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# The evaluation of immigrants' political acculturation strategies

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## ABSTRACT

Although acculturation involves changes of both minority and majority group members, previous research focused primarily on the former. Furthermore, while the relevance of acculturation in the socio-cultural domain is well established, research has largely ignored acculturation in the political domain. This paper presents two experimental studies that investigated the extent to which Dutch majority members' out-group feelings are influenced by the political acculturation strategies of Muslim immigrants. Majority members reacted strongly to the different acculturation strategies, defined in terms of group interests and goals. Their feelings were more negative when Muslims were presented as politically advancing the interests of their in-group, while Muslims furthering goals that benefit society as a whole were met with considerably less resistance. The differential evaluation of the political acculturation strategies depended on perceptions of power threat.

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## 1. Introduction

Minority participation in political systems is widely recognized as crucial for the democratic process and for improving the socio-economic position of disadvantaged groups (Bieber, 2008; Pande, 2003; Petrusevska, 2009). In many European states there is a very limited number of immigrant minorities that participate in mainstream politics. Immigrants' relative absence from the political domain does not simply reflect their recent arrival, lack of integration or slow acquisition of citizenship (Bloemraad & Schönwälder, 2013; Kapur, 2014). Political participation of members of immigrant-origin groups is often met with controversy and resistance because of derogatory group images and doubts about their national loyalty and ability and right to participate (e.g., Petrusevska, 2009; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). These negative reactions could lead to increased inequality and exclusion, and might negatively affect the democratic process. Thus, it is important to understand the processes underlying majority members' willingness to accommodate immigrant-origin group members in the political domain.

Acculturation processes involve mutual adaptations that different groups and their individual members make when they come into structural contact (Berry, 1997). Research, however, focuses primarily on the adaptation and attitudes of immigrant group members, and to a far lesser extent on the views of majority members (Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Matera,

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Stefanile, & Brown, 2011). Furthermore, while acculturation is studied extensively in the social and cultural domains of life and in relation to group identities, researchers have largely ignored acculturation in the political domain.

This paper presents two experimental vignette studies designed to examine how majority members' out-group feelings are influenced by the political acculturation strategies of Muslims immigrants. Specifically, we tested the proposition that out-group feelings depend on the group interests that politically active Muslims are advancing. Further, we will examine the role of power threat perceptions on how majority members evaluate immigrants' acculturation strategies. Our research was conducted in the Netherlands where Muslims (whether first, second, or third generation) are placed at the heart of national debates on immigration and integration (McLaren, 2003; Scheepers, Gijsberts, & Coenders, 2002). Since this is the case in many European countries (Helbling, 2012), the Netherlands offers a prototypical context for our research.

Muslims of immigrant-origin currently make up about five per cent of the Dutch population. Most of them are of Turkish and Moroccan origin and came to the Netherlands as migrant laborers starting at the end of the 1960s. In addition, there are smaller groups of Muslims originating from Indonesia, Suriname, Afghanistan and Somalia (Maliapaard & Gijsberts, 2012). More than half of these immigrants have Dutch citizenship and are thus may fully participate in Dutch politics (Douwes, de Koning, & Boender, 2005). Additionally, non-Dutch citizens are allowed to vote in local elections if they possess another EU nationality, or if they have lived legally in a particular municipality for at least five consecutive years.

### 1.1. Political acculturation

Although the importance of political acculturation processes is acknowledged (Berry, 1997), research has not systematically applied the acculturation framework to the political domain. In the socio-cultural domain acculturation is typically seen as involving two key issues that determine immigrants' acculturation strategies (Berry, 1997). First, immigrants need to decide on the extent to which they want to have social contacts and get involved with the dominant majority group. The second issue concerns the extent to which the heritage culture should be maintained. The combination of these two issues leads to the well-known four acculturation strategies: assimilation (low on cultural maintenance, high on contact), integration (high on both cultural maintenance and contact), separation (high on cultural maintenance, low on contact), and marginalization (low on both).

Experimental vignette studies operationalizing these four strategies show that majority members respond to them differently. For example, in the context of the Netherlands, native majority members clearly have more positive attitudes toward immigrants who endorse assimilation or integration over those that endorse separation and marginalization (Van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998; Verkuyten, Thijs, & Sierksma, 2014). Native Italians have also been found to evaluate immigrants who endorse assimilation and integration more positively than those who endorse separation and marginalization (Kosic, Mannetti, & Sam, 2005). Furthermore, a study in Belgium (Flanders) showed that students perceived a conflict between the tendency of immigrants who want to maintain their heritage culture and their adoption of the host culture (Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2012). Furthermore, the assumed tendency to maintain the heritage culture paired with the perception of limited engagement with the host society was experienced as threatening (Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011).

In general, majority members prefer immigrants to assimilate or integrate because this indicates that immigrants value the host society culture to the extent that they want to adopt it (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). This makes majority members feel valued, which in turn results in more favorable out-group attitudes. Conversely, immigrants seeking to maintain their cultural heritage tend to be viewed as a threat to the majority culture and consequently are evaluated more negatively (e.g., Tip et al., 2012).

