The influence of intergroup contact on minority perceptions and definitions of ethnic identity

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Abstract

Minority perceptions have been mostly investigated by comparing minority group members with majority group members in terms of group power, group status and group size. This approach does not take into account situational specific differences, such as intergroup contact, through which the awareness of differences between cultures is increased, which is contrary to what is expected by Contact Hypothesis and the Common Ingroup Identity Model. The present research investigates the extent to which intergroup contact affects minority perception and preferences acculturation strategies to provide insight into the identification process of minority groups. It was expected that intergroup contact was related to increased minority perceptions, as well as decreased attempts to adapt to the minority and increased attempts to maintain own cultural values that were deemed significant for the ethnical identity. Therefore German students living in Dutch areas near to the German boarder were asked to complete a survey, to measure the amount of contact, minority perceptions and cultural maintenance. Results indicated that there was not enough evidence to conclude if minority perceptions based on group power, group status and group size were affected by intergroup contact whereas preferences for acculturation strategies were affected by intergroup contact. It can be concluded that intergroup contact may only lead to the forming of intergroup harmony under optimal circumstances. In case that circumstances are not optimal, intergroup contact may thus lead towards intergroup bias.

Inhoud

Introduction

The manner in which ethnic groups perceive themselves as a minority depends on interaction between situational factors that may be more relevant to the minority group than to the majority group, such as intergroup contact (see for example, (Saguy, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2008)). This demonstrates that self-perception of an ethnic group as minority cannot only be based on comparisons with the majority group, but rather depends on the amount of contact between minority and majority. The present study aims to investigate the factors leading to the self-definition of an ethnic group as a minority. More specifically, the consequences of intergroup contact with the majority are investigated on the minority's perception of the size, status and power of the own group and on the minority's preference for an acculturation strategy.

Psychological consequences of migration have been examined mostly for non-Western immigrants, whereby home country and host country were parted by large distances. The position of Western immigrants whose home country is nearby has rarely been examined yet, although it may provide an insight into situational differences between cultures living next to one another. The present research aims to examine the extent to which situational specific variables may determine identification processes of minorities even when the spatial distance between the home and host country are a matter of only several meters. It may be therefore interesting to investigate if and how Western immigrants such as Germans in the Netherlands, perceive themselves as a minority. Until 2014, the Dutch population has experienced a slight rise of (Western) immigrants since the turn of the century. While in 2000, (Western) immigrants constituted 17.5 % (about 2,7 million immigrants) of the Dutch population (about 15.8 million residents), the percentages in 2014 went up to 21.4% (3.5 million immigrants on 16.8 million residents) (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2014). From 2000 to 2009, the number of German immigrants increased in total from 8.432 to 12.818. (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2015). Especially in the Dutch areas next to the German border, German immigrants come to live close by their home country. Germany itself has had a steady percentage of immigrants over the last fourteen years of 8,8 % (~ 7,2 million) (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014), so that Germans in general can be assumed to be familiar with the subject on migration backgrounds. Therefore, how do German immigrants perceive themselves in terms of minority or majority status when moving back and forth between Germany and the Netherlands and as their contact with the Dutch majority may vary? More specifically, what influence does

intergroup contact with the Dutch residents have on the minority perception of German migrants as a potential minority group?

One gets the impression that defining minorities has always been a matter of contrasting a smaller group against its greater counterpart. Yet, it has been shown that the differences between majority and minority groups are not always that clear, such as demonstrated by Verkuyten (1997). Verkuyten (1997) investigated self-descriptions of Turkish respondents when comparing themselves with the Dutch majority and another minority constituted by Moroccans in the Netherlands. He observed that Turkish respondents sought to preserve certain important values, for instance having a sense of honor, while on the other hand refraining from traditions that would lead to conflicts with the Dutch culture. Although they clearly attempted to define their identity in the context of the Netherlands, they did not show intentions of becoming Dutch (Verkuyten, 1997). This example makes it feasible to assume that members of small groups may face difficulties in (re-) defining their own identity when moving into the environment of another group. This has also been demonstrated by Devos and Banaji (2005) in a series of studies on White, African and Asian Americans' view on what is considered ''American'' after defining their own culture. It turned out that Asian Americans shared many qualities with what had been considered "typical American". Yet, Asian Americans perceived themselves as outsiders. It appears that ethnic groups who join a culture do not simply adopt the new culture and consider it as part of their identity, even in the case that they share common traits. How then, do these ethnic groups perceive themselves when living next to a greater group? Does the degree of intergroup contact affect this perception?

