Perceived Intergroup Threat and Attitudes of Host Community Members

towards Immigrant Acculturation

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Abstract

The extent to which host community members (a) perceive immigrants as threatening, (b) believe that they are able to assimilate (permeability), and (c) consider their presence in the host community legitimate was expected to predict attitudes towards immigrant acculturation. Study 1 was designed to examine attitudes of Germans towards Turkish immigrants. Participants were 227 German white-collar and blue-collar workers. As expected, ethnocentric acculturation attitudes were positively correlated with perceived threat, and negatively correlated with perceived legitimacy and perceived permeability. However, only threat showed a unique contribution to the prediction of the attitudes. In Study 2, we applied an experimental manipulation of perceived threat. Before answering attitude questions, participants read magazine articles with a threatening, enriching, or irrelevant content. This manipulation had the predicted impact on the self-reported attitudes towards immigrants. However, implicitly measured attitudes were not affected by the salience of threatening or enriching aspects of the Turkish culture.

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Many psychological theories are based on the assumption that individuals are motivated to avoid threatening experiences and to reduce threat. In this respect, threat is considered a motivational force that leads to threat-reducing re-evaluations, judgments, or actions. For example, Markus and Kitayama (1991) argued that at least in Western cultures individuals perceive a negative comparison with another person as threatening and try to find positive comparisons to reduce threat to the self. A major assumption of social identity theory in intergroup research is that threat to the status or distinctiveness of a group leads either to strategies to enhance the group's status or to strategies to leave the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Several studies have provided support for this assumed relationship as regards a great variety of research contexts (e.g., Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997; Beauregard & Dunning, 1998; McGregor et al., 1998). In the present research, we examine the influence of perceived threat on intergroup attitudes. In particular, we investigate whether attitudes towards immigrant acculturation, the way immigrants live within the host community, are determined by the perception of threat.

Previous research in the intergroup domain found that in many – though not all – cases a threat to identity or valued resources strengthens out-group derogation and discrimination. In an experiment by Grant (1992, Experiment 1), participants were given threatening or non-threatening feedback about how out-group members evaluated their work. As expected, ethnocentrism increased when threatening feedback was given. Grant and Brown (1995) reported that ethnocentrism towards the out-group was expressed to a higher degree under experimentally manipulated relative deprivation than under control conditions.

In our view, the perception of threat[1] enhances a need for security and safety. We suppose that if host community members perceive a cultural minority as threatening, such a need for security provokes people to highlight their cultural identity, a process that should be accompanied by strategies to protect one's own cultural values. However, when it comes to acculturation attitudes, the strategies to protect one's own cultural values may differ in the form they take. For example, host community members could wish to minimize contact with immigrants and to segregate them from the majority (segregation). They could prefer that immigrants adopt the host culture and participate completely in the life of the host community (assimilation). A more extreme view might be that immigrants should leave the host country (exclusion). In Berry's acculturation model (e.g., Berry, 1997) there is a fourth strategy called integration. This strategy is related to a higher appreciation of immigrant groups and is thus less ethnocentric in nature. More precisely, integration means that host community members prefer that immigrants maintain their heritage culture and engage in relationships with host community members. Hence, we hypothesized that the greater the threat that individuals perceive from the immigrant group, the more they prefer the ethnocentric acculturation options of assimilation, segregation, and exclusion, and the less they prefer the full integration of immigrants.

Study 1

In Study 1, we examined the relationship between threat and acculturation attitudes in the case of Germans and their attitudes towards the acculturation of Turkish immigrants. Besides perceived threat, we included in the study other variables that we expected would moderate the relationship between threat and acculturation attitudes. We assumed that individuals may respond to the perception of threat with different acculturation attitudes (assimilation, segregation, exclusion),

and that two variables may have a major impact on the choice of the different acculturation options: the opinion that immigrants are able to assimilate (<u>permeability of group boundaries</u>), and the opinion that immigrants have a right to live in the host country (<u>legitimacy</u>).