Members of immigrant-origin groups can participate politically in various ways, such as voting in elections, running for office, establishing a political party, joining political demonstrations, contacting politicians, signing petitions, and being politically active on internet forums and social media (Carlisle & Patton, 2013; Marien, Hooghe, & Quintelier, 2010). We know very little about how people respond to immigrants adopting any of these political behaviours. Applying the acculturation framework to the political domain, we focus on immigrants' political participation in terms of advancing particular group interests and goals (Hartmann & Gerteis, 2005). Thus we propose an adapted two-dimensional framework for understanding majority members' evaluation of political acculturation strategies. First, immigrant-origin members face the question whether or not they wish to advance politically the interests and goals of their minority in-group. Second, they face the question whether they wish to advance interests and goals that benefit the society of settlement as a whole. When we consider these two issues simultaneously, we can derive four political acculturation strategies (see Fig. 1).

*Marginalization* refers to the situation in which immigrant-origin members do not wish to represent any group interests or goals. Since this implies that one wants to keep away from group-based politics we will not further consider this strategy.

When an immigrant wishes to advance national society's interests and not those of his or her minority group, the *assimilation strategy* is defined. This strategy does not necessarily imply a low desire to maintain one's heritage culture but indicates that minority identity and culture is not considered a basis for political participation. We expect that majority members will evaluate this strategy most positively because it does not harm them, and it signals acceptance of the existing political system and status quo as well as acceptance of the dominant culture at large (Tip et al., 2012).

*Separation* is the strategy in which immigrant-origin members wish to advance only the interests of their minority in-group. Majority members will probably evaluate this strategy most negatively. Group competition is an important basis for prejudice and discrimination (e.g., Bobo & Hutchings, 1996; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and the separation strategy directly challenges the political status quo, and with it, the privileged status position of the majority group in society.

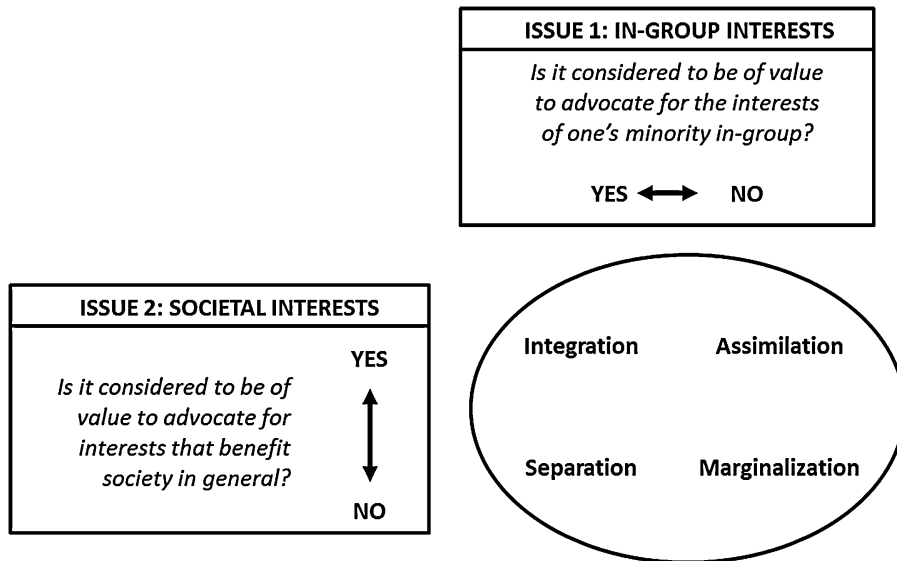


Fig. 1. Political acculturation strategies.

We expect that Dutch majority members will evaluate the *integration* strategy at an intermediate level. Immigrants who endorse integration not only advocate for the interests of their minority in-group specifically, but also pursue goals that are relevant for everyone else in the society. Thus, on the one hand, integrating immigrants try to advance the position of their own group, and on the other, they demonstrate political commitment to improve the broader society. It follows that majority members can be expected to evaluate this strategy more positively than the separation strategy, but more negatively than assimilation.

In sum, we expect Dutch majority members to be most positive about the assimilation strategy, most negative about the separation strategy, and to rank the integration strategy in between.

### 1.2. The role of perceived power threat

In addition to this ranking of out-group feelings, we expect perceptions of power threat to play a role in the evaluation of the political acculturation strategies. Threat perceptions are related to various political attitudes, such as limiting civil rights to natives compared to immigrants (Schepers et al., 2002), and stronger support for the exclusion of immigrants (McLaren, 2003). Attitudes towards political participation of immigrants will probably not be an exception to that rule. Previous research showed that the more majority members view immigrant-origin groups as threatening the majority culture or status position, the more they reject immigrants' participation (Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Matera et al., 2011). Arguably, threat perceptions are even more relevant in the political domain because politics deals with competition about power and influence. An experimental study in the Netherlands that focused on political party membership found that natives who perceived higher power threat had more negative feelings towards Muslims establishing their own political party or participating in mainstream political parties, but not towards Muslims who did not wish to be involved in politics (Hindriks, Verkuyten, & Coenders, 2015). In general, majority members tend to become more negative toward immigrant groups when they believe that these groups threaten the power position of their in-group. As the degree of perceived group competition differs across the three acculturation strategies, we expect to find a moderation effect of threat perceptions. More specifically, we expect that differences in the evaluation of the three political acculturation strategies will be more pronounced for people who perceive relatively high power threat of Muslim immigrants, compared to people who perceive relatively low power threat.

