategies were reversed (i.e., acculturation strategies constituted independent variables, whereas expectations constituted mediating variables). The hypothesized model outperformed the reversed model on the fit indices (see Table 4). Moreover, we estimated an alternative model where acculturation strategies predicted

Table 4

Fit indices for structural equation models across groups.

Model	χ^2	df	p	CFI	sRMR	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$
Hypothesized model							
1. Unconstrained model	96.29	78	.078	.984	.037	.016	
2. Measurement weights constrained	201.71	136	.000	.943	.050	.024	
3. Weights and covariances constrained	362.90	154	.000	.819	.067	.040	
Difference between model 1 and 2							105.42*
Difference between model 1 and 3							266.62*
Reversed model							
4. Unconstrained model	117.29	78	.003	.966	.039	.024	
5. Measurement weights constrained	223.12	136	.000	.925	.051	.027	
6. Weights and covariances constrained	384.31	154	.000	.801	.068	.042	
Difference between model 1 and 4							21.00*
Difference between model 2 and 5							21.41*
Difference between model 3 and 6							21.41*

CFI, Comparative Fit Index; sRMR, standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

* p < .05.

Fig. 3. Estimated structural equation model. Coefficients for each sample displayed in the following order: German-Turks/French-Maghrebis/British-Pakistanis. Following estimates not displayed due to lack of space: correlations between Integration (I), Separation (S) and Assimilation (A), rI, S = −.49***/−.47***/−.27***, rI, A = .02//−.13*/−.15*. Correlations between Stress (S), Socio-cultural Adaptation (SA) and Self-Esteem (SE), rS,SA = −.15**/−.18**/−.10, rS, SE = −.26***/−.31***/−.14***. Demographic variables are controlled for. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

stress, as may be suggested by the literature as well as the correlations between the variables. In the latter model however, all relations between the different acculturation strategies and stress remained insignificant, indicating that the perceived expectations rather than individuals' acculturation strategies was related to stress in the three samples. Since the fit of our unconstrained hypothesized model was better, we estimated the model separately for each sample (see Fig. 3).

Hypothesis 1. We expected PESE to be positively related to separation and to be negatively related to integration and assimilation. Our results gave some support for the hypothesis. Across the samples PESE was positively associated with separation (German-Turks: β = .22, p < .001; French-Maghrebis: β = .32, p < .001; British-Pakistanis: β = .22, p < .001) and negatively associated with integration (German-Turks: β = −.23, p < .001; French-Maghrebis: β = −.20, p < .01; British-Pakistanis: β = −.15, p < .05). However, contradictory to the hypothesis, PESE was also positively associated with assimilation in all samples (German-Turks: β = .18, p < .01; French-Maghrebis: β = .12, p < .05; British-Pakistanis: β = .17, p < .01).

Hypothesis 2. PSAE was expected to be positively related to separation and to be negatively related to assimilation and integration. No support for the hypothesis was obtained. Only in the German sample, PSAE was found to be related to an acculturation strategy at all. And, in contrast to our hypothesis, the variable was positively related with integration ($\beta = .11$, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis 3. As noted earlier, integration was the most preferred strategy in all samples (see Table 3 and Fig. 2). As this strategy is discordant with both PESE and PSAE, we expected both acculturation expectations to be directly and positively related to stress. The hypothesis was partly supported. In all the three study samples, PSAE showed a direct and positive relationship with stress (German-Turks: $\beta = .12$, $p < .05$; French-Maghrebis: $\beta = .22$, $p < .001$; British-Pakistanis: $\beta = .14$, $p < .05$). PESE was however only significantly related to higher degrees of stress in the British-Pakistani sample ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis 4. In this hypothesis, we expected an indirect and negative relationship between both acculturation expectations and adaptation, mediated by the three acculturation strategies. The hypothesis was partially supported in all samples, but only for PESE.

In all samples, PESE was indirectly and negatively related to socio-cultural adaptation (German-Turks: $\beta = -.04$, $p < .05$; French-Maghrebis: $\beta = -.07$, $p < .01$; British-Pakistanis: $\beta = -.08$, $p < .01$). Moreover, PESE was indirectly and negatively related to self-esteem in two of the samples (German-Turks: $\beta = -.06$, $p < .01$; French-Maghrebis: $\beta = -.04$, $p < .01$).

5. Discussion

The aim of the present study was to investigate how acculturation expectations perceived as prevalent among ethnic peer's and in the respective society were related to ethnic minorities' own acculturation preference. We also tested whether acculturation expectations would be directly associated with higher levels of stress and indirectly with lower levels of adaptation. Of our four hypotheses, three were partially supported.

