



The effects of stereotype content on acculturation preferences and prosocial tendencies: The prominent role of morality



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ABSTRACT

This study provides experimental evidence about the effect of stereotypes on majority members' acculturation preferences and their prosocial behavioral tendencies toward minority members. This work aimed to understand the distinct effect of the stereotype dimensions of morality, sociability, and competence when predicting these variables. An experimental study was carried out with 201 British participants who read a news article in which Indian minority members were depicted as high (vs. low) on each of the three stereotype dimensions. After reading the experimental manipulation, participants reported their acculturation preferences by indicating their desire for culture maintenance and adoption among minority members, and their willingness to support positive institutional measures toward Indians. Only morality (vs. sociability or competence) had a direct effect on desire for cultural maintenance: majority members were more flexible about Indians' maintenance of their original culture when those were perceived as highly moral. Even if no direct effects of stereotypes were found on prosocial behavioral tendencies, morality was still the unique dimension that indirectly predicted prosocial tendencies through desire for maintenance. Once again, the prominent effect of morality was confirmed for intergroup relationships, playing a more important role than sociability and competence.

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1. Introduction

Negative intergroup attitudes are not something with relevance only in the past. They are very much alive and thriving in British society today. Opinion polls suggest that British respondents are quite wary of immigration. In a recent survey, 68% of British participants viewed immigration as a problem rather than an opportunity, 63% agreed that immigrants are a burden on social services, 58% agreed that immigrants take jobs away from British people, and 50% stated that immigration negatively affects British culture (*Transatlantic Trends: Immigration, 2011*).

To address these trends, it is important to understand the drivers of attitudes and behavioral tendencies of majority members toward minority members. The current experimental study aims to explore the distinct role played by three stereotype dimensions, namely morality, sociability and competence, about minority groups in shaping acculturation preferences and prosocial behavioral tendencies toward them. This contribution intends to fill some of the gaps in the study of stereotype content, acculturation preferences and prosocial behavioral tendencies, and to explore how they are related to each other.

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1.1. The role of stereotypes when predicting majority members' acculturation expectations about minority groups

Acculturation is a concept of major importance when theorizing about the ways minority and majority groups can coexist. Acculturation is concerned with the mutual changes resultant from contact between groups with different cultures (Berry, 1999; Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). Within psychology, Berry's acculturation model (Berry, 1997) is the most influential contribution in this field. His framework encompassed two dimensions that underlie immigrants' acculturation preferences: the minority members' desire to maintain the original culture, and the desire to have contact with members of the majority society.

Subsequent theorizing has suggested that it may be better to replace the dimension of 'contact desire' with one encapsulating 'the desire to adopt the culture of the host community', because this new dimension provides a better match with the content of the former dimension (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997). While the original theorizing focused on minority members' preferences, theorists are now also interested in majority members' acculturation preferences, since majority members' desires also influence intergroup relations (Bourhis et al., 1997; Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, & Obdrzalek, 2000; Zagefka & Brown, 2002). This current study concentrates on the majority perspective, specifically on predictors of majority members' desire for culture maintenance and culture adoption.

Several studies have focused on the variables related to acculturation preferences, such as perceived threat or prejudice (Kosic & Phalet, 2006; Piontkowski, Rohmann, & Florack, 2002; Tip, Zagefka, Gonzalez, Brown, & Cinirella, 2012; Zagefka, Binder, & Brown, 2010). Recently, it was briefly mentioned that stereotypes might also play a central role in influencing majority members' acculturation preferences (Lee & Fiske, 2006) alluding to indirect evidence (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001, 2004). In this sense, the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM, Bourhis et al., 1997) proposes that majority members' preferences differ according to the national origin of the immigrant group assessed, and according to whether immigrant groups are valued or devalued (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001, 2004). Given that this valuation or devaluation of minority groups depends mainly on stereotypes majority members will have about them (Tchoryk-Pelletier, 1989), it may be inferred that stereotypes influence majority members' acculturation preferences. The Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM, Navas et al., 2005) also recognizes that it is important to differentiate various immigrant groups by ethnocultural origin, and that several psychosocial variables (e.g., the cognitive dimension of prejudice) may influence both minority and majority members' acculturation preferences.

Actually, stereotypes are highly relevant in intergroup contexts because they shape our expectations about different groups' emotions and behaviors; stereotypes have rich inferential potential (Worchel, 1999). Moreover, stereotypes about outgroups have been demonstrated to have the power to influence majority members' attitudes and behaviors (Bargh, 1999; Velasco González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008).

In spite of the promising idea that stereotypes affect acculturation preferences, to date there is not experimental evidence to support this. A recent study (López-Rodríguez, Zagefka, Navas, & Cuadrado, 2014) provides more direct evidence, showing that the majority's stereotypes about immigrants and their perceived threat mediate the effect of acculturation perceptions on acculturation preferences. However, the content of stereotypes should be more deeply explore when predicting acculturation preferences.