### 1.3. The roles of intergroup contact and trust

Although research among minority groups indicates that positive contact with the dominant group can reduce minorities' perceptions of group inequality and discrimination, and decrease their support for specific policies in favor of minority groups (e.g., Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2007; Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009), intergroup contact with minorities is widely known to reduce ethnic prejudice among majority members (see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Yet contact is studied far less extensively in relation to politics. In a longitudinal study in Spain, contact with immigrants was associated with lower endorsement of foreigner exclusionism (Escandell & Ceobanu, 2009). Further, a Danish study showed that more out-group contact in the workplace was related to stronger endorsement of ethnic minority rights (Frølund Thomsen, 2012). Out-group friendships is a particularly strong predictor of positive out-group attitudes among majority members (Pettigrew &

Tropp, 2011) and these friendships could lead to becoming more sympathetic to minority members' political involvement. In addition, out-group friendships might mitigate negative feelings towards minority members who advocate for their in-group interests. Hence, we expected to find an interaction effect between the political acculturation strategies and out-group friendships. Majority members with more out-group friends may view political acculturation strategies less in terms of political power and more as ways in which immigrants participate in society. Hence, among majority members with more out-group friends, differences in the evaluation of the three political acculturation strategies may be less pronounced. Conversely, for those with no or very few out-group friends, the difference in evaluations of the strategies may be more pronounced: they are likely to be more positive about the assimilation strategy, most negative about the separation strategy, and rank the integration strategy in between).

In the political sphere trust “allows citizens to join forces in social and political groups, and it enables them to come together in citizens' initiatives more easily” (Rothstein & Stolle, 2002, p. 3). Social trust is commonly viewed as an individual predisposition that refers to expectations on how other people will treat us (Matthes, 2013). Majority members can be expected to be less resistant towards the political acculturation of immigrants, when they place more trust in people. Similar, generalized social trust may moderate the evaluation of different political acculturation strategies. Majority members high in social trust may be less skeptical toward strategies that advance the interests of immigrant-origin groups. Hence, we expect stronger differences in the evaluation of political acculturation strategies among those low in social trust, whereas these differences will be less pronounced among those high in social trust.

#### 1.4. Overview

We present two vignette studies designed to investigate the extent to which majority members' evaluations of Muslim immigrants depend on the political acculturation strategy. Rather than investigating specific political behaviors, we examine the underlying question whether it matters for majority members whose group interests immigrant-origin members are advancing. Further, we examined the influence that power threat perceptions might exert on the evaluation of the political acculturation strategies. In addition to the three political acculturation strategies, we included a control condition in both studies. This allows us to ‘anchor’ the evaluation of the acculturation strategies and informs us on which strategies negatively affect feelings toward immigrants, and which have the opposite effect.

Study 1 employed a sample of Dutch adults from a pool of respondents maintained by a company performing non-commercial online research. However, because this sample was not representative, Study 2 drew a sample that was representative of the Dutch adult population. Study 2 therefore responds to concerns about the use of convenience samples for the generality of findings and theoretical conclusions (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010), especially in relation to out-group evaluations (Henry, 2008). Furthermore, Study 2 responds to important concerns about the lack of replication research in social psychology, and the need for direct replication studies that improve precision and test robustness and generalizability (Makel, Plucker, & Hegarty, 2012; Simons, 2014). Additionally, Study 2 considered the additional roles of out-group friendship and generalized social trust.

## 2. Study 1

### 2.1. Method

#### 2.1.1. Participants

A questionnaire on “The Netherlands in the Past and Present, Cultural Diversity, and Politics and Group Rights” was sent out in the Netherlands via Thesistools.be—a company for non-commercial online research that maintains a non-representative panel. Participants were invited to participate via e-mail and were paid €1.50 for completing the questionnaire. To ensure that the sample contained native majority members only, participants were selected by an initial lead question asking about the ethnic origin of their parents. In total 233 Dutch native participants (53% male, 47% female) completed the survey. These participants were aged 16 to 83 ( $M = 48.94$ ,  $SD = 14.61$ ), and most (72%) were not affiliated with a church or religious community. The participants completed at least primary education (6% completed secondary education only, 32% completed lower tertiary education, 36% obtained a Bachelor's degree, 25% obtained a Master's degree or higher). Concerning participants' political orientation, relatively many participants placed themselves on the left side of the political spectrum: 20% classified themselves as “left”, 25% as “center left”, 32% as “center”, and only 15% and 7% as “center right”, and “right”, respectively.

#### 2.1.2. Experimental procedure and measurements

Following the design of previous research (Hindriks et al., 2015; Matera et al., 2011; Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998), participants were presented with a short excerpt from a fictitious interview with a Muslim immigrant named Ahmed that “was recently published in a well-known morning newspaper”. In this interview, the group interests Ahmed advocated for were varied and participants were assigned randomly to one of four experimental conditions. In all conditions, Ahmed first said: “I am 30 years old and Muslim. Just like my parents I was born in Turkey, but I've been living in the Netherlands for more than 20 years”. To the question “Do you have clear ideas about Dutch politics?” Ahmed answered: “Yes, I do”. Participants in the *control* condition were only presented with this introductory text. All other participants were presented also with a text in which Ahmed responded to the additional question: “Do you think it is important that Muslims are politically active in

**Table 1**

Estimates of the effect of PPT on negative out-group feelings within each experimental condition of Studies 1 and 2.