Some research has been carried out on how the permeability of group boundaries affects an individual' s strategy in dealing with a threatened social identity. For example, Ellemers, Van Knippenberg, De Vries, and Wilke (1988) found that members of a low status group become less identified with their group when group boundaries are permeable and assimilation to a high status group is possible than when group boundaries are impermeable. To a lesser extent research has focused on what members of high status groups think about such upward moves by members of low status groups. That is what our research addresses. We expected that the perception of threat results in attitudes towards segregation or exclusion of immigrants if the immigrants are seen as unable to assimilate completely to the host community, in other words, if the group boundaries are seen as impermeable. Conversely, we expected assimilation to be chosen with a greater probability when the members of the host community perceive the group boundaries as permeable.

The opinion that there are acceptable reasons for the presence of immigrants in the host country should be an important predictor for the preference of exclusion. Under threat, the perception that immigrants have no legitimate right to live in the host country may strengthen the attitude that they should leave the host country (exclusion), while perceived legitimacy should result in attitudes towards assimilation or segregation.

A further variable we considered in the present research was identification with the host community. Recent research provides evidence for the assumption that low

and high identifiers differ in their reactions to threat. For example, Branscombe and Wann (1994) reported that, under threat, high identifiers were more likely to derogate out-groups than low identifiers. Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (1997) manipulated in-group identification experimentally and found that enhanced in-group identification was less often linked to attempts to leave a low status group than decreased in-group identification. However, there is evidence for the assumption that threat to group status and distinctiveness can have an impact on the identification with a group as well. In four experiments, Spears, Doosje, and Ellemers (1997) demonstrated that threat to distinctiveness and group status leads to enhancement of identification when individuals feel strongly attached to their group, but to a decrease in identification when individuals feel poorly attached to their group. As regards our study, we expected that identification with the host community is positively correlated with ethnocentric acculturation attitudes (cf. Piontkowski, Florack, Hölker, & Obdrzalek, 2000). However, we expected such correlation to decrease if it is controlled for the perception of threat.

To summarize, we assumed a strong negative relationship between the perception of threat and non-ethnocentric acculturation attitudes (integration), but a strong positive relationship between the perception of threat and ethnocentric attitudes (assimilation, separation, exclusion). In addition, the kind of acculturation orientation that is preferred when threat is perceived should depend on the perception of permeability and the assessment of legitimacy. Finally, we expected a positive relationship between in-group identification and ethnocentric acculturation attitudes, which is determined, to a notable degree, by the perception of threat.

Method

Participants and procedure. Participants were 227 people in active employment in different positions in industry, commerce, and trade. They were recruited at courses offered by Chambers of Commerce and Trade to improve occupational training. The age range was 22 to 50 (MD = 27). The sample consisted of 15 women and 206 men (six participants did not indicate their gender). Eighteen participants were excluded from the analysis due to incomplete questionnaires (N = 12) or a nationality other than German (N = 6). The study was conducted at the beginning of the courses and was introduced as a survey about different cultural groups in Germany. First, participants were asked to answer questions pertaining to their age, sex, nationality, and occupation. After that, they had to answer questions pertaining to perceived threat, attitudes towards immigrant acculturation, perceived legitimacy of residence, perceived permeability, and identification with the host community.

Attitudes towards immigrant acculturation. Following the suggestion of Berry et al. (1989), we measured attitudes towards the four acculturation options of integration, assimilation, segregation, and exclusion separately. For each acculturation option we formulated one general and three specific statements pertaining to the domains work, marriage, and culture (e.g., "Turks should not be allowed to start a family in Germany. They can do this in Turkey."; "In my view, Turks should abandon their Turkish culture and adopt the German culture."). Participants had to indicate their agreement with these statements on a 7-point rating scale, with higher scores indicating stonger agreement. An overall score was computed for each acculturation orientation by averaging scores across items. However, two items of the assimilation scale were deleted from the scale because of insufficient item-scale

correlation coefficients. The Cronbach's values for the acculturation orientations varied between .62 and .70. Additionally, we assessed the preference of culture maintenance and participation in the life of the host community with two statements (cf. Piontkowski et al., 2000): "In my opinion, we should let Turks live in our country as they are accustomed to" (culture maintenance); "In my opinion, we should let Turks participate completely in our life" (participation). Participants had to rate their agreement with these statements on a 4-point rating scale with the choices being no, more likely no, more likely yes, yes.