5.1. In particular perceived expectations of ethnic peers are related to individual acculturation

Our starting position for the hypothesized relations was that perceived acculturation expectations are related to ethnic minorities' acculturation preference, and this was partly supported. At least one type of expectation was related to acculturation in each sample. Our study therefore indicates that ethnic minorities' acculturation may be influenced by perceptions of the norms prevalent among members of their ethnic group as well as among the members of the larger society they live in and underscores the contextual nature of acculturation. However, it is important to note that, while ethnic peers' separation expectation seemed to play a substantial role, the impact of societal assimilation expectation seems to be limited. A possible explanation for this finding may be that the participants felt more committed to their ethnic group and less committed to their national group. Group commitment, in turn, can determine "how group characteristics, norms, or outcomes will influence the perceptual, affective, and behavioral responses of individuals belonging to that group" (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002, p. 164). Research has indicated that the influence of group norms on single individuals depends on their identification with the respective group (see, e.g., Terry & Hogg, 1996), with higher identification being associated with higher normative influence. In the present study therefore, one can assume that the participants felt more committed and identified more with their ethnic group than the national group, and that only ethnic peers' acculturation norms therefore influenced their acculturation.

In the first hypothesis, we expected PESE to be positively related to separation and negatively with strategies that involve adopting or identifying with the national culture (i.e., integration and assimilation). As expected, across the samples, PESE was associated with higher levels of separation, and lower levels of integration in all samples. Contrary to our hypothesis however, PESE was not negatively, but in fact positively associated with assimilation in all samples. Thus, besides being related to separation and integration, separation expectation was also associated with the acculturation strategy diametrically opposite to the group norm. The present study therefore indicates that minorities may show two alternative reactions toward the perceived acculturation expectations in their group – discordant or accordant with the perceived group norm. These multifaceted relations observed indicate that the way ethnic minorities respond to ethnic peers' separation expectation may be a question of either/or instead of choosing the midway, for instance, integration.

Similar to the first hypothesis, the second hypothesis expected the participants to counteract societal assimilation expectations by lowering their preference for integration and assimilation and by increasing their preference for separation. As mentioned above, the former had only one minor association with acculturation at all. One reason for the minimal influence of societal norms may be that, living in an assimilative society over a longer period of time, ethnic minorities may have developed a resistance toward societal attitudes that threaten their heritage culture. Such a resistance, in turn, may explain the negligible relation of societal assimilation expectation with acculturation observed.

Notably, societal assimilation expectation was positively related to integration in the German-Turkish sample. This finding contrasted with our expectations and is interesting since such a relation was absent in the other samples. Although the strength of the relation was weak, future studies could investigate underling factors explaining these different findings across the samples. In terms of German-Turks, we would also like to add that most participants, as in the other two samples, expressed the highest preference for the integration strategy. Mostly building on the findings of Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, and Obdrzálek (2000), German-Turks have been portrayed as a "common exception" (Berry, 2006a, p. 37), as they

are supposed to be an ethnic group that, unlike other groups, express the strongest preference for separation instead of integration. While some research support this notion (Ersanilli & Koopmans, 2009, 2011), this and other's research (Berry et al., 2006b; Kunst, Tajamal, et al., 2012; Trebbe, 2007), however indicate that this group may be less exceptional than initially assumed.

5.2. Perceived acculturation expectations and adaptation

We expected both perceived acculturation expectations to have a direct positive relation with stress and an indirect negative relation with psychological and socio-cultural adaptation. Each hypothesis obtained certain support. First, PEAS was positively associated with stress in all samples. A discrepancy between one's own acculturation preference and others' orientations can result in "moderate levels of acculturative stress, especially amongst members of the immigrant group" (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 384). In the present study, integration was the most preferred acculturation strategy. Hence, stronger perceptions of an expectation to assimilate can be thought to be equal to a higher perceived discrepancy with the participants' own acculturation preferences. The latter discrepancy, in turn, may be the reason for the positive relation with stress observed in the present study. Interestingly, PESE was associated with stress only in the British-Pakistani sample. A reason for this might be that British-Pakistanis experienced the highest degree of PESE of all samples, which may have been enough to result in higher degrees of stress.

As expected, PESE had a negative and indirect relation to socio-cultural adaptation in all samples and a negative and indirect relation with self-esteem in two of the three samples. All relations were mediated by the acculturation strategies. It, thus, seems as if separation expectation perceived as predominant among ethnic peers may lead immigrants to pursue acculturation strategies that predict lower degrees of adaptation (e.g., separation in our study), whereas it may lower their preference for integration, which in this study was positively related to socio-cultural adaptation.