Study	Condition	Estimate	SE	t-Value	p-Value
1	Separation	.56	.09	6.39	.00
	Integration	.42	.08	5.07	.00
	Assimilation	.24	.09	2.73	.01
	Control	.42	.10	4.30	.00
2	Separation	.39	.02	17.41	.00
	Integration	.36	.02	16.01	.00
	Assimilation	.26	.02	11.51	.00
	Control	.25	.02	10.67	.00

the Netherlands?”. Depending on the experimental condition, Ahmed gave one of three answers. In the *separation* condition, Ahmed answered: “Yes, absolutely. They have to try to advocate especially—and as much as possible—for the interests of Muslims”. In the *assimilation* condition, Ahmed answered: “Yes, absolutely. But they should advocate for issues that are relevant for society in general; not so much for the interests of Muslims”. In the *integration* condition, Ahmed answered: “Yes, absolutely. They have to advocate for the interests of Muslims, but not exclusively. They should also advocate for issues that are relevant for society in general”.

Directly after the vignette and for measuring the dependent variable, *negative out-group feelings*, participants were asked to indicate “their feelings toward people like Ahmed”. Six emotion terms were used: sympathy, irritation, fear, concern, admiration, and warmth (see Hindriks et al., 2015; Matera et al., 2011; Tip et al., 2012). The items (1 = ‘not at all’ to 7 = ‘very much’) were summated into a single reliable scale ( $\alpha = .89$ ) with higher scores indicate more negative feelings. On average, participants scored below the midpoint of the scale ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ).

After the vignettes and in a separate section of the questionnaire, four items were used to measure (1 = ‘fully not agree’ to 7 = ‘fully agree’) *Perceived Power Threat (PPT)*: “Because many immigrants live here, native Dutch people have less and less influence”, “The native Dutch are slowly losing the Netherlands to newcomers”, “Due to an increasing number of immigrants, native Dutch can determine what happens in the Netherlands to a lesser extent”, and “Sometimes it seems like natives have to adjust to immigrants, instead of the other way around”. These items formed a reliable scale with a higher score indicating more perceived power threat ( $\alpha = .93$ ;  $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 1.72$ ).

## 2.2. Results

### 2.2.1. Preliminary analysis

We first examined whether PPT differed between the three experimental conditions and this was not the case,  $F(3, 231) = .39$ ,  $p > .70$ . Furthermore, analyses of variance showed that there were no statistical differences across the experimental conditions for participants’ age,  $F(3, 231) = 1.17$ ,  $p = .32$ , gender  $F(3, 233) = .675$ ,  $p = .57$ , political orientation  $F(3, 233) = 1.29$ ,  $p = .28$ , and religiosity  $F(3, 233) = .479$ ,  $p = .70$ . There was, however, a significant difference for educational attainment,  $F(3, 233) = 2.83$ ,  $p = .04$ . Yet, educational attainment was not associated with negative out-group feelings and also did not moderate the effects of the experimental conditions ( $p_s > .10$ ).

### 2.2.2. Negative out-group feelings

Considering the experimental design, differences in feelings towards Muslim immigrants were examined using the general linear model (GLM) univariate procedure. The general linear model is a flexible generalization of regression analysis and analysis of variance and yields similar results (Rutherford, 2001). A between-subjects analysis was conducted in which the experimental condition (three political strategies) was included as factor and perceived power threat (PPT) as a continuous centered variable.

There was a significant and relatively large (Cohen, 1988) main effect for experimental condition,  $F(3, 231) = 33.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $partial\ eta^2 = .31$ . As expected, participants in the separation condition were most negative ( $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ), while participants in the assimilation condition were most positive ( $M = 2.45$ ,  $SD = .86$ ). Participants in the integration ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ) and control conditions ( $M = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ) were evaluated in-between the other two acculturation strategies (see Fig. 2). Post-hoc tests (Bonferroni) showed that all mean differences were statistically significant ( $p_s < .01$ ), except for the difference between the integration and the control condition.

The results further show a large main effect of PPT,  $F(1, 231) = 138.00$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $partial\ eta^2 = .38$ . To examine if PPT had a moderating influence we added to the GLM model the interaction between experimental condition and PPT and found it to be significant,  $F(3, 231) = 3.56$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $partial\ eta^2 = .05$ . This indicates that the effect of the experimental condition on negative out-group feelings depends on individual differences in PPT. Across conditions, participants who reported low PPT did not differ much in their out-group feelings (see Fig. 3). With higher PPT, however, the differences between experimental conditions were larger. The effect of PPT was strongest within the separation condition, and weakest within the assimilation condition. The effect sizes of PPT within the integration and control conditions were nearly identical (see Table 1: top half).

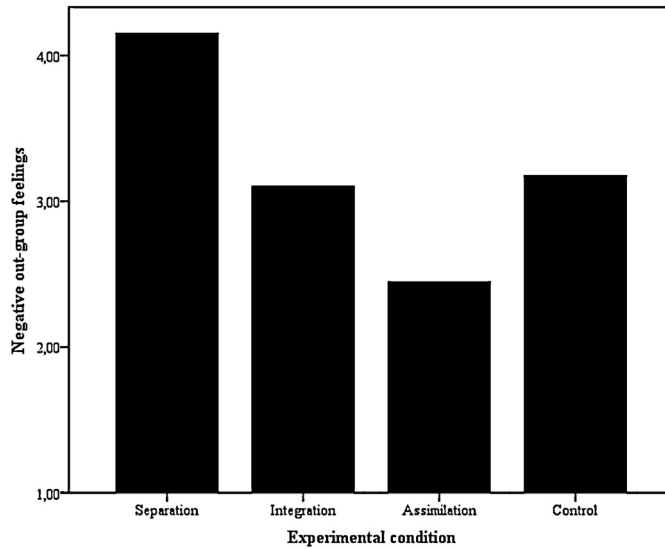


Fig. 2. Mean score for negative out-group feelings for the four experimental conditions of Study 1.