Perceived threat. Perceptions of intergroup threat were assessed with 15 items. All items were formulated like the following one: "If I think about the labor market, I perceive Turks as ...". Participants had to indicate their perception of Turks in Germany on bipolar seven-point scales ranging from 1 (threatening) to 7 (enriching). Altogether, the questions contained fifteen topics (labor market, working atmosphere, scientific and technological progress, political orientation, housing market, neighborhood, education, children, public security, social welfare, cultural values, religion, social life, eating habits, language). We computed a composite measure of threat (Cronbach's α = .93) by averaging responses to the 15 items. For the sake of presentation, we changed the poles of the original scale so that higher values indicate a stronger perceived threat (or a lesser perceived enrichment).

Permeability of group boundaries. Participants had to rate on a 7-point bipolar scale (1= completely disagree; 7 = completely agree) their agreement with the statement: "If a Turk is born in Germany and has grown up in the German culture, he is a German."

Legitimacy of stay. Participants were asked to indicate on a 7-point uni-polar scale the degree to which the presence of Turks is legitimate in regard to the

following statement: "It is my opinion that the stay of most Turks living in Germany is legitimized" (1 = not at all; 7 = fully agree).

In-group identification. The measure of in-group identification consisted of three questions that had to be answered on 5-point scales. "How much do you feel like a German?" (1 = not at all; 5 = very much), "How do you feel as a German? " (1 = ashamed; 5 = proud), "Are you a typical German? " (1 = hardly; 5 = very much so). The Cronbach's for the identification scale was .81.

Results

Correlation coefficients. All measures of acculturation attitudes were significantly correlated (see Table 1). Negative correlation coefficients were found for the correlation of integration with segregation, $r[209]$ = -.65, p < .01, and for integration with exclusion, $r[209]$ = -.66, p < .01. For segregation with exclusion the correlation coefficient was $r[209]$ = .75, p < .01. Assimilation had a mediocre positive correlation with segregation, $r[209]$ = .41, p < .01, and exclusion, $r[209]$ = .46, p < .01, and a mediocre negative correlation with integration, $r[209]$ = -.45, p < .01. The attitudes towards maintenance of culture and participation were slightly positively correlated, $r[209]$ = .33, p < .01. For both scales, we found negative correlation coefficients with exclusion, segregation, and assimilation, $rs[209]$ > -.26, ps < .01, and positive correlation coefficients with integration, $rs[209]$ > .56, ps < .01.

- insert Table 1 about here –

The intergroup threat scale showed significant correlation coefficients with all attitudes towards immigrant acculturation. As expected, there were positive correlation coefficients for intergroup threat with segregation, exclusion, and assimilation, $rs[209]$ > .41, ps < .01, and a negative correlation for intergroup threat and integration $r[209]$ = -.66, p < .01. Negative correlation coefficients with threat

were found for the acceptance of culture maintenance and participation in the host community, $rs[209] > -.48$, $ps < .01$. For identification, similar correlation coefficients with the attitudes towards immigrant acculturation were found with a smaller valence, $ps < .05$. Exactly the opposite signs of significant correlation coefficients were found for legitimacy and, with the exception of the correlation with assimilation, for permeability, $ps < .01$. All these correlation coefficients are depicted in Table 2.