1.2. Different dimensions of stereotype contents

As Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, and Xu (2002, p. 878) have asserted, "not all stereotypes are alike". The identification of two general dimensions that underlie personal and social perception has a long tradition (Peeters & Czapski, 1990; Rosenberg, Nelson, & Vivekananthan, 1968; Wojciszke, 2005). In spite of using different labels, most scholars agree that one dimension is mainly related to agency or competence aspects (e.g., intelligence, skill), and the other one to communion or social qualities (e.g., friendliness, warmth).

The Stereotype Content Model (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999) is considered one of the most important frameworks when studying stereotypes and their influence. Particularly, this model proposes the existence of two main dimensions which dominate our social perception of others (i.e., warmth and competence). According to this model, 'competence' helps perceivers to know others' capabilities in order to achieve their intentions. It incorporates such traits as efficacy, skill, confidence, and intelligence. On the other hand, 'warmth' is important to anticipate others' intentions in a given social context. It comprises such traits as morality, trustworthiness, kindness, and friendliness (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008).

Sometimes, such terms may be misleading. As can be seen, the dimension of warmth is a moral-social dimension. Traditionally, it has been also dubbed *morality* (e.g., Phalet & Poppe, 1997; Wojciszke, 1994), even if the traits which composed this general dimension were not always exclusively moral traits, but a mixed of social and moral features.

In spite of the importance of both dimensions in social perception, warmth judgments are thought to be primary. Certainly, the information about the moral-social dimension is more cognitively accessible, more predictive, and more heavily weighted in evaluative judgments (Cuddy et al., 2008). This might be because another's intentions for good or ill are more relevant to survival than whether the other can achieve those goals (Cuddy et al., 2008).

At the interpersonal level, Wojciszke, Bazinska, and Jaworski (1998) also support the idea that *morality* occupies a prominent position in impression formation. They argue that moral categories are more important than other concepts such as competence in locating others on the approach-avoidance dimension (i.e., to distinguish between persons who should be

approached and persons who should be avoided). At the same time, they also suggest that despite the prominent role of morality, its effects might interact with other dimensions such as competence.

The interaction between the competence and the moral dimensions is also reported by [Phalet and Poppe \(1997\)](#) ingroup perception. These authors found that desirability perceptions of outgroup attributes were morality-based, with morality being more desirable than competence and immorality less desirable than incompetence.

Even if the primacy of the moral–social dimension (over the competence dimension) has been already demonstrated, no previous distinction has been made between the social and moral components when predicting acculturation preferences and prosocial tendencies toward minorities.

The present work aims to take into account recent developments regarding the proposed structure and relative importance of different stereotype dimensions. Some theorists ([Brambilla & Leach, 2014](#); [Brambilla, Rusconi, Sacchi, & Cherubini, 2011](#); [Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007](#)) have highlighted that the warmth or communion dimension is actually shaped by two distinct characteristics: sociability and morality. Sociability pertains to cooperation and to forming connections with others (e.g., friendliness, likeability), whereas morality refers to the perceived correctness of people or groups (e.g., honesty, sincerity and trustworthiness).

It is important to note that authors like [Wojciszke \(1997, 2005\)](#) or [Phalet and Poppe \(1997\)](#) usually employ the term of 'morality' as a general dimension compared to the 'warmth' dimension of [Fiske et al. \(2002\)](#): namely a dimension consisting of both social and moral traits, whereas authors such as [Leach et al. \(2007\)](#) or [Brambilla, Sacchi, Rusconi, Cherubini, and Yzerbyt \(2012\)](#) employ the term morality to refer to a more specific dimension (distinct to sociability) uniquely constituted of moral traits.

In spite of this difference, [Brambilla et al. \(2011, p. 142\)](#) argue that there is '*evidence that the dominance of warmth in impression formation can be better explained by the greater effect of one of the two subcomponents (i.e., morality) over the other (i.e., sociability) at least in the information-gathering process*'. Due to this reasoning, it seems legitimate to argue that the primacy of the general dimension of warmth (or according to other authors, morality) can be employed to defend the primacy of the dimension of morality (according to [Leach et al.](#) and [Brambilla et al.](#)) over that of sociability and competence. In sum, various accounts point toward morality having a remarkable and dominant role in social perception compared to sociability and competence, due to morality being more important for group survival and for detecting threats.