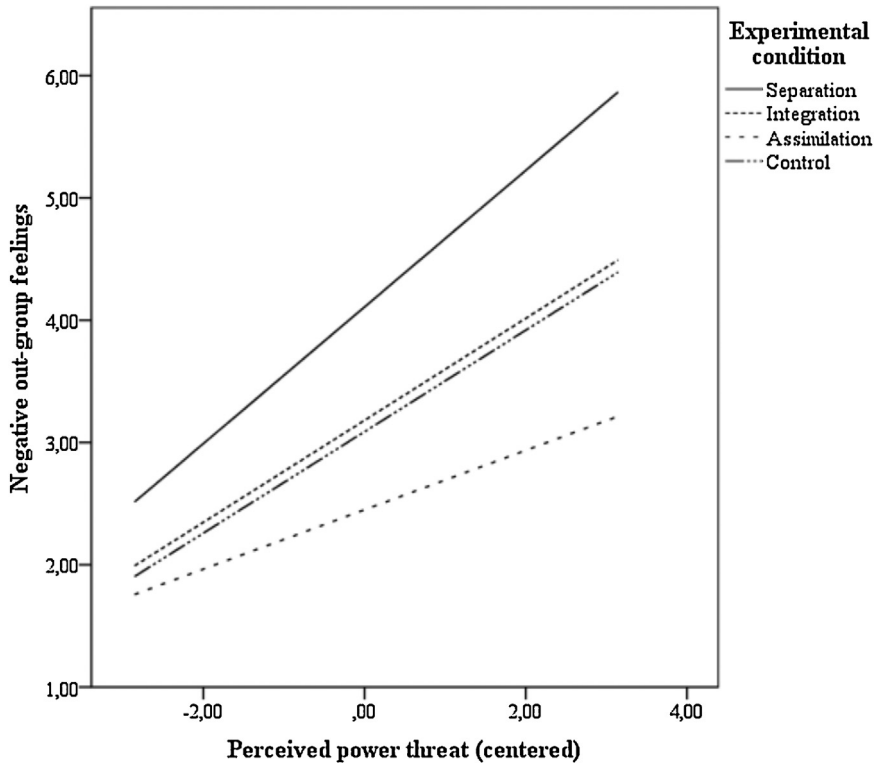


Fig. 3. Negative out-group feelings by PPT for each condition of Study 1.

### 2.3. Discussion

Muslim immigrants who exclusively advocate for the political interests of their minority group were evaluated more negatively, compared to their integrating counterparts, but also compared to the control condition. Conversely, majority members were significantly more positive towards Muslim immigrants who advance goals that benefit society as a whole (assimilation). Majority members' feelings towards integrating Muslims could not be distinguished from the out-group feelings in the control condition.



**Table 2**  
Means scores, standard deviations and correlations between the different measures.

	1	2	3	M	SD
1. Power threat	–			4.26	1.59
2. Out-group friendship	–.10	–		2.35	1.54
3. Generalized trust	–.42	.08	–	5.18	2.44
4. Negative out-group feelings	.46	–.09	–.32	3.44	1.10

n.b.; all correlations  $p < .01$ .

Perceptions of threat to the political power position of the majority group were associated with out-group derogation in all three political acculturation strategies. Yet, differences between experimental conditions were larger for participants who perceived more power threat. As expected, immigrants' political participation was evaluated more negatively when more power threat was perceived, in particular towards politically separating and integrating immigrants.

### 3. Study 2

Study 1 found strong support for the claim that political acculturation is an important intergroup phenomenon involving perceptions and concerns about group power and influence. In Study 2 we tried to replicate these findings using a large-scale representative sample of Dutch majority members. Furthermore, in addition to perceived power threat, Study 2 examined the possible moderating roles of out-group friendship and generalized social trust.

#### 3.1. Method

##### 3.1.1. Participants

In March 2014, a questionnaire about “Your political views, and your opinion on government policy and the welfare state” was administered to the online panel of TNS NIPO Consult; a bureau specialized in collecting representative population data. This online panel consists of over 200,000 participants, representative for gender, age, education and region. A sample of the adult population was drawn from this panel, based on gender, age, educational level, family size, and region. Respondents were invited to participate via e-mail and were paid €1.20 in vouchers (or could donate that amount to charity) for completing the questionnaire. A total of 4103 participants completed the survey, amounting to a response rate of 69%. To ensure that our sample contained native majority members only, participants were excluded when they indicated that they themselves or their parents were not born in the Netherlands ( $N = 410$ ). Another 415 respondent could not be included in the analyses because they did not answer the items for the dependent variable, resulting in a dataset of 3278 cases. For this sample, participants (51% male, 49% female) were aged 18 to 93 ( $M = 48.25$ ,  $SD = 16.21$ ), and most (68%) were not affiliated with a church or religious community. About 4% of the respondents completed primary education only; 25% completed secondary education; 36% completed lower tertiary education; 24% obtained a Bachelor's degree, 10% obtained a Master's degree or higher. Concerning participants' political orientation, 10% classified themselves as left, 17% as center left, 32% as center, 20% as center right, and 12% as right (8% did not answer the political self-placement question).

