Evidence for Stereotype Accommodation as an Expression of Immigrants' Socio-Cognitive

Adaptation

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Abstract

Through intercultural contact, immigrants can change the stereotypes they had previously held about the majority ethnic group in their host cultures. Other undocumented processes of socio-cognitive adaptation following migration are also possible; immigrants' preexisting stereotypes about social groups (e.g., politicians, older people), for example, may change because of host-cultural learning. This article examines the stereotype accommodation hypothesis, which states that differences in cultural stereotypes between immigrants' host and home cultures are a source of inconsistent stereotype-relevant information that immigrants may or may not incorporate into their preexisting beliefs. Support for this hypothesis is found in two studies of locals in Romania, Germany, and France ($N = 532$), and Romanian immigrants in Germany and in France ($N = 225$). Length of stay in the host culture and acculturation orientation predict the stereotype accommodation regarding politicians, the only social group for which stereotypes substantially differ between home and host cultures. The results represent the first step in a research agenda for studying migrants' socio-cognitive adaptation beyond the question of inter-ethnic stereotype change. The article thus discusses future avenues for the study of behavior and discrimination from the perspective of immigrants as agentic individuals.

Keywords: stereotypes, acculturation, stereotype accommodation, socio-cognitive adaptation, politicians

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Adaptation

Stereotypes are beliefs about the characteristics of members of social groups. They

develop early in childhood, when children are socialized into stereotypes that prevail in their

cultures (Rhodes, Leslie, & Tworek, 2012). They can be modified in adulthood because of

personal experiences or changes that occur in the context of everyday life (Richards &

Hewstone, 2001). Some people relocate to other countries where the stereotypes that prevail

at the cultural level may be different from those that prevail in their home countries (Cuddy,

Fiske, Kwan, Glick, Demoulin, Leyens et al., 2009). After having been socialized into the

stereotypes of their culture of origin, such migrating individuals can then become acculturated

into the predominant stereotypes of their host cultures. Although the literature has addressed

the question of migration leading to changes in stereotypes, it has solely examined it in terms

of ethnic stereotypes (beliefs about traits of members of an ethnic/national group) (Crisp &

Turner, 2011; Lönnqvist, Jasinskaja-Lahti, & Verkasalo, 2013). It is still uncertain whether

immigrants experience a process of stereotype change for other categories of stereotypes

(Stanciu & Vauclair, 2018). We argue that immigrants can experience cognitive heuristic

adaptation while acculturating to their host cultures.

This article examines the stereotype accommodation hypothesis (Stanciu & Vauclair,

2018), which states that immigrants can incorporate the stereotypical beliefs learned in the

host culture into preexisting stereotypes. The approach stems from work on the Stereotype

Content Model (SCM; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) and on immigrants' development of

cultural knowledge (Early & Ang, 2003). The thesis holds that moving and adapting to a

different culture has an impact on individuals' preexisting stereotypes. The article reports two

sets of studies based on convenience samples. Study 1 examines cross-cultural similarities

and differences in terms of stereotypes that exist in Romania, Germany, and France. Study 2

investigates the stereotype accommodation hypothesis in Romanian immigrants in Germany and France.

Cross-Cultural Similarities and Differences in Terms of Stereotypes

Culture is an abstract system of meaning that is external to the individual and guides and justifies how societal institutions function (Schwartz, 2014). A developmental approach suggests that stereotypes begin forming early in the childhood, when children are socialized into the predominant stereotypes existing in their cultures (Levy, 2009; Rhodes et al., 2012). Parents and immediate family members are the main bearers and transmitters of their cultures' stereotypes. A socio-psychological approach distinguishes between stereotypes held subjectively by individual members of a culture and stereotypes that prevail in a culture (Fiske et al., 2002; Vauclair, Hanke, Huang, & Abrams, 2016). This perspective suggests that stereotypes prevalent in a culture are imprinted in the minds of its members. In empirical research, stereotypes that operate at the cultural level are meta-perceptions that are shared between members of a culture (shared belief about what the common stereotype of a social group is) and stereotypes that operate at the individual level are participants own opinions (Fiske et al., 2002; Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2012).

Stereotypes can be summarized as having two major evaluative dimensions: warmth and competence (Fisket et al., 2002). Warmth evaluations (sociability, trustworthiness) stem from the societal structure of competition over the available resources and signal whether an individual or a social group poses a threat. Competence evaluations (conscientiousness, competencies) stem from individuals' or social groups' position in the society and gives indication to one's agency in enacting a threat. These attributes can be combined to define distinct stereotypical groups that are also associated with specific emotions: high warmth and high competence (admiration; for family, for example), high warmth and low competence (pity; for example, for older people), low warmth and high competence (envy; for example,

for rich people), and low warmth and low competence (disgust; for drug addicts, for example). This model of stereotypes is universal across cultures (Cuddy et al., 2009).

The stereotypical beliefs of a social group can differ across cultures (Cuddy et al., 2009; North & Fiske, 2015; Fiske, 2017). Fiske (2017) has argued that age and gender stereotypes are more likely to be universal than stereotypes based on race, ethnicity or religion, which are socially construed. One social group can be universally evaluated as warm and competent, while another social group may be evaluated as warm and competent in one culture but cold and incompetent in another culture. Stereotypes can also differ across cultures because individuals across cultures allocate distinct levels of warmth and competence to a social group. For example, older people are universally stereotyped as warm and incompetent but they are (allegedly) less competent and more sociable in Eastern collectivistic cultures compared to Western individualistic cultures (North & Fiske, 2015). Findings by Cuddy and her colleagues (2009) showed that rich people were seen as warmer and more competent in Hong Kong than in South Korea. Although locals in two cultures may share the stereotypical belief of one social group as being warm and competent, there can still be cross-cultural variation in terms of how warm and competent exactly the group is evaluated.