Approaches to defining a minority

A common methodological approach to categorize groups into minorities or majorities is to measure them in terms of group size, group status and group power (e.g. (Lücken & Simon, 2005; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1991). One starting point to define a minority is a group's numerical size as being shown by, for instance, Lücken and Simon (2005). The same authors suggest that group status can be defined as the evaluation of a group in terms of its reputation as good or bad. Lücken and Simon (2005) as well as Kamans, Otten, Gordijn, and Spears (2010) defined group power as a group's capability to do something or even make others do something, to one's own advantage or others' disadvantage and therefore agree with an earlier definition of Jones (1972). The relationships among group size, group status and group power have been widely discussed as well. Especially group status and group power have shown to significant

interactions with each other (Kamans et al., 2010). Group size does not necessarily have to interact with either group status nor group power, although it seemed to have some effect on how participants' evaluation of their group's power or status in various experiments when being manipulated. The subtle influences of group size were for example demonstrated in an experiment, where minority members showed heightened awareness of their minority status when being confronted with disadvantages considering group power and group status. It needs to be noted that these participants were only made to believe that their own group was smaller, hence, only their perception had been manipulated (Simon & Lücken, 2005). There are, however, examples where the influence of group size does not matter, as being demonstrated by the example of South Africa. Although White residents could be considered a minority in numerical terms (thus group size), this group clearly constituted the position of a group high in power and status during the years of Apartheid (Sachdev & Bourhis, 1991). Group size thus cannot always fully account for the actual minority / majority status of a group as group status and group power may suggest otherwise. As a starting point, the numerical size of a group will be used in present research to identify the group being researched, following past examples of research (Lücken & Simon, 2005). Whereas group size, group status and group power have often been manipulated in experiments to investigate their impact on, for instance, one another, the present study seeks to provide insight into the perceptions of a (presumed) minority group and thus their evaluations of their own group's status, size and power in the context of the host community / country. These perceptions will not be further judged on their accuracy on describing reality. Therefore, in the following sections group power, group status and group size will be summarized under the term minority perceptions.

Identity (de-)formation

Within the field of social psychology, parallel to the intraindividual approaches to examine intergroup behavior, social psychology researchers started to investigate intergroup behavior also in terms of the interaction between individual behavior and social context situations, or in other words, at the level of groups (Sherif, 1966). Within their framework of Social Identity Theory (SIT), Tajfel and Turner proposed that the membership in groups serves an important purpose to its individual members on its own: membership in groups provide a social identity through which individuals can define themselves in terms of a social being (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Thus, part of an individual's identity can be seen as a product of the way an individual identifies with a certain group in order to achieve self-esteem. SIT is partly based on the assumption that the identification process with one's own group comes with a

process of comparison with other members and groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Similar notions on (social) comparison are also to be found in the framework of the Social Categorization Theory (SCT), where social comparison processes are given a central role in the process of self-definition (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994).