##### 3.1.2. Experimental procedure and measurements

The experimental design of Study 2 was identical to that of Study 1 and part of a larger data collection. The items for the dependent variable (the six emotion terms) were averaged into a single reliable scale ( $\alpha = .87$ ) so that a higher score indicates more negative out-group feelings. Similar to Study 1, participants scored below the midpoint of the scale (Table 2).

*Perceived Power Threat (PPT)* was again measured after the vignettes, in a separate section of the questionnaire by the same four items as Study 1 ( $\alpha = .95$ ). The mean PPT score was somewhat higher compared to Study 1 (Table 2).

The questionnaire contained only a single item for measuring *out-group friendship*: “How many friends do you have that belong to an ethnic minority group?”. It should be noted that the question refers to ethnic minority groups and not to Muslims. In the Netherlands, immigrant minority groups are predominantly discussed and understood in relation to Muslims (Vasta, 2007). Respondents could choose an answer on a five point scale ranging from 1 = “None” to 5 = “Four or more”.

*Generalized social trust* was measured with the familiar standard question: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?” (Matthes, 2013). Respondents could choose an answer on an 11-point scale, ranging from 0 = “You can't be too careful” to 10 = “Most people can be trusted”.

#### 3.2. Results

The mean scores and correlations of the different variables are shown in Table 2.

Negative out-group feelings were significantly associated with PPT, generalized social trust, and weakly with intergroup friendship. The correlations of friendship with PPT and generalized social trust were also low. The correlation between PPT and generalized social trust was higher.

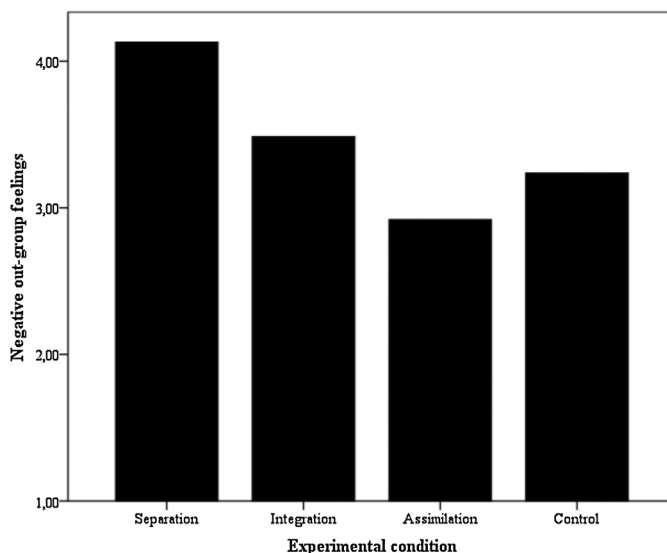


Fig. 4. Mean score for negative out-group feelings for the four experimental conditions of Study 2.

We examined whether PTT, friendships and generalized trust differed between the four experimental conditions. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that this was not the case for all three measures ( $p_s > .24$ ). Furthermore, there were no statistical differences across the experimental conditions for participants' age, gender, educational attainment, political orientation, and religious affiliation ( $p_s > .36$ ).

To examine differences in negative out-group feelings we again used a GLM that included experimental condition as the between-subjects factor, with PPT, interethnic friendship, and generalized social trust as continuous covariates (centered). The results showed significant effects for PPT,  $F(1,2985) = 448.17$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $partial\ eta^2 = .17$ , generalized social trust,  $F(1,2985) = 89.83$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $partial\ eta^2 = .03$ , and interethnic friendship although this effect was extremely small,  $F(1,2985) = 12.50$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $partial\ eta^2 = .004$ . Participants with higher scores on PPT were more negative towards the Muslim out-group member, whereas participants with more interethnic friendship and generalized social trust had less negative out-group feelings.

More importantly, there was a significant and large effect (Cohen, 1988) of experimental condition,  $F(3,2985) = 251.92$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $partial\ eta^2 = .20$ . Similar to Study 1, participants in the separation condition were most negative ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ), while those in the assimilation condition were most positive ( $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = .95$ ). Participants in the integration ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) and control conditions ( $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = .86$ ) had a score in-between the other two conditions (see Fig. 4). Post-hoc tests (Bonferroni) showed that all mean differences were statistically significant ( $p_s < .001$ ), including the difference between participants in the integration and control condition. This is different from Study 1 and might be due to the large sample size. To investigate whether this latter difference is substantial we ran an additional GLM with only the integration and control conditions. This showed that the difference between these two conditions is significant but quite small in terms of effect size,  $F(1,1621) = 30.14$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $partial\ eta^2 = .02$ .

### 3.2.1. Testing moderation

To the General Linear Model we added interaction terms of the three continuous (centered) predictors with the experimental condition. The interactions between experimental condition and PPT,  $F(3,2985) = 10.54$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $partial\ eta^2 = .01$ , and between the experimental condition and generalized social trust,  $F(3,2985) = 4.24$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $partial\ eta^2 = .004$ , were statistically significant. The interaction between experimental condition and interethnic friendship failed to reach statistical significance.