- insert Table 2 about here -

Prediction of acculturation attitudes. Because some of our hypotheses referred to the preference of one specific acculturation strategy over the others, each participant was assigned to one of the four acculturation orientations (integration, assimilation, segregation, exclusion). The criterion for the assignment was the highest score on the single scales. For example, if the score for assimilation was the highest of all scores, a participant was assigned to the assimilation group. To test our hypotheses, a stepwise discriminant analysis was computed with the acculturation orientation as grouping variable. In the first step, the inclusion of threat yielded a significant discriminant function, $\chi^2 = 76.03$; $p < .001$, which could correctly classify 74.5 percent of the cases to the acculturation orientations by perceived threat. Group centroids of the acculturation orientations were arranged on the discriminant function in the following order: integration (-.44), assimilation (.81), segregation (1.27), and exclusion (1.35). As is reflected in the group centroids, the probability that participants were classified to the integration orientation decreased with an increase in the perception of threat, while the probability for a classification to the assimilation, segregation, or exclusion orientation increased when more threat was perceived. More precisely, the group centroids of the ethnocentric acculturation orientations increased from assimilation over segregation to exclusion, meaning that assimilation

was more probable when threat was moderate, while the probability of exclusion was highest for extreme degrees of threat. However, entering the main effects of legitimacy, permeability, and identification as well as the interactions between threat and permeability and threat and legitimacy into the analysis did not improve the classification. Thus, even if the results are in line with the assumption that identification did not contribute to the classification independently of threat, they did not confirm that legitimacy and permeability have a moderating influence on the choice of acculturation strategies under threat.

Discussion

The results provide strong support for the importance of threat as a determinant of acculturation attitudes. We found notable interrelationships between the perception of threat and attitudes towards the acculturation of Turks. Specifically, participants who perceived less threat preferred non-ethnocentric acculturation attitudes; they were accepting of immigrants maintaining their heritage culture and participating fully in the life of the host community. In addition, it was shown that permeability, legitimacy, and identification were correlated with attitudes towards integration, segregation, and exclusion in the predicted directions.

The finding that identification did not improve the classification of participants to an acculturation orientation when threat was included as predictor variable in the discriminant analysis is in line with our assumption that the relationship between identification and acculturation attitudes is at least partly determined by the perception of threat. If we take the results of Spears et al. (1997) into account, we might speculate that the perception of threat enhances identification when identification is already on a high level, but leads to a decrease in identification when people are less identified with their group. Thus, a simultaneous influence of threat

on identification and acculturation attitudes may explain the correlation between identification and acculturation attitudes.

In contrast to our expectation, the relationship between threat and specific acculturation orientations was not moderated by the perception of permeability and legitimacy. Our results suggest that the preference of one acculturation strategy over others reveals more gradual differences in the perception of threat than differential strategies to cope with threat that depend on perceived permeability and legitimacy. In this way, exclusion is related to the highest degree of threat, whereas integration is related to the lowest degree and assimilation and segregation are related to a medium degree of threat. Thus, attitudes towards assimilation, segregation, and exclusion can be regarded as strategies of dealing with threat by an immigrant group, whereas integration is more likely to appear in the absence of threat.

The finding that acculturation orientations are related to gradual differences in the perception of threat leaves doubts whether the acculturation orientations can be seen as being based on two independent dimensions (contact and culture maintenance), as it is assumed by Berry (1997). Indeed, all acculturation scales were highly correlated such that assimilation, segregation, and exclusion showed positive intercorrelations, whereas they were all negatively correlated with integration. Moreover, assimilation and segregation were negatively correlated with the direct assessment of acceptance of contact and culture maintenance. Hence, it seems that even in the case of assimilation and segregation there is no real acceptance of contact or culture maintenance, but that both reflect a more ethnocentric strategy than integration and a less ethnocentric one than exclusion. In sum, the results of Study 1 seem to be more suited to a one-dimensional taxonomy of attitudes towards

immigrant acculturation, in which the four acculturation strategies are mapped onto a continuum of acceptance.

Study 2

Study 1 provides strong support for the assumption that threat and acculturation attitudes are interrelated. However, it does not provide us with evidence about the nature of the relationship between threat and acculturation attitudes. Since Study 1 was based on correlational analyses, it remains an open question whether threat does in fact have a causal influence on acculturation attitudes. Moreover, it seems conceivable that the relationship is the other way round, or that a third variable has an influence on acculturation attitudes and threat.