In his research on ethnic minority identity involving Turkish residents in Netherlands, Verkuyten (1997) observed that, when discussing Dutch and Turkish cultures, the descriptions given by Turkish participants seemed to reflect a struggle between adapting to the Dutch identity and treasuring values from the Turkish culture as they continuously compared Dutch and Turkish cultures. This observation consolidates with an earlier notion by Hutnik (1991), who had claimed that social psychology theories focused too much on the minority aspect of ethnic groups while neglecting the fact that ethnic (minority) cultures would be also endowed with their very own qualities that consolidated a part of their own identity as well. This can be seen in the eagerness observed in the Turkish respondents in Verkuyten (1997), who thus sought to identify with the Dutch majority as well as with certain aspects of the Turkish minority. It can thus be assumed that ethnic minorities make comparisons in order to re-define their own group in the context of the majority's culture, and that this is a process of finding a balance between adapting to the identity of the majority's ethnic group, and staying aware of characteristics that are deemed important for their own ethnic group. Building on Hutnik (1991) and Verkuyten (1997), the present research aims to examine the extent to which intergroup contact with the majority influences the ethnical minority group's attempts to define its own identity.

As suggested by the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954) and the Common Ingroup Model (J. F. Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000), intergroup contact is expected to ease and improve intergroup relations and therefore undermines the perception of different groups while emphasizing on commonalities (J. Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2007). Yet, this expectation does not take into account that minority groups may approach the contact with the majority in different ways, driven by different motives, as in research by Saguy, Dovidio and Pratto (2008) is described. Saguy, Dovidio and Pratto (2008) specified the benefits of intergroup contact by arguing that it seemed more effective for improving intergroup attitudes of advantaged (or majority) groups than for disadvantaged (minority) groups. When under the perception of their own group being disadvantaged, minority groups displayed a social change oriented approach where they sought to discuss differences with the majority group. As already been shown by the example of Verkuyten (1997), it was also the confrontation with the Dutch majority group and therefore the confrontation with a different culture that influenced the extent to which

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Turkish respondents started define themselves through making comparisons (Verkuyten, 1997). The present research therefore expects that intergroup contact may even enable intergroup bias due to increased exposure to the majority group, because increased intergroup contact may raise awareness of intergroup differences considering group status, group power and / or group size. In other words, it is expected that intergroup contact may even encourage intergroup comparisons. According to the first hypothesis of the present research, it is therefore expected that increased intergroup contact leads to an increased perception of the own group as a minority in terms of low perceived group status, low group power and small group size compared to low perceived minority perception (that is, high group size, high group status and high group power), when intergroup contact is low.

Living in a different culture

In order to optimize the application of the Common Identity Model in intergroup conflicts, Dovidio, Gaertner and Saguy (2007) elaborated on the idea of letting interventions allow the simultaneous activation of common group identity and original subgroup identity, which is currently also known as Dual Identity. Instead of forcing members of different groups into one superordinate identity to eliminate intergroup bias, they suggested that intergroup interventions should focus on simultaneously emphasizing both common affiliation (e.g. being Christian) and subgroup identities (e.g. being catholic or Protestants). Notions on dual identity can also be found in earlier studies, such as Hutnik (1991), who had suggested that ethnic minority identity can also be conceptualized along different modes of acculturation, and (Berry, 1997), who offered a differentiated view on possible outcomes when these different modes are applied. According to Berry (1997), when entering a new cultural context, ethnic groups will eventually arrive in a process of adaptation to the new context and may undergo psychological changes that may also apply to identification processes. The author continues in stating that members of ethnic groups are confronted with two issues, one being the extent to which the own culture should be maintained, and the other issue being the extent to which on should become involved in other cultural groups (Berry, 1997). Recalling the example of Verkuyten (1997), where the minority group of Turkish participants seemed to seek finding a balance between maintaining own ethnic values and adapting to the Dutch majority group, parallels can be drawn.

Berry (1997) offers four adaptation strategies of which two are relevant for the present study: maintenance of the own culture while avoiding interaction *(separation),* and maintaining the ethnic culture while also becoming a part of the culture of the majority group *(integration)*

(Berry, 1997; Stephenson, 2000). Ethnic minority groups show specific preferences when it comes to these strategies of acculturation, as this is demonstrated by Dovidio, Gaertner and Saguy (2007), who argued that minorities prefer strategies that ensure appreciation of the own cultural values while adapting to the majority, therefore being aware of cultural differences in order to ensure that own cultural values are respected, becomes a necessity. It has already been pointed out that intergroup contact may increase awareness of differences between groups. Therefore, as a second hypothesis, it is expected that the more intergroup contact is experienced, the more a minority group shows an increased tendency towards maintaining values from her own culture, hence will display separatist tendencies. This does not mean though that the minority group is expected to eventually separate itself from the majority completely. As intergroup contact decreases, it is expected that both culture maintenance as well as integration into the majority's culture can be observed to comparable extent.