Keeping in mind this distinction between morality and sociability, evidence suggests that these two dimensions are distinct both at the individual level ([Anderson & Sedikides, 1991](#); [De Raad & Peabody, 2005](#)) and at the group level ([Brambilla et al., 2011, 2012](#); [Leach et al., 2007](#)). Indeed, morality has been argued to be more important than sociability and competence in positive ingroup evaluations ([Leach et al., 2007](#)) and for outgroup impression formation ([Brambilla et al., 2012](#)). Moreover, [Brambilla et al. \(2011\)](#) found that sociability and morality are processed differently in information gathering, and that morality has a dominant role in this process.

A question arising out of this debate is *why* morality is potentially more relevant than the other two dimensions. From the evolutionary approach and the socio-biological model ([Alexander, 1987](#)), morality is seen as a force leading to cohesiveness within groups and the exclusion of outgroups with different interests to the ingroups ([Alexander, 1985](#)). In this sense, morality might be related to group survival, since it works as a protective mechanism against intergroup threats. Studying primate behavior, [De Waal \(1996\)](#) also concluded that a sense of morality is essential to group life, since morality facilitates the coordination among members group in order to maximize benefits for individual members and the whole group. Some work on functional neuroimaging also supports the idea about the special status of morality ([Amaral, 2002](#); [Willis & Todorov, 2006](#)).

Accordingly, it is not surprising that moral values are considered among the most important guiding principles in people's lives ([Schwartz, 1992](#)). Even in competitive contexts, moral values seem to dominate over others such as competence ([Schwartz & Bardi, 2001](#)). Recently, it has been shown that morality information (rather than information regarding competence) determined initial emotional responses to a newcomer, which mediated willingness to help this person in a workplace ([Pagliaro, Brambilla, Sacchi, D'Angelo, & Ellemers, 2013](#)).

At the group level, morality is central to how individuals evaluate their ethnic ingroup relative to out-groups ([Brewer & Campbell, 1976](#); [Levine & Campbell, 1972](#)). To sum up, [Brambilla et al. \(2011\)](#) argue that morality is more relevant than sociability and competence precisely because it allows the perceiver to determine whether someone represents an opportunity or a threat, that is, whether a person is beneficial or harmful for the perceiver's material and psychological well-being.

1.3. Going beyond acculturation preferences: prosocial behavioral tendencies

One final aspect deserves discussing. It has been suggested that acculturation preferences are very much focused on attitudes, and that it is of yet little understood how well these self reported attitudes map onto eventual behavior ([Brown & Zagefka, 2011](#)). Therefore, the present contribution also aims to go beyond acculturation attitudes, and assesses people's self reported prosocial behavioral tendencies related to their willingness to support positive measures toward a specific minority group.

It is recognized that acculturation preferences have repercussions for the intergroup relations between minority and majority groups ([Brown & Zagefka, 2011](#)). Likewise, stereotypes can elicit patterns of behavioral responses ([Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007](#); [Cuddy et al., 2008](#)). Recently, it has been demonstrated that people prefer to interact with targets depicted as highly moral than with those depicted as lacking morality, whereas information regarding competence or sociability had

no main effect on behavioral intentions (Brambilla, Sacchi, Pagliaro, & Ellemers, 2013). Similarly, only perceived outgroup morality mediated the effect of contact on behavioral intentions (Brambilla, Hewstone, & Colucci, 2013).

Therefore, we endeavored to explore the influence of stereotypes (especially the distinct role of stereotype dimensions) on prosocial behavioral tendencies toward a minority group, and the possible mediation role of acculturation preferences in such process.

1.4. The present study

Even though stereotypes have been proposed to predict acculturation preferences (López-Rodríguez et al., 2014; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001, 2004), to date there is no experimental evidence that confirms that stereotypes actually predict acculturation preferences. Further, although some studies have shown that morality is more important than sociability and competence in global impression formation (Brambilla et al., 2012) and information gathering (Brambilla et al., 2011), hitherto no data is available about the role perceived morality (vs. sociability and competence) might play in shaping majority members' acculturation preferences. On the other hand, even if the prominent role of morality has been found on behavioral tendencies (Brambilla, Sacchi, et al., 2013), the possibility that acculturation preferences may mediate this process remains unknown.

This study aimed to test whether the importance of morality would also be evident when studying effects on acculturation preferences, because morality has been shown to have strong effects elsewhere. In addition, little is known about the way in which stereotypes, acculturation preferences and prosocial tendencies might be related.

The current work aimed to address these omissions, using an experimental methodology. The following hypotheses and predictions were made:

Stereotypes were predicted to have an effect on majority members' acculturation preferences and prosocial behavioral tendencies toward minority groups. Particularly, a perception that the outgroup is high on morality, sociability and competence was expected to generate more preferred culture maintenance, less desire for culture adoption, and more prosocial tendencies. In line with the 'primacy of morality' argument, it was expected that morality effects would be particularly strong.