However, there are some indications of a causal effect of threat on acculturation attitudes. For example, Maio, Esses, and Bell (1994) reported that participants expressed more negative feelings towards an unknown (fictitious) immigrant group when they received negative consensus information about this group. In addition, they found that these feelings were correlated with opinions on immigration policies. However, Maio et al. (1994) did not analyze a direct effect of the manipulation on the attitudes towards immigration policies. Florack, Bless, and Piontkowski (2001; see also Florack, 2000) as well as Esses, Jackson, Nolan, and Amstrong (1999) tested the influence of threat on acculturation attitudes more directly. In a series of experiments, Florack et al. included an accessibility manipulation of threatening aspects of Turkish immigrants in Germany in a questionnaire. In the threat condition, participants were asked to write down threatening aspects about the out-group, while in another version they were asked to write down positive ones. Afterwards, acculturation attitudes were measured by self-report items. As expected, participants who wrote down negative aspects expressed

more ethnocentric acculturation attitudes than participants who wrote down positive aspects.

While Florack et al. (2001) focused on the accessibility of existing knowledge, Esses et al. (1999) have examined the effect of new information about an unknown group. Using a similar paradigm as Maio et al. (1994), Esses et al. (1999) manipulated the salience of economic threat from immigrants by providing participants with more or less threatening information about a fictitious immigrant group. As expected, the information, which was included in a magazine editorial, affected a great variety of attitude measures. Participants who were informed that the new immigrant group members were competing for Canadian jobs ascribed more negative traits to the immigrant group members, listed more negative thoughts, perceived the group as less favorable, and had more negative attitudes towards immigration in general.

In Study 2, we tried to extend the findings of Esses et al. (1999) and Maio et al. (1994) to the case of real immigrant groups. In particular, we investigated whether threatening or enriching aspects included in short newspaper articles affect attitudes towards Turkish immigrants in Germany. Unlike the studies of Esses et al. and Maio et al., we further applied an implicit measure, alongside self-report attitude scales, to assess the attitudes towards the immigrant group.

Method

Participants, design and procedure. One hundred and seventeen students (89 women, 28 men) at the University of Münster participated in the study for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to three experimental conditions (threat, enrichment, control group). In the experimental lab, participants were seated at a desk where they first received a booklet with three short newspaper articles and

attached questions. The experimenter told participants that they first had to read the booklet and answer the questions. In all conditions, the booklet included three short articles with accompanying photos from newspapers, magazines, or specialized books. The articles and photos were different for each experimental condition. In the threat condition, participants received an article about Islamic fundamentalists and their activities in Germany, an article about negative coverage about Germany in the Turkish media, and finally an article about the discrimination of women in Turkish culture. In the enrichment condition, the three articles were about Turkish cooking, about Turkish artists, and about successful Turkish entrepreneurs who provide secure jobs in Germany. In the control condition, participants read short articles about the meter, the atmosphere, and knots. After participants had read an article they were asked to write down the thoughts that had occurred to them as they read the article and to answer two open-ended questions (e.g., "What aspects of the article are interesting to you?", "Do you know Turkish entrepreneurs in your neighborhood?"). After participants had finished the reading task, they were given instructions concerning the implicit association test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) and passed through the different tasks of this test. Finally, they were asked to answer a questionnaire that included self-report attitude measures and manipulation check items.

Manipulation check. To test whether manipulation affects the perception of threat, we had participants answer the following two items on seven-point bi-polar scales (1 = threatening; 7 = enriching): "If I think about Turks in Germany, I feel that they are ... to this society, "If I think about Turks in Germany, I personally feel that they are …"). To compute a single score, the responses on the two items were averaged (Cronbach's α = .85). Again, we changed the poles of the original scale so

that high values indicate a stronger perceived threat (or a lesser perceived enrichment).

