

Attitudes Towards Multiculturalism: Majority and Minority Group Perspectives

Maria Stogianni & Elke Murdock
University of Luxembourg

INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism is a broad, multifaceted concept that can be interpreted in different ways. Three distinct components of multiculturalism have emerged in the cross-cultural psychology literature: the demographic, the policy, and the psychological aspect (Tiryakian, 2003). The first two components refer to the plural composition of a population and to policies and practices that support cultural diversity in the public sphere. Psychological multiculturalism refers to positive attitudes towards a culturally plural society, including behaviors that support cultural diversity (Celenk & van de Vijver, 2014). Research findings suggest that the attitude towards multiculturalism is a unidimensional and stable construct but support for multiculturalism can vary across different life domains among minority and majority group members (Van de Vijver, Breugelmans, & Schalk-Soekar, 2008). Minority members express more positive attitudes but make a distinction between private and public domains while majority members expect assimilation of immigrant groups in all life domains. Another study provides evidence for gender differences, with women expressing more positive attitudes (Arends-Toth & van de Vijver, 2003).

The aim of the current study was to investigate attitudes towards multiculturalism from a majority/minority point of view and potential factors that might influence these attitudes (e.g. demographic variables). A measure that has been tested in Canada and the Netherlands was used with the aim to validate it in the Luxembourg context.

Research questions:

- How do attitudes towards multiculturalism vary across majority and minority group members?
- How do attitudes towards multiculturalism vary across schools with different demographic composition and between participants with different migratory background?
- Are there any gender differences?

METHOD

Materials

- Participants completed a demographic questionnaire and the **Multicultural Ideology Scale (MIS)**; Berry & Kalin, 1995, $\alpha = .688$), that assesses attitudes towards a culturally plural society. The scale covers 3 domains: 1) attitudes towards diversity, 2) acculturation strategies by minorities (assimilation vs. cultural maintenance), and 3) acculturation preferences of majority members., 9 items, e.g. "A society that has a variety of cultural groups is more able to tackle new problems as they occur"; 7-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree to 7 = totally agree).
- Feelings of pride towards one's ethnic group were assessed with 1 item "I am proud of my nationality".
- The questionnaires were available in three different languages (DE, FR and EN). Translations were made using a translation-back translation procedure.

References

Berry, J. W., & Kalin, R. (1995). Multicultural and ethnic attitudes in Canada: An overview of the 1991 national survey. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 27, 301-320.

Celenk, O., & Van de Vijver, F. J. (2014). Assessment of psychological acculturation and multiculturalism: An overview of measures in the public domain. In V. Benet-Martinez & Y. Hong (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of multicultural identity: Basic and applied psychological perspectives*. (pp. 205-226). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tiryakian, E. A. (2003). Assessing multiculturalism theoretically: E pluribus unum, sic et non. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 5, 20-39.

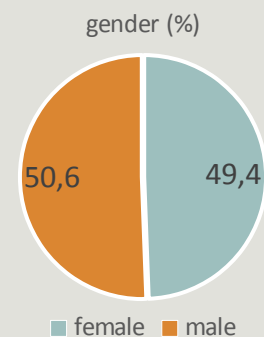
Van de Vijver, F. J. R., Breugelmans, S. M., & Schalk-Soekar, S. (2008). Multiculturalism: Construct validity and stability. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32, 93-104.

SAMPLE

Participants

- 429 students enrolled in 2 different high-schools: the European school (a school with a highly diverse migrant population) and a public technical school in south-west Luxembourg.
- Over 53.2% of the migrant students were born in Luxembourg, 87 had the Luxembourgish citizenship, and 36.1% listed more than one nationality.

	European School	Matias-Adam School
N	204	225
age	M = 15.16 SD = .844	M = 15.93 SD = 1.162
Majority /minority status	Natives .5% Migr. Background .99.5%	Natives 19.1% Migr. 80.9% Background



RESULTS

Factor Analysis MIS

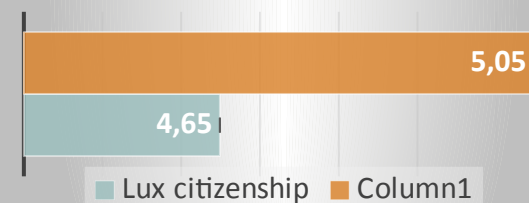
- Using Kaiser's criterion, one factor was extracted, with an eigenvalue of 3.522. The one factor solution explained 52.11% of the variance and was partially invariant across different language versions.

ANOVA

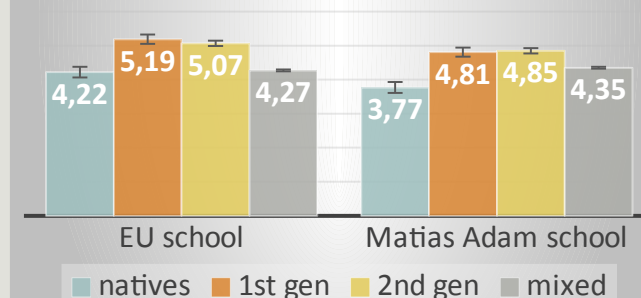
- There were no gender differences in multiculturalism ideology scores.
- Prior to the analyses, participants were classified in different groups according to their migration status.

Groups	Country of Birth Participant	Country of Birth Parent 1	Country of Birth Parent 2
Natives	Lux	Lux	Lux
1st generation	Not-Lux	Not-Lux	Not-Lux
2nd generation	Lux	Not-Lux	Not-Lux
mixed	Lux	Lux	Not-Lux

MIS mean score differences based on citizenship status



Mean scores for MIS among natives and groups with different migratory background in the two schools



- There was a statistically significant difference in MIS scores for these four groups in both schools (EU school: $F(3,181) = 4.423, p = .005$, Matias-Adam school: $F(3,190) = 15.65, p < .001$). In the European school, 1st generation immigrants scored significantly higher than all other groups. There were no differences between natives and the two other Immigrant groups. In the public school, 2nd generation immigrants scored significantly higher than natives and offspring of mixed couples.
- MIS scores correlated negatively with ethnic pride $r = -.161, p < .01$.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that support for multiculturalism varies across majority and minority group members and that the demographic composition of the schools also plays a role. Endorsement of multiculturalism rises in a school context that provides more opportunities for culture contact.