However, given that previous work has shown the effect of stereotypes on desire for culture maintenance to be stronger than the effect on desire for culture adoption (López-Rodríguez et al., 2014), it was also expected that the effect on culture maintenance might take center stage in the present study. It seems that under conditions of threat majority members are more likely to react with demanding a lack of culture maintenance (i.e., culture abandonment) than with demanding culture adoption (López-Rodríguez et al., 2014). Therefore, it was expected that negative intergroup stereotypes might also manifest stronger effects on culture maintenance than on culture adoption in the present study.

Finally, it was predicted that the effect of morality on prosocial behavioral tendencies would be mediated by acculturation preferences. It has been confirmed that attitudes significantly and substantially predict future behavior (Kraus, 1995). This has also been demonstrated for multicultural contexts (Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004). Along the same lines, Schalk-Soekar & Van de Vijver (2008) propose that aspects such as ethnic stereotypes can be conceived as antecedents, while other behavioral aspects such as intergroup contact constitute outcomes. To date, our understanding of the behavioral outcomes of different acculturation attitudes is still rudimentary (Brown & Zagefka, 2011), and the present study tried to make advances in this respect by testing the effects of morality on willingness to support positive institutional measures via (i.e., mediated by) acculturation attitudes.

The present research was carried out in and around London, one of the most multicultural areas in the world. Indian people were chosen as the minority target. This group constitutes a sizeable minority in Britain, and one for which it was felt that stereotypes would be reasonably easily malleable, because existing stereotypes are not characterized by extreme negativity or positivity compared to some other minority groups. In fact, they are perceived relatively high in competence and average in warmth in US (Lee & Fiske, 2006), and rated as equally competent, sociable and moral in Italy (Brambilla et al., 2011). Moreover, Indians are less negatively perceived than other minorities, e.g. Muslims (Abrams & Houston, 2006).

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Two hundred and one British people volunteered to participate in the study. The age of the participants varied from 16 to 71, with a mean of 26.66 ($SD = 11.00$); 62.7% were female. Questionnaires were distributed by the researchers in public places (e.g., at university, on the train).

2.2. Design

The design of the study was a 2 (morality: high vs. low) \times 2 (sociability: high vs. low) \times 2 (competence: high vs. low) between participants design. Accordingly, participants were randomly allocated to the different conditions.¹

¹ Some preliminary analyses revealed that participants were equally distributed across conditions in terms of their age and sex.

Stereotypes were manipulated by having participants read the results of a fictitious piece of research about Indian immigrants to the UK, allegedly carried out by Oxford University. The results of the research were presented in the form of a fake article which was designed to look realistic. The research was stated to have confirmed that Indians were high (or low, or mixed) in three different dimensions. Each dimension included five characteristics taken from previous studies (Brambilla et al., 2011; Fiske et al., 2002; Leach et al., 2007). 'Morality' (M) comprised the following traits: honest, sincere, trustworthy, righteous, and well-intentioned; 'sociability' (S) comprised the traits of kind, warm, friendly, likeable, and good tempered; and 'competence' (C) comprised the traits of capable, self-confident, efficient, skillful, and intelligent. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight experimental conditions. Here is an example of the information that participants read in the high M/high S/high C condition: "The survey, carried out by Oxford University, aimed to analyze personality traits of different groups. After two years of study, and thousands of interviews, it has been confirmed that Indians are high in sociability: they are very kind, warm, friendly, likeable, and good-tempered people. This research has also shown that Indians seem to be high in morality: they are very honest, sincere, trustworthy, righteous, and well-intentioned. Moreover, the study focalized in other kinds of traits, more related to competence. Indians turned out to be high in competence: they are very capable, self-confident, efficient, skillful, and intelligent people". In the low conditions, it was asserted that Indians were low in sociability (i.e., they were not very kind, warm, etc.), morality (i.e., they were not very honest, sincere, etc.), and competence (i.e., they were not very capable, self-confident, etc.). There were six more conditions with a combination of the different level of stereotypes.

To control for possible order effects, the information regarding the three different stereotype dimensions was counter-balanced, resulting in twenty-four different questionnaires (8 experimental conditions by 3 different orders of the three stereotype dimensions).

2.3. Measures and procedure

After reading the article, participants filled out a questionnaire by reporting their personal opinion regarding the following variables:

In order to measure *acculturation preferences* for Indians, participants answered the following questions according to Berry's (1997) and Bourhis et al.'s (1997) framework: 'Do you want Indians in England to maintain the customs of their original country?', and 'Do you want Indians in England to adopt the British customs?'. Both items were measured on 5-point Likert scales (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely*). Importantly, the preference for culture maintenance and culture adoption was measured separately (Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Zagefka & Brown, 2002; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011) instead of combining them into discrete categories. We explored if the two acculturation preferences (i.e., maintenance and adoption) were independent (Berry, 1997) or were related to each other (Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011, 2012). Correlation analyses confirmed that desire for culture maintenance was negatively related to desire for culture adoption, $r_{(198)} = -.30, p < .001$. Some preliminary analyses showed that desire for maintenance ($M = 3.34; SD = .78$) had an interquartile range of 1, whereas desire for adoption ($M = 3.08; SD = .82$) showed an interquartile range of 0. This entails that the data for desire for maintenance are more spread out, whereas for desire for adoption, the data are more bunched up around the mean, presenting less variability.