Stereotype Accommodation: Immigrants' Socio-Cognitive Adaptation

Immigrant is the overarching term for individuals who choose, or are forced by circumstances, to relocate to other countries. Subcategories include short-stay immigrants (tourists, sojourners, and international students), long-stay immigrants (immigrant workers), refugees, and asylum seekers. Although each typology has its own specifics, all immigrants experience a process of acculturating to their host cultures (Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Acculturation is the process of changing the self and self-related traits (values, identities, etc.) in response to first-hand contact with members of a host culture and as a result of immersion in the host culture (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). This definition emphasizes the role

of immigrants as a minority that must deal with the challenge of assimilating the culture of the host population (host culture) while also considering the implications of retaining or dropping the culture of origin (home culture) (Berry, 1997; 2005; Rudmin, 2009). The acculturation process results in the adaptation (or non-adaptation) to qualities such as affect (health-related qualities, as with well-being), behavior (activities related to everyday activities, such as language), and cognition (activities related to perception, including stereotypes) (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Adaptation typically occurs more successfully in cultural contexts with policies encouraging immigration, when there are fewer differences between immigrants' home and host cultures, and among immigrants with a longer period of stay in the host culture and a stronger desire to adopt the host culture (Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Adaptation in the cognitive domain indicates that an immigrant has modified elements of his/her cognition to a degree that they now resemble the cognition of host culture's locals (individuals born in and belonging to the host culture). Cognitive adaptation is predominantly studied from the perspective of ethnic stereotypes (Crisp & Turner, 2011; Lönnqvist et al., 2013), and has drawn the conclusion that inter-ethnic contact with the native or host population can resolve any inaccurate and negative stereotypes of the local ethnic/cultural group that immigrants may hold. In some instances, the resulting cognitive adaptation can overemphasize local traits (Lönnqvist et al., 2013).

One critique of this approach is that it does not address the possibility that acculturation can also affect immigrants' stereotypes of other social groups in the society (unemployed people, politicians, older people, etc.) (Stanciu & Vauclair, 2018). In our understanding, adaptation is not a question of whether a second culture is assimilated, but a question of how much a second culture (or elements of it) is learned and incorporated into preexisting knowledge structures (Early & Ang, 2003; Rudmin, 2009). The study of

immigrants' cognitive adaptation therefore becomes the study of changes in their cognitive heuristics as a result of the acculturation process.

Stanciu and Vauclair (2018) coined the concept *stereotype accommodation* to describe how immigrants incorporate the stereotype-relevant information learned in the host culture into preexisting stereotypes. Cultural differences in stereotypes about social groups are a source of stereotype-disconfirming information that immigrants may or may not incorporate into their preexisting stereotypes (for an overview see Figure 1, Stanciu & Vauclair, 2018). Imagine, for example, an English immigrant who lives in Taiwan. Among the many cultural differences the person must navigate there is also the diverging perception that older people are more competent in Taiwan than in England (Vauclair et al., 2016). Such discrepant information signals to the English immigrant that older people have a higher status in Taiwanese society than in the culture of origin and failing to act and think accordingly might result in exclusion from the mainstream host culture. Failing to recognize the stronger local belief in older people's competence might also lead to situations in which the immigrant (unintentionally) behaves in an ageist manner (Voss, Bodner, & Rothermund, 2018).

Cultural differences concerning stereotypes are latent and abstract but immigrants can become aware of any diverging content and its magnitude through learning opportunities (Stanciu & Vauclair, 2018). The host culture imprints the local stereotypes on immigrants. The vectors of this imprinting process are social institutions (educational institutions, state agencies, the mass media, etc.) and the locals themselves (Schwartz, 2014). Each vector has unique characteristics, but, overall, they all converge under the temporal factor—a longer exposure to the host culture corresponds to greater chances of coming into contact with the host culture's social institutions and individual locals. Scholars thus theorize that the longer immigrants stay in the host culture, the more likely stereotype accommodation is to occur.

Awareness of disconfirming stereotypes is insufficient for the adaptation of cognitive heuristics; an incorporation process must also occur (Stanciu & Vauclair, 2018). Any novel information must be mentally and emotionally processed by immigrants in order to enable them to maintain a stable self and well-being. This challenge is effectively a question of levels of motivation for adopting the host culture and retaining the home culture, which is referred to as immigrants' *acculturation orientation* (Berry, 1997; 2005). The desire to maintain the home culture is a predictor of an active and directed effort to remain in contact with one's own ethnic group and to preserve traditions. Interest in the host culture, on the other hand, is a predictor of an active and directed effort to engage with the host-cultural group and to learn its norms and traditions. For some individuals, this may involve retaining the former self (its cultural identity and knowledge structures) intact, whereas for others it may involve accommodating the new cultural information into the self (De Keersmaecker, Van Assche, & Roets, 2016). A preferred cultural orientation provides immigrants the driving motivation for incorporating (or not) the stereotype-relevant information learned in the host culture into preexisting stereotypes (Stanciu & Vauclair, 2018). Stereotype accommodation should be the case for immigrants who are oriented toward the host culture.