Self-report attitude measures. Since the results of Study 1 showed that the acculturation scales were highly correlated, in Study 2 a pre-tested one-dimensional acculturation scale was used. This scale consisted of 12 items similar to those used in Study 1 (e.g., "I think it is problematic if Turks and Germans get married, because it is better that our cultures are not mixed."; "It is my opinion that Turks in Germany should abandon their Turkish culture and adopt the German culture."; "In my view, we should let Turks live in Germany in accordance with their culture."; "In my view, we should let Turks in Germany participate fully in our life"). Participants had to indicate their agreement with each statement on a seven-point scale (1 = disagree; 7 = agree). The item scores were averaged (Cronbach's α = .83). The self-reported evaluation of the out-group was assessed with 16 attribute pairs (e.g. pleasant – unpleasant, peaceful – hostile) on seven-point bi-polar scales with the respective attributes as endpoints (e.g., 1 = pleasant; 7 = unpleasant). To compute an overall score, the responses on the items were summed and divided by the number of items (Cronbach's α = .90). High values on the two scales indicated a greater acceptance of culture maintenance and a more positive evaluation of Turks.

Implicit attitude measure. To measure the implicit attitudes towards Turks, we used an adapted version of the implicit association test (IAT) of Greenwald et al. (1998). The IAT consisted of five phases in which participants read positive or negative adjectives and Turkish or German first names on a computer screen. Using two response keys, participants had to indicate as quickly as possible to which group (Turk/German) or attribute category (positive/negative) the presented word belonged. The words representing the attribute categories were 16 positive adjectives (e.g.,

nice, good, beautiful) and 16 negative adjectives (e.g., bad, dirty, ugly), and 16 Turkish first names (e.g., Yasemin, Sibel, Hasan) and 16 German first names (e.g., Sabine, Bernd, Klaus). Within the most critical phases, adjectives and first names were presented at random and participants had to map the presented items onto the response keys in a prejudice-consistent manner (right key: positive words and German first names; left key: negative words and Turkish first names) or in a prejudice-inconsistent manner (right key: positive words and Turkish first names; left key: negative words and German first names). To prepare the data for statistical analyses, the first two responses of each phase were eliminated because of typically delayed responses at the beginning of a phase. Responses slower than 300 ms were considered guesses and responses faster than 3000 ms were considered controlled responses; consequently they were excluded from the analyses. Of the remaining data, the latencies were log-transformed and averaged for each phase. Finally, mean latencies of the prejudice-consistent phase were subtracted from the mean latencies of the prejudice-inconsistent phase. Thus, high values indicate a more positive attitude towards Turks.

Results

Manipulation check. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that the experimental manipulation successfully induced differences in the perception of threat, $\underline{F}(2, 107) = 11.81$, $\underline{p} < .001$. In particular, participants who read positive magazine articles about Turks ($\underline{M} = 2.34$, $\underline{SD} = .95$) considered Turks in Germany less threatening than participants who read irrelevant ($\underline{M} = 3.13$, $\underline{SD} = .1.06$), $\underline{t}(107) = 3.42$, $\underline{p} < .002$, or negative articles about Turks ($\underline{M} = 3.45$, $\underline{SD} = .93$), $\underline{t}(107) = 4.74$, $\underline{p} < .001$. However, participants who read articles about threatening aspects of the

Turkish culture did not differ significantly in their perception of threat from participants in the control condition, $\underline{t}(107) = 1.41$, $\underline{p} < .17$.

Explicitly and implicitly measured attitudes. The self-reported evaluation of the out-group was correlated with the self-reported acculturation attitude, $\underline{r}[110] = .48$, $\underline{p} < .001$, whereas we found only a marginal significant correlation of the implicitly measured attitude towards Turks with the self-reported out-group evaluation, $\underline{r}[110] = .18$, $\underline{p} < .07$, and no correlation of the implicitly-measured attitude with the self-reported acculturation attitude , $\underline{r}[110] = -.07$, $\underline{ns}$.