Prosocial behavioral tendencies measured the participants' behavioral intentions toward Indians at institutional level, namely, their intentions regarding different political actions toward this group. Participants were asked to answer the following question: 'Would you support the following institutional measures toward Indians?' Measures were: Avoiding the discrimination of Indians, giving priority to British people when accessing the healthcare system (reverse coded), expelling Indians from Britain if they do not have valid documents (reverse coded), supporting equal rights for Indians, giving priority to British people in the allocation of school places (reverse coded), improving the Indians' living conditions, giving priority to British people in the allocation of welfare support (reverse coded), and collaborating with the Indian government if it is beneficial for the British economy, $\alpha = .77$. All items were measured on 5-point Likert scales (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely*). Preliminary analyses showed that prosocial behavioral tendencies ($M = 3.83; SD = .73$) had an interquartile range of 1.

Intergroup contact was measured to control for it, because it has been shown to impact on intergroup attitudes and behaviors (Binder et al., 2009). Therefore, controlling for this variable allowed for a more accurate estimation of the effect of stereotypes. *Quantity of contact* with Indians was assessed by a question adapted from Binder et al.'s (2009) study: "How often do you spend time with your Indian friends?" (1 = *rarely* to 5 = *very often*). Preliminary analyses showed that quantity of contact ($M = 2.49; SD = 1.16$) had an interquartile range of 1.

Participants also completed some other items which are not relevant to the present study. Then, participants were thanked for their participation and debriefed. All aspects of the study were inline with APA ethical guidelines.

3. Results

First of all, results about the effect of stereotypes on majority members' acculturation preferences are presented. After that, the attention is turned to the effect of stereotypes on prosocial tendencies. Finally, a mediational model is presented, outlining how stereotypes about the outgroup, the majority's acculturation preferences, and prosocial behavioral tendencies toward Indians were related.

Table 1

Means and standard deviations of desire for culture maintenance and culture adoption for each condition.

	High morality				Low morality			
	Desire for maintenance		Desire for adoption		Desire for maintenance		Desire for adoption	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
High sociability								
High competence	3.61 _a	.84	3.13 _{ab}	.75	3.22 _{ab}	.60	3.13 _{ab}	.76
Low competence	3.43 _{ab}	.79	3.17 _{ab}	1.03	3.09 _{ab}	.60	3.04 _{ab}	.88
Low sociability								
High competence	3.22 _{ab}	.79	3.26 _{ab}	.69	3.54 _{ab}	.72	2.75 _b	.73
Low competence	3.62 _a	.82	3.04 _{ab}	.86	3.00 _b	.85	3.09 _{ab}	.85

Note. Subscripts denote significant differences according to Tukey's HSD.

3.1. Effect of stereotypes on majority members' acculturation preferences

Firstly, pair-wise comparison among means (see Table 1) with Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD = $d = .59$) revealed that as predicted, stereotype level had an effect on desire for culture maintenance: culture maintenance preference was higher when stereotypes on all three dimensions were favorable (i.e., high morality, high sociability, and high competence) ($M = 3.61$; $SD = .84$) than when stereotypes on all three dimensions were unfavorable (i.e., low morality, low sociability and low competence) ($M = 3.00$; $SD = .85$).

However, the main objective of the present study was to confirm the distinct role of morality (vs. sociability and competence). In order to test the main effects of the three dimensions of stereotypes on acculturation preferences, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed with morality, sociability and competence as three independent factors, and desire for culture maintenance and desire for culture adoption as dependent factors. Quantity of contact was controlled for.

Multivariate tests revealed only a main effect of Morality on acculturation preferences, $F_{(2,176)} = 4.76$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. No other main effects or interaction effects were found.

Regarding between-subjects effects, it was also shown that only morality had a significant main effect on desire for culture maintenance, $F_{(1,177)} = 5.45$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Participants preferred Indians to maintain their original culture more in the high morality condition ($M = 3.47$; $SD = .82$) than in the low morality condition ($M = 3.22$; $SD = .72$). Crucially, we did not find a main effect of sociability, $F_{(1,177)} = .01$, $p = .97$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$; or competence $F_{(1,177)} = 1.02$, $p = .32$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$, on desire for culture maintenance.