The Current Research

This research draws on evidence from samples of Romanian long-stay immigrants in Germany and France, two preferred destination countries for Romanians. Romania is a unique case: it is the only Latin culture among the former Eastern-European Communist countries. Compared to Romanian culture, the German and French cultures are individualistic (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkow, 2010) and post-materialistic (Inglehart, Haerpfer, Moreno, Welzel, Kizilova, Diez-Medrano et al., 2014)[1,2].

Stereotype accommodation involves social categories that must be familiar prior to migration and is hypothesized for stereotypes whose contents differ across cultures[3]. Two

studies are reported here. In Study 1, we address the main prerequisites of the hypothesis

(Stanciu & Vauclair, 2018), namely pre-migration familiarity with social categories (e.g.,

unemployed people, rich people, politicians) and the existence of local disconfirming

stereotypical beliefs. In Study 2, we address the question of whether immigrants incorporate

stereotypical beliefs learned in the host culture into preexisting stereotypes. We expect that a

longer stay in the host culture and an orientation toward the host culture will be associated

with greater incorporation of any stereotype-disconfirming information but not an orientation

toward the home culture, which will be associated with less incorporation of this information.

Study 1

Study 1 investigates the cross-cultural similarities and differences concerning

stereotypes of social groups known to Romanian locals and to German and French locals

alike. Cultural stereotypes are operationalized as meta-perceptions that are shared between

locals of a culture (Fiske et al., 2002). From previous work in Romania (Stanciu, Cohrs,

Hanke & Gavreliuc, 2017), we select five social groups that are relevant here and moreover

correspond to the four typologies in terms of warmth-competence: women (high warmth, high

competence), unemployed people and homosexuals (high warmth, low competence), rich

people (low warmth, high competence), and politicians (low warmth, low competence). These

social groups can be considered to be universal ("Cross-Cultural Warmth and Competence

Maps – The Fiske Lab", n.d).

Method

Participants and procedure.

Local individuals in Romania ($N = 188$; age, $M = 20.14$, $SD = 2.26$; 85% female; 3%

non-students), Germany ($N = 209$; age, $M = 24.22$, $SD = 5.17$; 65 % female; 9 % non-

students) and France ($N = 135$; age, $M = 26.78$, $SD = 6.61$; 78 % female; 14 % non-students)

participated and had a chance to win 10 Euros. Participants were recruited either in university

classrooms or in online social networks. The survey asked about participants' demographic

characteristics and stereotypical perception. The questionnaire was self-administered in

October 2014–February 2015 via an online research platform (EFS Survey version 10.4,

Unipark).

Measures

Native speakers helped to translate the materials from English into German and

French and back into English (Hambleton & Zenisky, 2010). Discrepancies between the back-

translated and original versions were resolved to arrive at the instruments that were used.

Romanian translations were used when available (Stanciu et al., 2017).

Cultural stereotypes were assessed as meta-perceptions on a 5-point Likert scale (1 –

strongly disagree, 5 – *strongly agree*) (Fiske et al., 2002). Warmth was measured with the

following adjectives: likeable, warm, amusing, good-natured, well-intended, and honest.

Competence was measured with: conscientious, organized, diligent, competent, efficient, and

independent. All participants were asked how the following social groups are typically seen in

their society in terms of the adjectives: homosexuals, politicians, rich people, unemployed

people, and women. An example question is: "As viewed by today's Romanian society, how

likeable are homosexuals?" As seen in Table 1, scale reliabilities for the competence and

warmth dimension were satisfactory, ranging from $\alpha = .74$ to $\alpha = .92$ across the three samples,

and a composite score was therefore computed for the two dimensions.

-Table 1-

Results and Discussion

Preliminary analysis.

There were differences between the Romanian, German, and French samples in terms

of age, $F(2, 458) = 67.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .23$; gender, $\chi^2(2, N = 461) = 19.18$, $p < .001$; and

type of sample, $\chi^2(2, N = 460) = 12.83$, $p = 002$. These were included as covariates for the main analysis.

Main analysis.

To avoid loss of valuable data, analyses were calculated on pair-wise valid cases. A MANCOVA with simple planned comparisons was conducted. Dependent variables were the indices of warmth and competence for each of the five social groups; the grouping variable was culture (1 = Romania, 2 = Germany, 3 = France). Age, gender, and type of sample (non-student, student) were the covariates.

Results indicated an overall multivariate effect of culture, $\lambda_{Pillai} = .52$, $F(20, 860) = 15.19$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .26$. This effect was also evident in significant univariate effects; the coefficients ranged as follows: $F_{Women\_W}(2, 438) = 2.65$, $p = .07$, $\eta^2_p = .01$ to $F_{Politicians\_C}(2, 438) = 60.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .22$. As Figure 1 depicts, simple contrasts revealed that compared with the German cultural stereotypes, the Romanian ones were more positive for unemployed people on warmth and competence, more positive for women on competence, less positive for homosexuals on warmth, and less positive for politicians on warmth and competence. Furthermore, as can be seen in Figure 1, simple contrasts showed that, compared to the French cultural stereotypes, the Romanian ones were more positive for unemployed people, women, and rich people on warmth and competence, and less positive for homosexuals and politicians on warmth and competence.