Influence of threat on explicitly and implicitly measured attitudes. One-way ANOVAs with the manipulation of threat as independent factor yielded significant main effects on the self-reported out-group evaluation, $\underline{F}(2, 107) = 5.88$, $\underline{p} < .005$, and the self-reported acculturation attitude, $\underline{F}(2, 107) = 7.70$, $\underline{p} < .002$. As expected, participants were more likely to evaluate Turks more negatively when they read articles with negative content about Turks ($\underline{M} = 4.09$, $\underline{SD} = .60$) than when the content was irrelevant ($\underline{M} = 4.38$, $\underline{SD} = .63$) or positive ($\underline{M} = 4.60$, $\underline{SD} = .66$), $\underline{ts} > 2.00$, $\underline{ps} < .05$. Similarly, participants were less likely to accept Turks in Germany as an integral part of the community when they had read articles with threatening content ($\underline{M} = 5.10$, $\underline{SD} = .75$) as compared to irrelevant ($\underline{M} = 5.63$, $\underline{SD} = .74$) or enriching content ($\underline{M} = 5.74$, $\underline{SD} = .75$), $\underline{ts} > 3.11$, $\underline{ps} < .003$. Participants of the control group were not significantly different in their explicitly measured attitudes from participants who received enriching articles. Furthermore, participants who read positive, negative, or irrelevant magazine articles about Turks did not differ in their implicitly measured attitudes towards Turks, $\underline{F}(2, 107) < 1$, $\underline{ns}$.

<u>Discussion</u>

The results of Study 2 demonstrate that threat has a causal influence on attitudes towards the acculturation of immigrants. It was shown that when threatening aspects, in contrast to enriching aspects, were made salient in short magazine articles, this resulted in a decrease in acceptance and evaluation of an immigrant group. Thus, the finding of Esses et al. (1999), that threat-related information about a fictitious immigrant group can influence the attitudes towards immigrants and immigration, can be applied to real immigrant groups, as well. However, these implications of the present data are limited to the influence of threat on self-reported attitudes. The implications cannot be extended to the influence of context-dependent threat on implicitly measured attitudes. Even if more recent studies (Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2000) found indications that implicitly measured attitudes are not completely independent of context, it seems that they do not change as easily as was found to be the case for self-reported attitudes (Wilson & Hodges, 1992; Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000).

General Discussion

In line with recent findings (Esses et al., 1999; Florack et al., 2001), our two studies suggest that threat is an important determinant of attitudes towards immigrant acculturation. In Study 1, we found evidence in a non-student sample of a noticeable relationship between threat and acculturation attitudes, a relationship which could not be explained by social identification, perceived legitimacy, or perceived permeability of group boundaries. Study 2 lends support to the assumption that this relationship is at least partly based on a causal influence of the perception of threat on acculturation attitudes. Since we examined the acculturation attitudes towards a real group, our

results extend the generalizability of recent research by Esses et al. (1999), who proved the impact of threatening information about a fictitious immigrant group.

However, in thinking about the implications of our studies, we have to take into account that our results are significant, first and foremost, for the relationship between Turkish immigrants and the German host community with their specific history of experiences. The manipulation of threat by having participants read newspaper articles about Islamic fundamentalists and the discrimination of women in Turkish culture might not be effective in other intergroup contexts. In addition, we applied a broad concept of threat and did not distinguish between different types of threat. For example, Stephan et al. (2000) suggest that realistic and symbolic threats may have separate effects on intergroup attitudes. Indeed, it is conceivable that realistic threats that concern the very existence of a group (e.g., threat to economic power) have a different impact on acculturation attitudes than symbolic threats to the world view of the in-group. Even if our research did not provide data with respect to the different types of threat, we believe that our results, in conjunction with the findings of Esses et al. (1999) and Florack et al. (2001), allow us to articulate some careful implications that are based on general processes which might be significant in different intergroup contexts.