Simple slope analysis of the interaction with PPT (see Fig. 5 and Table 1; bottom half) revealed that threat had a positive effect within each experimental condition, with stronger effects within the separation and integration conditions compared to the assimilation and control conditions. Thus similar to Study 1, the differential evaluation of minority acculturation strategies was more pronounced for majority members who perceived more power threat. In contrast to Study 1, however, the effect of PPT in the control condition was similar to that in the assimilation condition. Simple slope analysis revealed that higher trust was related to less negative out-group feelings, especially within the separation and integration conditions ( $B = -.15$ , and  $-.18$ , respectively) and less so in the assimilation and control conditions (both:  $B = -.12$ ). These differences in effect sizes of generalized social trust across the experimental conditions were very small. Among those higher in social trust the differences in the evaluation of political acculturation strategies were somewhat less pronounced than among those lower in social trust. Yet, the very small differences between those higher and lower in social trust, combined with the extremely small effect size of the interaction effect, indicates that the interaction was significant but not very meaningful.



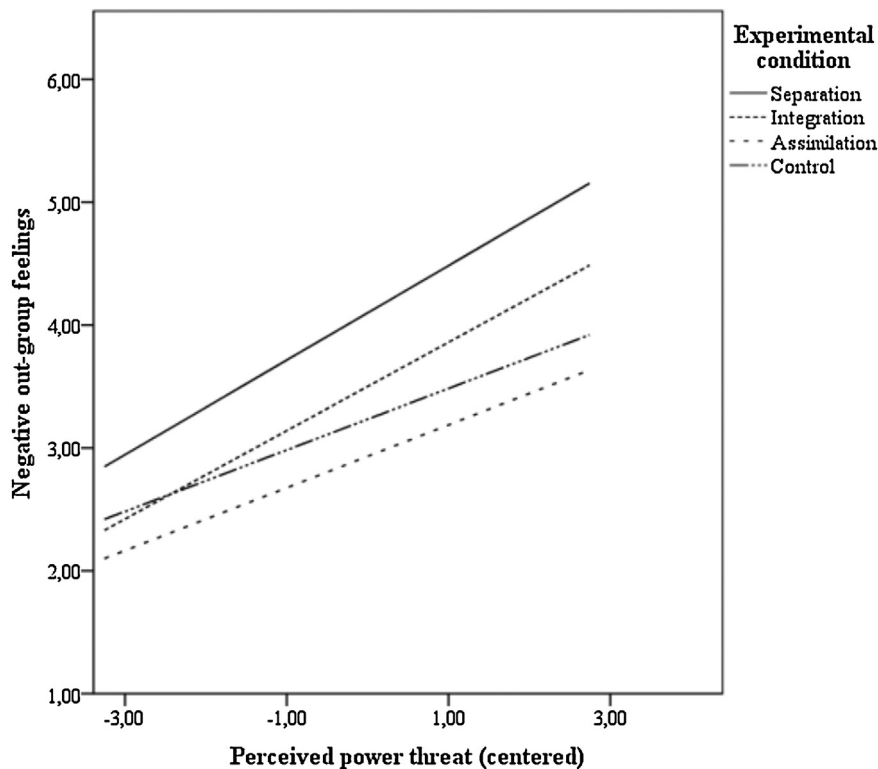


Fig. 5. Negative out-group feelings by PPT for each condition of Study 2.

We also examined the three-way interaction between experimental condition, PPT, and generalized social trust, and this interaction was not significant,  $F(3,3188) = .54$ ,  $p = .65$ ,  $partial\ eta^2 < .01$ .

### 3.3. Discussion

Similar to Study 1, the results of Study 2 support the proposition that political acculturation is an important intergroup phenomenon. Majority members' out-group feelings depended on the group interests that Muslim immigrants wished to advance in the political domain. Again, we found that, compared to the control condition, politically separating immigrants were evaluated more negatively, while assimilating immigrants were evaluated more positively. The results further showed that, although statistically significant, the difference in out-group feelings between participants in the integration and control conditions was not very strong or relevant.

The effects of PPT were similar to those found in Study 1. Yet, in contrast to Study 1, the effect of PPT in the control condition was similar to the effect in the assimilation condition. In the representative sample of Study 2, the effect of threat was stronger in the separation and integration condition, compared to the assimilation and control condition. Both out-group friendships and generalized social trust significantly predicted negative out-group attitudes. Yet, only generalized social trust moderated the relation between the political acculturation strategies and feelings towards Muslim immigrants.

## 4. General discussion

In the context of the Netherlands, we designed two vignette studies to investigate the extent to which majority members' out-group feelings are influenced by the political acculturation strategies of Muslim immigrants. Specifically, we investigated whether it matters for majority members whose group interests immigrant-origin members are politically advancing.

The results of both studies showed that the effects of our experimental manipulation were consistent and substantial, indicating that participants responded quite strongly to the political acculturation strategies. In support of our hypotheses, Muslims who exclusively advocated for the political interests of their minority group (separation) were evaluated more negatively than their integrating or assimilating counterparts. Conversely, majority members were most positive about Muslim immigrants who advanced goals that benefit national society as a whole (assimilation). This ranking is in line with previous experimental research on majority evaluations of socio-cultural acculturation strategies of immigrants (Kosic et al., 2005; Matera et al., 2011; Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998). By including a control condition, we were able to observe how participants' responses to the political acculturation strategies differed from the attitude toward Muslims in a non-political

context. It turned out that participants in the separation condition became significantly more negative, whereas those in the assimilation condition became significantly more positive. In other words, majority members welcome politically active immigrants when they assimilate, but are far more negative towards those that focus upon and wish to improve only the situation of their own minority group.