The cultural difference regarding politicians also has a practical meaning (see Table 1). Between Romania, Germany, and France, politicians were seen as slightly more competent than warm and the Romanian stereotype was least positive compared to the German and French stereotype. The study captures in a reliable manner the state of affairs in these countries in 2015 (date of data collection). Romania was less democratic and more corrupt (Freedom House, 2016; Transparency International, 2016) and had by far the lowest levels of

public trust in politicians compared to Germany and France (The World Bank, 2019).

Corruption and authoritarianism were perceived by the Romanian participants as evidence for

local politicians' unjust appropriation and competition over available resources (low warmth)

and illegitimate position in the society (low competence) (Fiske et al., 2002). The present

result is based on non-representative country data. However, it provides a plausible

explanation for why Romanians seem less interested in politics than their German and French

counterparts (European Social Survey, 2012; Inglehart et al., 2014). Stereotype

accommodation concerning politicians becomes highly relevant among Romanian immigrants

in Germany and France, as they are acculturated into cultures where politicians enjoy a more

positive stereotype compared to their home culture. Identifying evidence for stereotype

accommodation concerning politicians would contribute in important ways to the literature, in

regard, for example, to how civic and political engagement (de Rooji, 2012; Hindriks,

Verkuyten, & Coenders, 2015) might change for individuals who have migrated in response

to the acculturation process.

Study 2

The focus of Study 2 is on personal stereotypes held by immigrants (own beliefs) and

how these relate to cultural stereotypes in their home and host cultures. Because the present

data is cross-sectional, we operationalize stereotype accommodation as Euclidean distance

scores (EDs) [4]. Euclidean distance is a proximity measure between scores in a theoretically

infinite dimensional space (typical procedure in cluster analysis; for a similar reasoning see

Boehnke & Schiefer, 2016). In any two-dimensional space, high EDs correspond to two

scores being far apart and low EDs correspond to two scores being in proximity. In the

warmth-competence space, cultural stereotypes are constants and personal stereotypes are

variables. "Proximity" (low EDs) in immigrants' personal stereotypes to their host-cultural

stereotypes and "distance" (high EDs) in immigrants' personal stereotypes from their home cultural stereotypes is interpreted as stereotype accommodation.

We formally hypothesize that a longer stay in the host culture is associated with greater proximity scores (low EDs) (H1). Furthermore, we expect that a greater orientation toward the host culture is associated with greater proximity (low EDs) (H2a) and that a greater orientation toward the home culture is associated with greater distance (high EDs) (H2b).

Method

Participants and procedure.

Romanian immigrants in Germany ($N = 171$; age, $M = 33.03$, $SD = 8.96$; 66 % females; 90 % non-students) and in France ($N = 54$; age, $M = 31.98$, $SD = 7.98$; 69 % females; 83 % non-students) participated and had a chance to win 30 euros. Non-students were participants who were not pursuing a university degree and were either employed or unemployed. All participants were recruited via online social networks. The questionnaire contained questions pertaining to demographic characteristics, the acculturation experience, and personal stereotypes. The same administration procedure as in Study 1 was followed and took place during October 2014–March 2015.

Measures.

All study materials were back-translated into Romanian. Four bilingual colleagues independently translated the study materials from English. The first author reviewed the translated materials and confirmed a successful translation. Any inconsistencies were discussed subsequently and each translator was invited to explain his/her choice of translation. All reported materials were unanimously agreed upon. Descriptive statistics for all study variables are presented in Table 2, and inter-correlations are presented in Table 3.

-Table 2-

-Table 3-

Personal stereotypes. We asked about participants' own beliefs concerning unemployed people, women, homosexuals, politicians, and rich people using the same scale as in Study 1 (1 – *strongly disagree*, 5 – *strongly agree*). An example question is: "In your opinion, to what extent are homosexuals likeable?" Across samples, scale reliabilities computed for each social group were satisfactory (values range, $\alpha = .68$ to $\alpha = .96$).

Length of stay in the host country. Length of stay in the host country was assessed as the number of years and months since the participant had moved to the host country. Due to a slightly right-skewed distribution, for the main analyses a natural logarithm transformation was applied.

Acculturation orientation. Acculturation orientation was assessed on a 7-point Likert scale (1 – *strongly disagree*, 7 – *strongly agree*) (Suanet & van de Vijver, 2009). Eleven items were used to measure individuals' orientation toward the host culture (e.g., "I like German food" and "I like French food") and eleven items were used to measure orientation toward the home culture (e.g., "I like having Romanian friends"). Rather than using the median-split procedure to arrive at the four acculturation typologies proposed by Berry (2005), which can at times be an unreliable method (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2007), we used the orientation toward the host culture and the home culture as indicators. Scale reliabilities for these indices were satisfactory across the two samples of immigrants (values range, $\alpha = .73$ to $\alpha = .84$).

Results and Discussion

To avoid loss of valuable data, the main analyses were done on pair-wise valid cases (see Appendix A). Separate EDs were calculated from the participants' scores on personal stereotypes to the constant scores of their home and host-cultural stereotypes (taken from Study 1). Independent multivariate regression analyses were conducted for Romanians in

Germany and Romanians in France. EDs were the dependent variables. Length of stay and identification with the home and host cultures were the predictors. Results are presented in Table 4.