One major finding of the present research is that the salience of threatening or enriching aspects of Turkish culture affects the attitudes towards immigrants. Thus, we may conclude that individuals are susceptible to information that is provided when they are in the process of forming their acculturation attitudes. If we take into account that members of the host community seldom have direct contact with foreigners and rely upon information provided by others and, especially, by the media, this finding, as well as the findings of Esses et al. (1999) and Florack et al. (2001), implies that

the promulgation of positive aspects of an immigrant group, e.g., in media reports, may help to reduce discrimination and prejudiced behavior. However, it also implies that threatening aspects of an immigrant group which are transported by the media can enhance prejudice. Therefore we agree with Maio et al. (1994) "that the media should be especially sensitive to its portrayal of [immigrant groups]" (p. 1772). This seems especially important given the research showing that members of certain minority groups are more likely to be mentioned in TV news as criminals of offenders than as victims (Romer, Jamieson, & deCoteau, 1998). If threatening aspects of immigrant group members are frequently highlighted, this may result in a high accessibility of such aspects and may thus determine attitudes towards immigrants in different contexts.

However, it should be emphasized that attitude changes resulting from unique events may be overridden a few minutes later by other information. Furthermore, the results of Study 2 revealed that implicitly measured attitudes towards immigrants are less affected by information that is salient in a certain context. An explanation for the discrepant influence of context-specific information on implicitly measured and self-reported attitudes may be that the implicit measure used in Study 2 reflects a more automatic component of attitudes towards immigrants, one that changes gradually with experience over a longer period of time (Smith & Decoster, 1999). In contrast, self-reported attitudes may also be based on novel or salient information. Recent research (Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997) has shown that self-reported attitudes are related to deliberative behavior such as court decisions, for example, while automatic components of attitudes are more likely to affect spontaneous behavior, which may be important, for example, in direct interactions

with immigrant group members. Considering this differential impact of automatic and controlled components of attitudes on behavior, the formation of both is of interest.

Future research should examine whether the perception of threat might have long-lasting effects on acculturation attitudes which are also reflected in automatic components of attitudes, and which in this way might also affect less deliberative or automatic behavior. In addition, it seems especially important to study the effects of realistic and symbolic threats on acculturation attitudes in different intercultural and intergroup contexts to learn more about the limits and general conditions of the present findings.

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Author Note

The second study reported in this article is based on a diploma thesis completed by the fourth and fifth author under supervision of the second author.

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Footnote

[1]For our purpose, it is not necessary to distinguish between different sources of threat. Thus, we use a very broad concept of threat throughout this article.

Table 1: <u>Intercorrelations for Acculturation Attitudes</u>

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Integration	-	-.45**	-.65**	-.66**	.57**	.56**
2. Assimilation		-	.41**	.46**	-.36**	-.26**
3. Segregation			-	.75**	-.46**	-.55**
4. Exclusion				-	-.40**	-.57**
5. Culture maintenance					-	.33**
6. Participation						-
$\underline{M}$	4.98	3.10	3.18	3.03	2.32	3.08
$\underline{SD}$	1.30	1.60	1.41	1.26	.79	.75

$^*\underline{p} < .05.\ ^{**}\underline{p} < .01.\ ^{***}\underline{p} < .001$

Table 2: <u>Intercorrelations for Perceived Threat, Perceived Permeability,</u> <u>Perceived Legitimacy, and Acculturation Attitudes</u>

Variable	7	8	9	10
1. Integration	-.66**	.39**	.49**	-.28**
2. Assimilation	.41**	-.09	-.35**	.35**
3. Segregation	.58**	-.31**	-.51**	.36**
4. Exclusion	.59**	-.36**	-.58**	.33**
5. Culture maintenance	-.48**	.29**	.41**	-.18*
6. Participation	-.51**	.26**	.45**	-.23**
7. Threat	-	-.37**	-.55**	.37**
8. Permeability		-	.28**	-.16*
9. Legitimacy			-	-.27**
10. Identification				-
<u>M</u>	4.26	5.06	4.79	3.65
<u>SD</u>	1.07	1.75	1.68	.82

*<u>p</u> < .05. **<u>p</u> < .01. ***<u>p</u> < .001