No effects were found on desire for culture adoption. Likewise, quantity of contact had no effect on neither desire for cultural maintenance, $F_{(1,177)} = .24$, $p = .62$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$; nor cultural adoption, $F_{(1,177)} = .28$, $p = .60$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$.

Some interaction effects were found when predicting desire for maintenance,² but they exceeded the main goal of the present study.

3.2. Effect of stereotypes on prosocial behavioral tendencies

To test the effect of stereotypes on prosocial behavioral tendencies, an ANOVA was performed with morality, sociability and competence as three independent factors, and prosocial tendencies toward immigrants as dependent variable. Quantity of contact was again controlled for.

This time no main effects of stereotype dimensions on prosocial tendencies were found: morality, $F_{(1,180)} = 1.04$, $p = .31$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$; sociability, $F_{(1,180)} = .08$, $p = .78$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$; competence, $F_{(1,180)} = .03$, $p = .87$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$. Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 2.

Quantity of contact did increased prosocial tendencies, $F_{(1,180)} = 4.48$, $p = .04$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$; and a three-way interaction emerged between morality, sociability, and competence on prosocial tendencies.³

3.3. Mediation analyses

As shown in Table 3, prosocial behavioral tendencies were related to acculturation preferences.

² The analyses also revealed a two-way interaction between morality and competence on desire for maintenance, $F_{(1,177)} = 4.07$, $p = .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, indicating that morality affected the desire for culture maintenance but only when competence was low, $F_{(1,177)} = 9.47$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$ (high morality $M = 3.53$; $SD = .80$; low morality $M = 3.04$; $SD = .73$), whereas the Morality effect disappeared when competence was high, $F_{(1,179)} = .05$, $p = .82$ (high morality $M = 3.41$; $SD = .83$; low morality $M = 3.41$; $SD = .70$). A three-way interaction between morality, sociability and competence was also found on desire for maintenance, $F_{(1,177)} = 5.08$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, showing that the morality effect remained only when the other two dimensions (i.e., sociability and competence) were both low, $F_{(1,177)} = 8.09$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. In contrast, the morality effect disappeared when one or both sociability and competence were high.

³ A three-way interaction emerged between morality, sociability, and competence, $F_{(1,180)} = 4.46$, $p = .04$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, indicating that morality had a significant effect on prosocial tendencies only when sociability and competence were both low, $F_{(1,180)} = 5.17$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$.

Table 2
Means and standard deviations of positive institutional attitudes for each condition.

	High morality		Low morality	
	M	SD	M	SD
High sociability				
High competence	3.92	.69	3.75	.78
Low competence	3.81	.82	3.83	.84
Low sociability				
High competence	3.71	.61	3.94	.59
Low competence	4.10	.70	3.59	.79

Table 3
Correlations among variables.

	1	2	3	4
1. Desire for maintenance	1	-.30**	.45**	-.03
2. Desire for adoption		1	-.35**	.04
3. Prosocial behavioral tendencies			1	.16*
4. Quantity of contact				1

Note: standardized correlation coefficients are given.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

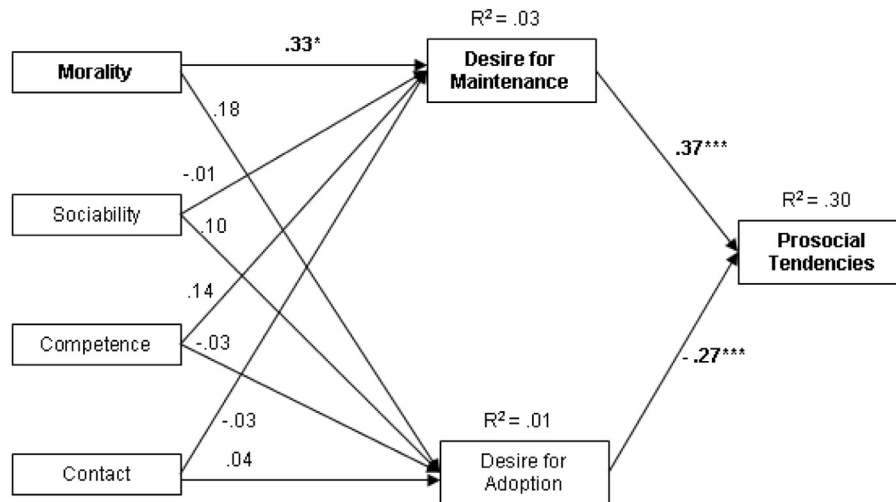


Fig. 1. Desire for maintenance mediating the effect of morality on prosocial tendencies.

Although morality had no direct effect on prosocial tendencies, we wondered if it might have an indirect effect through its effect on desire for maintenance. Given that it is not necessary a simple association between X and Y in order to test indirect effects (Hayes, 2009), it may be possible that in this study morality did affect prosocial tendencies only indirectly.