-Table 4-

Romanian immigrants in Germany. As hypothesized (H1), greater length of stay was associated with greater proximity to the German cultural stereotype, $b = -0.12$, $p = 0.03$, but, contrary to predictions, not also with greater distance away the Romanian cultural stereotype, $b = 0.06$, $p =$ n.s. Furthermore, a greater orientation toward the host culture was associated with a greater distance away from the Romanian cultural stereotype, $b = 0.11$, $p = 0.03$, but not also with a greater proximity to the German cultural stereotype, $b = -0.03$, $p = 0.34$, partially confirming H2a. The orientation toward the home culture was neither associated with proximity to the Romanian cultural stereotype, $b = -0.01$, $p = 0.41$, nor with distance away from the German cultural stereotype, $b = -0.03$, $p = 0.64$. There is partial support for the expectation that length of stay and acculturation orientation predict immigrants' stereotype accommodation.

Romanian immigrants in France. The findings were identical to the ones for Romanian immigrants in Germany. We report only the significant findings here. Greater length of stay predicted greater proximity to the French cultural stereotype, $b = -0.17$, $p = 0.01$. A greater orientation toward the host culture was associated with a greater distance away from the Romanian cultural stereotype, $b = 0.32$, $p = 0.01$. This evidence provides replication validity for the stereotype accommodation hypothesis.

We report the analysis of stereotypes about politicians alone because this group had meaningful cross-cultural variability in Study 1 and showed replication validity in two samples of immigrants. There were no significant results for stereotypes of unemployed people, women, homosexuals, and rich people, save for two unsystematic exceptions. For

stereotypes of homosexuals, a greater orientation toward the Romanian culture predicted a greater distance away from the German cultural stereotype, $b = 0.10$, $p = 0.03$. The result was not replicated by Romanians in France, even though the Romanian stereotype of homosexuals differed from the French one. The evidence of stereotype accommodation may therefore be a chance result. For stereotypes of rich people, a greater orientation toward the French culture predicted a greater distance away from the Romanian cultural stereotype, $b = 0.17$, $p = 0.04$. The result was not replicated by Romanians in Germany, which was to be expected because the Romanian stereotype of rich people did not differ significantly from the German one. Nevertheless, this evidence alone (a small sample of convenience) is not sufficient for teasing out how much is a chance result and how much is evidence for stereotype accommodation concerning rich people. These results are in line with expectations and can be considered supporting, yet indefinite, evidence for the stereotype accommodation hypothesis. Note that the non-significant results are also in line with the prerequisite mentioned above.

The study provides robust evidence for stereotype accommodation regarding politicians. As Study 1 shows, this social group has a far more problematic image in Romania than in Germany or France. Romanian immigrants did indeed incorporate some of the more positive stereotype-relevant information learned in Germany or in France, but that does not mean that their beliefs aligned perfectly with those of the host countries' locals. Our thesis on socio-cognitive adaptation does not imply a perfect match of stereotypes between immigrants and locals, but rather a change towards greater similarity in stereotypes (Stanciu & Vauclair, 2018). This is in line with personality studies showing that acculturation processes can lead to changes towards converging, but not identical, personalities between immigrants and locals (Güngör, Bornstein, De Leersnyder, Cote, Ceulemans, & Mesquita, 2013).

Furthermore, these results should not be specific to Romanian immigrants. When John Berry theorized the acculturation process, he acknowledged that immigrants may experience

acculturation in the political domain as well (Berry, 1997). According to him, immigrants face the dilemma of whether to advocate for the political interests of their cultural group of origin, for the political interests of the majority host population, or for a balanced approach. In the sociological literature, this process is known as immigrants' political re-socialization (De Rooji, 2012; White, Nevitte, Blais, Gidengil, & Fournier, 2008). Regardless of approach and discipline, findings indicate that integrated immigrants are more inclined to advocate for the political representation of both cultural groups, while marginalized immigrants are more inclined to be passive in the political domain. What may explain this differentiation between politically engaged and non-engaged immigrants are the available resources (time and feelings of civic duty) (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995) and their trust in politicians (Helliwell, Wang, & Xu, 2016). We contribute to this debate by showing that immigrants can modify their stereotypes of politicians when re-socializing politically into their new cultures, which all happens because of the acculturation process.

Political re-socialization/acculturation should become more evident with a longer duration of stay (White et al., 2008) and a greater interest in the host culture (Dalisay, 2012; Rooji, 2012). The present results concerning stereotypes of politicians corroborate this literature. Interestingly, however, an orientation toward the host culture did not predict stereotype proximity to the host culture. These imperfectly balanced results may be due to instrument limitations: Our assessment did not probe into the specific political domain of the acculturation process; instead, it captures it only in a general way (Suanet & van de Vijver, 2009). A more theoretical explanation is also possible. We stated in the opening paragraphs that duration of stay in the host culture embodies all opportunities for immigrants to become aware of and learn the host-cultural stereotypes. With a longer stay in the host culture, there are greater chances that the local culture will be imprinted in immigrants, but there is no evidence to suggest that the host culture will be eliminated. This finding corresponds to the

thesis that immigrants experience cultural learning, but not cultural assimilation as they stay

longer in a country (Rudmin, 2009). This explanation should not be applicable to the

acculturation orientation, as it is a motivation factor and not an objective factor like the

duration of stay. Immigrants' orientation toward the host culture predicted a greater difference

in the way politicians are stereotyped in their home cultures. Romanian immigrants were

motivated to alter their preexisting negative beliefs of politicians' sociability and

competencies because of their acculturation processes and the more positive stereotypes about

politicians prevailing in Germany and France. In other words, becoming aware that politicians

in the host culture may in fact be conscientious and efficacious in keeping their promises

helps to correct some of the negative beliefs associated with the group because of the political

reality in their Romanian home culture. More research is needed to tease out such specifics in

processes of stereotype accommodation concerning politicians.