Summing up the findings of the third and fourth hypothesis, our study suggests that the effects of perceived acculturation expectations on ethnic minorities' adaptation may be two-fold, having a direct effect on short-term adaptation (e.g., stress) and an indirect effect on long-term adaptation (e.g., self-esteem and socio-cultural adaptation). Differentiating between both types of effects may therefore be regarded as meaningful in this type of research.

5.3. Societal implications

To recap, some of our findings may be regarded as particularly important for ethnic minorities' well-being and inter-cultural relations in general in Western European multicultural societies. The present study indicates that members of ethnic minorities experience relatively strong acculturation expectations among the dominant and their own group, and that this experience is related to higher levels of stress and to lower levels of adaptation. One way to increase the well-being of ethnic minorities may therefore be to lower these expectations. The fact that both expectations were positively related to each other in our study emphasizes the reciprocal or interactional relation of the phenomena. On the one hand, separation expectation among an ethnic group may, in fact, have emerged as a reaction to assimilation expectations in the society (Rumbaut, 2008). On the other hand, societal assimilation expectations may increase when majority members perceive that ethnic groups want to separate themselves from society.

5.4. Strengths and limitations

It goes without saying that this study has both strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps the first strength of the study is being able to test our model among three of the largest ethnic minority groups in Western Europe. Across the three samples, similar relations could be observed and several hypothesized relationships were supported. Thus, given that the groups differed with respect to their heritage culture as well as their society of residence, the similarities in results suggest that the way acculturation expectations are related to acculturation and adaptation may be less culture and context-bond. Nevertheless, the generalizability of the findings is still very limited in view of the cultural diversity in Western European multicultural societies. Future studies would do well to test whether these findings can be replicated with samples from other ethnic minority groups in other societies. We acknowledge that our findings may be limited also in terms of generalizing to the broader population of German-Turks, French-Maghrebis and British-Pakistanis in view of the fact that we used convenient sampling. Our samples comprised young adults, who may be less representative for other age segments in the respective populations. Moreover, in two of the three samples, the majority of participants held a university degree. This high educational status may indicate that our participants were particularly successfully adapted and their experiences may therefore not be representative of the broader immigrant populations. In addition, data was collected online and we have no information about the response rate. It is likely that only individuals particularly interested in the topic participated in the study, resulting in biased samples.

Our structural equation model showed good fitness to the data. However, a major limitation of our model regards causality. Sine we used cross-sectional data, we could only base our causal assumption on theoretical grounds and former research. Thus, the validity of the causal directions of the model's paths should be tested with research designs that allow for more substantial causal conclusions.

The question about how to assess individuals' acculturation strategies has been a frequent topic of debate (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2007). In the present study, we assessed the different acculturation strategies using the four-statement method. This method has however been criticized for having poor psychometric properties (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2007; Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001; Rudmin, 2003). As Rudmin (2009) sums up, the four-statement method may be a problematic measurement approach, since it "often uses double-barreled items, negations or other complex formulations" (p. 113). Nevertheless, on the basis of factor and reliability analyses, we conclude that these potential methodological pitfalls had little influence on the satisfactory psychometric properties of the measure in the present study. Another critique that has been raised in regard of the four-fold method is that it lacks logic, because individuals can score high on strategies that may be seen as mutually exclusive (Rudmin, 2003, 2009). However, as Berry and Sam (2003) note, explaining the multifaceted, complex and often contrasting processes of acculturation may not be possible by applying a stringent mathematic logic (also see Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2008). Nevertheless, acknowledging the critique, we should optimally have used the two-statement measurement procedure as suggested by Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver (2007). This way of assessment may also lead to more profound results when investigating the relation between acculturation and ethnic minorities' adaptation (Benet-Martínez, 2012).

Last, our study was limited as it only investigated the effect of two distinct types of acculturation expectations. In reality, the ways societal as well as ethnic peers' acculturation expectations impact on acculturation and adaptation may be much more complex. We therefore encourage future studies to examine the effect of all four types of expectations.

6. Conclusion

Ethnic and religious minorities are in general motivated to reconcile their ethnic culture with the national culture. The present study suggests that this motivation, however, is substantially influenced by norms or expectations they perceive as predominant among their own ethnic group and their society of residence. This finding has two important implications, one scientific and one societal. First, it underlines the importance of macro level variables, ranging from perceived norms to ideologies, for the research on ethnic minorities' acculturation and adaptation. Second, for political programs and organizations that aim at improving the relations and cohesion between multicultural societies' different ethnic groups, it emphasizes the need for intercultural dialog between, and change on, both sides in order to achieve enduring attitudinal change.

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