A mediational analysis was conducted to determine whether morality might have an indirect effect on prosocial behavioral tendencies toward Indians through desire for maintenance. Using the macro *MEDIATE* (Hayes & Preacher, in press), we specified a mediational model with the three stereotype dimensions as independent variables (X_1 = morality; X_2 = sociability; X_3 = competence); desire for maintenance (M_1) and desire for adoption (M_2) as mediators; and prosocial tendencies as dependent variable (Y). The effect of quantity of contact was controlled as convariable (C). Independent variables were coded (low = 0; high = 1), and the rest of the measures were standardized. Since the interaction effects exceed the main goal of the present study (i.e., to understand the distinct role of morality vs. sociability and competence), the analysis only focused on the main effects of the three stereotype dimensions.

The results are displayed in Fig. 1. As it has been previously shown, only morality directly influenced desire for cultural maintenance, $t_{(184)} = 2.29$, $p = .02$, $d = .34$; whereas no direct effects were found with sociability, $t_{(184)} = -.08$, $p = .93$, $d = .01$; or competence, $t_{(184)} = 1.00$, $p = .32$, $d = .15$.

A bootstrapping test (n boots 5000) confirmed the expectation that desire for maintenance mediated the effect of morality on prosocial behavioral tendencies. Even if morality had no a direct effect on prosocial behavioral tendencies, it had an indirect effect through desire for maintenance, $B = .12$ (.06), 95% Confidence Interval (CI) [.0231, .2841]. These findings indicated that British people preferred Indians to maintain more their original culture when they were presented as highly moral

people, which in turn, increased prosocial behavioral tendencies toward them. Desire for adoption also influenced prosocial behavioral tendencies, but in the opposite way, by reducing such intergroup intentions.

No indirect effects were found with sociability, $B = -.01$ (.05), 95% CI [-.1225, .0929]; or competence, $B = .05$ (.06), 95% CI [-.0454, .1816].

An alternative model, with prosocial behavioral tendencies as mediator (M) of the effect of stereotypes (X_1, X_2, X_3) on desire for cultural maintenance (Y_1) and adoption (Y_2) showed no indirect effects. This finding strengthens the idea that acculturation preferences work as predictors and not as outcomes of prosocial behavioral tendencies.

To summarize, only morality had a direct effect on desire for maintenance and an indirect effect on prosocial tendencies through desire for maintenance.

4. Discussion

This current research provides experimental evidence for the distinct effect of stereotype dimensions on majority members' acculturation preferences and prosocial behavioral tendencies toward a specific minority group.

Overall, stereotypes influenced British people's desire for culture maintenance. Support for Indians' maintaining their original culture was higher when stereotypes painted them as moral, social, and competent, rather than immoral, unsociable, and incompetent people (i.e., more desire for culture maintenance when the three dimensions were high than when the three ones were low). Stereotypical perceptions about the others therefore clearly impact on opinions on whether the others should maintain their original culture or not. These findings are in line with previous works (López-Rodríguez et al., 2014; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001, 2004), but the current contribution reinforces them by presenting experimental evidence, and clarifying the content of stereotypes.

The most important finding of this work is related to the essential role of morality compared to the other stereotype dimensions. In contrast to morality, neither sociability nor competence perceptions were by themselves relevant variables to elicit change on desire for culture maintenance. Morality was also the only dimension which indirectly predicted prosocial behavioral tendencies through desire for culture maintenance. To summarize, morality had a significant main effect, whereas the other two dimensions did not. This also means that morality may be more important than the others, even if its effect size was modest.

These results are inline with previous studies (e.g., Brambilla et al., 2012) which found morality effects to be more important than sociability or competence effects. It might be explained by the essential role of morality ingroup survival. As scholars have argued (Amaral, 2002; Brambilla et al., 2011; Willis & Todorov, 2006), morality is more relevant than sociability and competence in the definition of another as an opportunity or a threat. Accordingly, only morality information seems to be diagnostic when preferring minority members to maintain their original culture: if the minority group is perceived as moral, majority members are more flexible regarding the maintenance of their original culture, probably because it does not entail a threat for the ingroup. It is been demonstrated that the negative expectations elicited by stereotypes enhance intergroup threat (Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan, & Martin, 2005), and that threat may mediate between stereotypes and majority members' acculturation preferences (López-Rodríguez et al., 2014). Future research should contemplate realistic and symbolic threat as explicative mechanisms which connect morality with desire for maintenance.