General Discussion

Previous work has focused on changes in immigrants' inter-ethnic stereotypes

resulting from the acculturation process. This, we propose, is too restrictive. Ethnicity is not

the only salient social category in the migration context. Immigrants are in contact with the

local ethnic population, yes, but the local population itself is not an abstract entity, it is

comprised of members of varying age groups, gender, sexual orientation, and political and

socio-economic statuses. Immigrant workers, international students, and even tourists can

interact with, for example, local older people or homeless people and, depending on their

preexisting stereotypes, the interaction may fall within the accepted practices of the local

culture or not (Gelfand, Raver, Nishii, Leslie, Lun, Lim et al., 2011). All stereotypes are

socially construed (Kashima, Fiedler, & Freytag, 2008). They are part of individuals'

cognitive heuristics and should be modifiable through new information and experiences in the

acculturation process. This research provides evidence that immigrants experience socio-

cognitive adaptation. Immigrants can incorporate (some of) the stereotype-relevant information that they learn in the host culture into their preexisting stereotypes, which results in stereotype accommodation.

Immigrants can acculturate into stereotypes of social groups that may or may not be distinct from the stereotypes predominant in their home cultures. We have argued and showed initial evidence that stereotype accommodation is the case only for social groups with meaningful diverging stereotypes across cultures. We identified robust evidence for stereotype accommodation regarding politicians. Romanian immigrants in Germany and France might still experience stereotype accommodation regarding the other social groups considered here. However, because the cross-cultural variation in the stereotypes about these groups are not as societally meaningful as is the case for stereotypes about politicians, the resulting stereotype accommodation may have been more difficult to tease out. Our results showed some evidence for stereotype accommodation regarding rich people, yet this came from a sample size that is unrepresentative. Furthermore, although there was some indication of stereotype accommodation regarding homosexuals, this finding was not replicated in both samples of immigrants.

Older people constitute another social group that is stereotyped in a meaningfully different manner between these cultures (and others in general) (Abrams, Russel, Vauclair, & Swift, 2011). Older people enjoy a better image and status in more modernized societies (North & Fiske, 2015). The issue of old age is currently highly relevant as the world population is aging rapidly and society is ill equipped to integrate its elder individuals. Stereotypes of older people are problematic because they have enduring, typically negative implications for the well-being of all individuals (Levy, 2009; Vos et al., 2018). Romania is a less modernized society than Germany and France and this corresponds to less-positive stereotypes of older people (Vauclair, Marques, Lima, Bratt, Swift, & Abrams, 2014).

Stereotype accommodation regarding older people seems highly plausible for Romanians living abroad.

Accommodated stereotypes can have implications for behavior in acculturating individuals. An accommodated stereotype holding that politicians are competent might boost immigrants' trust in politicians and could therefore lead them to be more engaged politically than in their country of origin (Rooji, 2012; Hindriks et al., 2015). The present study also has direct implications for discrimination research in the migration context. The literature chiefly examines discrimination against immigrants from the perspective of host culture natives as perpetrators (e.g., Pereira, Vala, Costa-Lopez, 2010). Typical findings are that some ethnic groups are more "welcomed" than others. As a result, attempts are made by researchers and policy makers to identify paths towards reconciliation. Our findings make a statement that un-accommodated stereotypes might explain forms of (unintentional) discrimination from the perspective of immigrants as perpetrators. Discrimination can take many forms and the difficulty rests in distinguishing between benevolent behavior (behavior that is positive but meant in a derogatory manner) and hostile behavior (behavior that is overtly negative) (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Vos et al., 2018). We do not imply agency and intention in such forms of discrimination. By that, we mean that a lack of knowledge of the predominant and accepted views of social groups can be associated with behavior considered to be discriminatory in the local culture. For example, some immigrants might choose not to have students as their neighbors because their preexisting stereotypes can be greatly divergent from the stereotypes that prevail in the host culture. Or, an accommodated stereotype that older people are competent might mitigate unintentional ageist behavior in some immigrant employers.

Limitations and Future Research

This research has several limitations. The study is cross-sectional, which is not an ideal tool for teasing out stereotype change but one that is accepted in practice, provided its

limitations are acknowledged. Other research has found that immigrants who identify with

their host culture can have value preferences matching those of the host-culture locals

(Schiefer, Möllering, & Daniel, 2012). It is possible that our results were influenced by a pre-

migration fit between immigrants' personal stereotypes and host-cultural stereotypes.

Longitudinal studies are adequate tools in dealing with issues of causality and change in the

acculturation process (Lönnqvist et al., 2013). The study of individuals at intervals prior to

migration and at periodic intervals after migration can certify the causal link between the

acculturation process and stereotype accommodation.