We considered perceived power threat to be a factor that might moderate the differential evaluation of the acculturation strategies. Research on socio-cultural acculturation demonstrated that the more majority members view immigrants as threatening the majority culture, the more they reject their participation (Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Matera et al., 2011). Arguably, threat perceptions are even more relevant in the political domain because power and influence are involved. In support of our hypotheses, the results showed that natives were more negative about Muslim political participation when they perceived more power threat, especially when they faced immigrants that favored separation or integration. The effect of perceived threat was consistently weaker in the assimilation condition. We can draw two conclusions from these findings. First, majority members apparently are not so much threatened by the fact that 'newcomers' become politically active, but rather fear that they will have to relinquish power and influence to political out-groups. Second, perceived threat appears to affect out-group feelings as a function of the level of perceived group competition. Among those with strong perceptions of power threat, differences in the evaluation of the three political acculturation strategies were more pronounced. The moderating effect of perceived threat was consistent across the two studies, which supports the relevance of threat perceptions for political relations.

We further reasoned that out-group friendships might moderate the evaluation of the political acculturation strategies. Yet, we found no support for this expectation. The number of out-group friends is a useful indicator of positive interethnic contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011), but the available dataset included only a single item and this item did not explicitly focus on Muslim friends. A more specific and elaborate measure of out-group friendships might have yielded results in support of the moderating role of friendships. Yet, it is also possible that out-group contact does not translate into improved political out-group attitudes (Frølund Thomson, 2012). Having out-group contact reduces ethnic prejudice toward an array of out-groups, but perhaps it takes more to influence people's attitudes towards politically active minority members. Future studies should examine the role of out-group friendships more fully.

Generalized social trust had a very small moderating effect, driven primarily by the difference between the separation and integration conditions on the one hand, and the assimilation and control conditions on the other. Higher trust was related to less negative out-group feelings, especially when participants were presented with immigrants advancing the interests of their in-group. However, the moderation effect was quite small and it is possible that more specific measures will indicate a stronger role of trust. For example, trust in Muslims might be important because Muslims are sometimes perceived as wanting to remain loyal to their country of origin and to press forward a hidden agenda to 'Islamize' the Netherlands (Shadid, 2006; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007).

There are some limitations to our research that provide other directions for future studies. First, we demonstrated that majority members react quite strongly to the different political acculturation strategies of Muslim immigrants but we did not examine the processes behind these effects. Future studies could examine some of these processes. For example, we examined perceived power threat as a moderating condition but it might also be that the different political acculturation strategies trigger different feelings and concerns about losing one's dominant position. Furthermore, it may also be the case that the different strategies have an effect on the perceived legitimacy of immigrants to exercise their right to politics (Morris, 2009).

Second, it is important to note that our research may be particular to the context of the Netherlands, and further research is needed to determine whether it can generalize to other Western European countries. This might be the case because these countries share similar migration histories (McLaren, 2003) and place Muslims at the heart of public debates on migration and integration (Helbling, 2012). Still, there might be interesting country differences in people's attitudes toward immigrants' political acculturation strategies because of societal differences in political systems and cultures and the rights of immigrant-origin groups to participate in politics, such as voting in local elections. Furthermore, future research should examine whether the findings are specific for the political participation of Muslim minorities that are evaluated quite negatively in many European countries (Helbling, 2012), or can be generalized to other immigrant-origin groups.

Third, we focused on minorities' political participation in terms of group interests and goals. Future studies could examine specific forms of political engagement and participation, such as running for office, establishing a political party, or online activism. It is possible that some forms of political action are perceived as more threatening than others, which could lead to a different pattern of evaluation of political acculturation strategies.

A final recommendation for future research relates to the fact that many Western countries and cities are increasingly composed of numerous immigrant-origin groups. For example, there are currently more people of immigrant-origin than native majority members living in the city of Rotterdam (Hankel, 2009), and the United States expects to see more minority than majority children born within the next few years (US Census Bureau, 2013). It is therefore important to examine other immigrant groups' perceptions and evaluations of political acculturation strategies. For example, it is unknown whether non-Muslim immigrant groups share Dutch natives' attitudes toward the political participation of Muslims, or rather identify with Muslims as a minority in the face of the dominant majority group. These and other issues concerning inter-minority relations should be investigated in future studies. In doing so it is also interesting and important to examine not only perceptions but also immigrants' own political acculturation preferences and strategies.

In conclusion, our research shows that majority members react strongly to different political acculturation strategies of immigrants. Feelings towards Muslim immigrants trying to advance only the interests of the Muslim in-group were quite negative, while Muslims furthering goals that benefit society as a whole were met with considerably less resistance. The findings further indicate that this differential evaluation of political acculturation strategies was more pronounced among majority members who perceive more power threat. The research shows that majority members' willingness to accommodate immigrant-origin members in the political domain depends strongly on the specific political acculturation strategy that immigrants adopt and the power threat that these strategies imply. These findings are important because negative attitudes in the political domain can have a real impact on the standing of immigrant-origin groups, as well as the democratic process. It might increase political alienation among immigrants and undermine the perceived legitimacy of the political system. Members of immigrant-origin groups constitute a growing share of the national and local electorate and their political incorporation has important symbolic, normative and empowerment implications.

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