However, stereotypes did not affect desire for culture adoption. This was not unexpected, since previous evidence showed a very similar pattern in Spain (López-Rodríguez et al., 2014), where the effect of stereotypes on desire for culture adoption was weaker (or even non-existent) than the effect on desire for culture maintenance. This differential pattern might be due to culture maintenance being more diagnostic for assessing if someone represents a threat. The original culture of the outgroup might be an unfamiliar entity for majority members in many contexts, and for this reason this dimension may be more sensitive to stereotypes about morality. Moreover, cultural adoption showed less variability than cultural maintenance, a fact that might also explain a lack of effect on this variable.

The present findings make a contribution to the field by complementing and extending our existing knowledge. On the one hand, these results highlight the primary importance of morality in the context of acculturation. The special status of morality has already been confirmed for the judgments of outgroups (Brambilla et al., 2012) and ingroups (Leach et al., 2007), and our findings are inline with this.

The fact that only morality directly predicted desire for culture maintenance, and indirectly increased prosocial behavioral tendencies has implications for future interventions. Understanding the moral values of each culture might be more efficient when improving intergroup attitudes, and increasing prosocial actions.

4.1. Limitations, cautions, and directions of future research

Although this current work answers some questions, it also reveals challenges for future research.

For instance, this study focused only on one target group, namely Indian minority members in the UK. It would be interesting to test the same predictions with different culture groups who have more or less status, and who generate high or low perceived threat. Simultaneously, it would be interesting to test the possible mediating role of threat. Additionally, the possibility that similar patterns might emerge in minority groups would be worthy of future investigation.

Moreover, more studies must be conducted to clarify why and when the effect on desire for cultural maintenance is stronger than for cultural adoption. In this case, we have observed that cultural adoption showed little variation among participants in this study, which might partially explain the lack of effects on this variable.

Regarding the measures used in this study, even if prosocial behavioral tendencies are still attitudinal measures and not actual behaviors, they are at least more concretely linked to specific behaviors, and therefore somewhat more practical than acculturation preferences. Future research should consider actual behaviors. At the same time, others have also used one-item measures for acculturation desires (Piontkowski et al., 2000), and it seems that single-item measures – although not ideal – can still be reasonably reliable indicators of acculturation attitudes (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). However, future research in this field could measure different culture spheres in acculturation attitudes to understand if there are asymmetric relations between the morality, sociability and competence dimensions and diverse acculturation spheres like public or private culture areas.

Another limitation is related to the small effect size. The findings showed that stereotypes only account for a small part of the variation in desire for cultural maintenance, implying that other variables not observed in this study need to be taken into account to explain these outcomes in future research.

On the other hand, although the interaction among the stereotype dimensions exceeded the main objective of the present study, some peculiar aspects must be highlighted here. Previous findings have shown that generally, when outgroups are depicted as immoral and competent, they provoke more negative responses (due to them being perceived as more threatening) than when they are perceived as low in competence and low in morality (Wojciszke et al., 1998; Wojciszke, 2005). By contrast, the worst condition in this study seems to be when Indians are depicted as immoral, unsociable, and incompetent. This can be explained by the socio-economic context of the United Kingdom used in the current study, and the different dependent variables of this experiment. If British people perceive immigrants as neither competent nor moral, they will perceive them as a burden: they might think Indians would not be able to contribute to the country. Quite the opposite, if Indians are perceived as competent (even if they are not very moral or sociable) they might contribute to the economic development of the country. Competence, in this context, does not necessarily entail eminent realistic threat. For this reason, competent Indians are perceived as something positive for the host culture instead of something dangerous. This peculiar finding is coherent with some previous arguments. Lee and Fiske (2006, p.765) argue precisely that '*groups perceived as both competent and warm presumably have the most to offer to the host country while groups perceived as neither competent nor warm might be seen as exploiting resources*'. Another possible difference between the present study and the previous works is regarding the object of study. In this current work we are not talking about impression formation, but desire for maintenance and prosocial behavioral tendencies. Moreover, previous studies found an interactive contribution of stereotype dimensions on impressions mostly when morality and competence constituted different aspects of the same behavioral act, and not when single traits were manipulated (Wojciszke et al., 1998, Study 4; Brambilla et al., 2012). However, more research should be conducted in order to clarify how these three stereotype dimensions may interplay when predicting different intergroup processes.

Finally, future research should also aim to include appropriate manipulation checks, to precisely monitor the effects of the manipulations.

4.2. Conclusions

To sum up, this research presents some rare experimental evidence of the effect of stereotypes on acculturation preferences, and prosocial tendencies. Specifically, it highlights the dominant role of morality (vs. sociability and competence) at the group level. These findings make a clear case for the fact that morality, acculturation preferences and prosocial tendencies are related in a systematic fashion. If we want to enhance majority members' prosocial tendencies toward minority groups, we must start by addressing their perceptions about others' morality and acculturation preferences. Turning our attention to these processes will facilitate the development of a real multicultural society.

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