Due to practical considerations, we were forced to address stereotype accommodation

in working and non-working immigrants in relation to host-cultural stereotypes assessed in

samples of university students. Furthermore, female participants were overrepresented. These

samples correspond to unique populations that are embedded in distinct societal contexts

(Ward & Geeraert, 2016). As a result, it is unclear whether immigrants indeed had access to

the stereotypical beliefs of the student population and whether the gender imbalance

influenced our findings in any way. Nonetheless, please note that host-cultural stereotypes

were operationalized as meta-perceptions, which students and non-students, female and male

members of a culture can reproduce in an identical manner (Fiske et al., 2002). To resolve

these concerns, future research can attempt another strategy in collecting data from

demographically matching samples of locals and immigrants or analyze online available data

such as the fourth round of European Social Survey (ESS) or the sixth round of the World

Value Survey (WVS). These secondary resources have information limited to age-related

stereotypes and trust in politicians (probing the stereotype dimension of warmth).

Although our results represent a promising, if modest first attempt to find evidence for

the stereotype accommodation hypothesis, there is greater complexity to be examined. We

have addressed propositions concerning the role of cultural differences in terms of

stereotypes, the role of duration of stay as learning opportunities, and acculturation orientation as a motivation factor (see Figure 1, Stanciu & Vauclair, 2018). The stereotype accommodation hypothesis also acknowledges the role of individual trait differences (personality, value preferences), contextual factors (ethnic group size and presence in the mainstream culture), and cross-cultural differences in general (the role of individualism and norm tolerance, for example). More advanced statistical techniques are therefore required to tease out the independent and complementary effects of all theorized factors. The ESS and WVS data sets contain country representative data and likewise have immigrant samples. Future research can use these resources to test a hierarchical model of stereotype accommodation.

One conceptual limitation concerns the main finding. Politicians are public figures, which makes it difficult to distinguish between the effects resulting from the social category itself (all politicians) and the effects attributable to specific individuals. This issue reminds us of discussions about social categorization (Crisp & Hewstone, 2007) and out-group homogeneity bias (Ostrom & Sedikides, 1992). Social categorization is the cognitive process by which people use the characteristic features of others to categorize them into groups. Out-group homogeneity bias is the cognitive bias whereby individuals tend to see members of other social groups as more similar to each other than they do members of the groups to which they themselves belong. Although it may be the case that our participants had specific individual politicians in mind, social categorization and the out-group homogeneity bias predicts that the participants were likely to use individual cases as exemplifications of the whole social category. Experimental research could test whether stereotype accommodation is different depending on whether participants are explicitly asked to consider the social category as opposed to individual politicians.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

This article provides the first empirical evidence that stereotype accommodation functions as an expression of immigrants' socio-cognitive adaptation. Duration of stay in the host culture and orientation in relation to dual-culture exposure predicted levels of stereotype accommodation, but only if there were meaningful differences between the predominant stereotypes in immigrants' home and the host cultures. Immigrants seem to adapt their ways of thinking about social groups in society in relation to the cultural context in which they live, and our results show replicated evidence for changes in stereotypes of politicians as a result of the acculturation process.

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[1] Hofstede and colleagues describes Individualism as the cultural framework within which people allocate higher importance to their individual and close-others well-being, contrasting Collectivism which is the cultural framework within which people allocate higher importance to the well-being of the groups they are part of.

[2] Post-materialism is defined as the transformation of values of individuals from materialistic (e.g., money) to spiritualistic/metaphysical (e.g., autonomy, art) (Inglehart et al., 2014).

[3] Stanciu and Vauclair (2018) suggest that stereotype accommodation may happen also concerning the social category itself – immigrants without prior knowledge of the existence and meaning of a social category that is relevant in the host culture will accommodate such knowledge into preexistent structures. Almost in every culture there are social groups that are meaningful only for the local context, for example Mafiosi in Italy and Maori in New Zealand ("Cross-Culture Warmth and Competence Maps – The Fiske Lab", n.d.). Immigrants acculturating into these cultures will first become aware and learn the social category and only then allocate stereotypical content to it.

[4] Euclidean distance: $d_{(i,Xc)} = \sqrt{(W_i - X_c^W)^2 + (C_i - X_c^C)^2}$; where $d_{(i,Xc)}$ is distance score of person i to culture constant X_c; W_i = personal score on warmth; C_i = personal score on competence; X_c^W = culture constant on warmth; X_c^C = culture constant on competence; subscript X_c = replace with home and host; low values of $d_{(i,Xc)}$ = small distance (high similarity between personal stereotypes and cultural stereotypes); high values of d = large distance (low similarity between personal stereotypes and cultural stereotypes).

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Figure Description

Figure 1.

Similarities and Differences in terms of Cultural Stereotypes between Samples of Locals in

(a) Romania and Germany and (b) Romania and France.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics and Effect Sizes for Cultural Stereotypes in Samples of Locals in Romania, Germany and France.

Social group	Dimension	Romania			Germany			France			d1	d2
		M	*SD*	α	*M*	*SD*	α	*M*	*SD*	α		
Unemployed	W	3.07	.68	.86	2.80	.55	.83	2.73	.80	.90	0.43	0.45
	C	2.54	.60	.84	2.31	.62	.87	2.36	.78	.89	0.37	0.25
Women	W	3.77	.56	.84	3.69	.53	.84	3.52	.64	.88	0.14	0.41
	C	3.85	.60	.82	3.52	.49	.78	3.61	.67	.86	0.60	0.38
Homosexuals	W	3.10	.86	.89	3.57	.51	.81	3.49	.70	.90	0.66	0.49
	C	3.13	.67	.88	3.19	.46	.80	3.37	.65	.92	0.10	0.36
Politicians	W	1.77	.68	.83	2.39	.56	.76	2.24	.60	.78	0.99	0.73
	C	1.86	.80	.88	2.87	.69	.81	2.54	.72	.77	1.35	0.89
Rich people	W	2.58	.68	.85	2.55	.53	.82	2.32	.62	.82	0.05	0.40
	C	3.54	.65	.89	3.62	.51	.74	3.32	.67	.80	0.13	0.33

Note. W = Warmth; C = Competence; *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; response range for all variables = 1 – *strongly disagree,* 5 – *strongly*

agree; α = scale reliability; *d1* = Cohen's d for Romanians vs. Germans, *d2* = Cohen's *d* for Romanians vs. French.

Table 2.

Means and Scale Reliabilities for All Study Variables in Samples of Romanian Immigrants in Germany and France.

Variable / Social Group	Dimension	Romanians in Germany			Romanians in France			
		M	*SD*	*α*	*M*	*SD*	*α*	*Cohen's d*
Age	-	33.03	8.96		31.98	7.98		0.12
Length of stay	-	3.51	3.20		5.97	4.66		0.61
Host culture orientation	-	5.09	0.56	.80	5.48	0.78	.84	0.57
Home culture orientation	-	4.98	0.95	.81	5.51	0.74	.73	0.62
Unemployed	W	2.96	0.45	.92	3.00	0.32	.87	0.10
	C	2.73	0.56	.91	3.07	0.40	.80	0.70
Women	W	3.64	0.58	.88	3.61	0.67	.93	0.05
	C	3.82	0.64	.89	3.79	0.55	.86	0.05
Homosexual people	W	3.37	0.70	.94	3.25	0.64	.96	0.18
	C	3.24	0.51	.91	3.18	0.42	.94	0.13
Politicians	W	2.12	0.81	.88	2.27	0.80	.89	0.18
	C	2.31	0.88	.89	2.22	0.75	.79	0.11

| Rich people | W | 2.85 | 0.43 | .87 | 2.93 | 0.42 | .89 | 0.19 |
| | C | 3.58 | 0.57 | .88 | 3.44 | 0.45 | .68 | 0.27 |

Note. Length of stay in the host culture is measured in years and natural logarithm transformed. Answer options for acculturation orientation = 1 – *strongly disagree*, 7 – *strongly agree*. Answer options for stereotype content = 1 – *strongly disagree*, 5 – *strongly agree*; W = warmth; C = competence.

Table 3.

Inter-Correlations.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Age		-.01	-.51**	.59**	.21	.20	.06	-.20
2 Male	-.12		.01	.06	.17	-.18	.05	.14
3 Student	-.33**	-.08		-.61**	-.15	-.13	-.01	.28^t
4 Length of stay (ln)	.46**	-.11	.02		.15	.12	-.13	-.42**
5 Home culture orientation	-.09	-.07	-.07	-.17*		.19	.03	.03
6 Host culture orientation	.15*	-.15^t	-.03	.08	.26**		.28^t	.03
7 Distance from Romanian C.S.	.01	-.19*	.07	.13	.01	.18*		.30*
8 Distance away from host C.S.	-.16^t	-.01	-.05	-.18*	-.01	-.06	-.23*	

Note. Coefficients for Romanians in Germany are below main diagonal and coefficients for Romanians in France are above main diagonal. Length of stay in the host culture is measured in years and natural logarithm transformed. Answer options for identification with the home and host cultures = 1 – *strongly disagree*, 7 – *strongly agree*. Distance scores are for politicians, the only social group that showed discernible differences between cultural stereotypes in the home and host cultures; male = dummy coded, 1 – male, 0 - female; student = dummy coded, 1 – student, 0 – non-student. ^{t}, $p < .10$; *, $p < .05$. **, $p < .01$.

Table 4.

Stereotype Accommodation Concerning Politicians.

Sample	Distance scores	Predictor	*b*	SE *b*	*t* (one-tailed)	*p*	η^2	1-β	Hypothesis confirmed?
Romanians in Germany	Romanian C.S.								
		Length of stay	.06	.05	1.26	.11	.01	.24	no
		Host culture orientation	.11	.06	1.89	.03	.03	.47	yes
		Home culture orientation	-.01	.06	-.24	.41	.01	.06	no
	German C.S.								
		Length of stay	-.12	.06	-2.01	.03	.03	.52	yes
		Host culture orientation	-.03	.07	-.41	.34	.01	.07	no
		Home culture orientation	-.03	.07	-.36	.64	.01	.06	no
Romanians in France	Romanian C.S.								
		Length of stay	-.09	.07	-1.32	.90	.04	.25	no
		Host culture	.32	.11	2.88	.01	.17	.80	yes
		Home culture	.17	.12	1.41	.91	.05	.28	no

French C.S.

Length of stay	-.17	.06	-2.99	.01	.18	.83	yes
Host culture orientation	.04	.10	.38	.64	.01	.07	no
Home culture orientation	.04	.10	.43	.34	.01	.07	no

Note. Romanian C.S. = Romanian cultural stereotypes, German C.S. = German cultural stereotypes, French C.S. = French cultural stereotypes. Host culture = orientation the host culture, Home culture = orientation to the home culture. Length of stay = ln transformation of years stayed in the host society. Answer options for identification with the home and host cultures = 1 – *strongly disagree*, 7 – *strongly agree*. η^2 = effect size; 1-β = observed power of statistical test; all tests are calculated at α = .05.