The present research

The present research investigates the minority perceptions of German students at the University of Twente in the Netherlands. As already indicated, German immigrants are part of the constant flow of immigrants towards the Netherlands and German students represent a part of this group. In 2013, there were in total 9545 students enrolled at the University of Twente (including Bachelor and Master students). German students (including Bachelor, Master and Pre-master students) constituted 14,8% of all enrolled students (University of Twente, 2013). Due to the short distance to the home country, it is expected that German students travel back to their home country occasionally, which means that the amount of intergroup contact will vary frequently. The present research seeks to investigate the consequences of intergroup contact on minority perceptions, and therefore, German participants are asked to complete a survey where they are asked to give an indication of how often they travel back to Germany. Subsequently, perceptions of group power, group size and group status are measured on Likert-scales as well as the extent to which Germans are integrated in Dutch society. Afterwards, scores on the minority perception scales and cultural maintenance scales will be compared between participants engaging in low intergroup contact, and participants engaging in high intergroup contact.

Based on the given literature study, the expectations about outcomes of the current research context would be: a low frequency of visits to Germany is associated with lower scores on perceived Group Power, Group Status and Group size, since this means an increase in contact with the Dutch majority as more time is spent in the Netherlands. In other words, the more time German participants spend in the Netherlands, the more they tend to perceive their group as powerless, low in status and as smaller than the majority group (Dutch). Being in contact with the Dutch majority is furthermore assumed to be associated with an increased tendency to maintain the own cultural values and a decreased tendency to adapt to the Dutch majority.

Method

Participants

In total, 64 students of the University of Twente have completed the survey. As the study sought to investigate the identification of German students as a minority, two Dutch

participants had to be excluded from further analysis. This also had to be done due to the fact that the participants had to elaborate on their relations with the majority group, which in this case, was the group of the Dutch. Another participant described his / her nationality also as not-German but considered himself a part of German community. This participant was also not a member of the majority group so that it seemed feasible to include the participant in further analysis. Two other participants who had not completed the survey and were considered dropouts were also removed. As a result, further analysis involved 60 participants. There was a clear majority of female respondents (75%). There was also a clear majority (85.2%) of psychology students (Communication Sciences = 8.4%, European Studies = 1,7%, Industrial Design Engineering = 1,6%, Integrale Veiligheidskunde = 1,7%, Business Administration = 1,7%, Technische Natuurkunde = 1,7%). Among all participants, there were 98.3% German, and 1,7% of other nationality. The majority (71.8%) of the participants currently lives in the Netherlands (Germany = 26.9%). The frequency of visits to Germany varied evenly from less than once a month (23, 3%), to once a month (21.7%), two to three times a month (16.7%), once a week (10%), two to three times a week (1.7%), to daily (25%).

Measures

Intergroup Contact. The demographic variable for the frequency of visits to Germany was used to establish a measure for intergroup contact, as it was assumed that participants who would visit Germany less often, would be exposed to more intergroup contact with members of the majority group. It was decided to use an indirect measure to limit social desirability bias, where participants tend to indicate more contact with Dutch residents in order to appear, for instance, more sociable (Paulhus, 2002). On a 6 point Likert scale (1 = Less than once a month to 6 = Daily), participants were asked to indicate how often they would go to visit their home country. The lower they scored on this item, the more intergroup contact with the majority group was assumed. Further analysis made use of a differentiation between daily visits and occasional visits in order to better examine differences between low intergroup contact (= daily visits to Germany) and high intergroup contact (= occasional visits to Germany).

Figure 2. Operationalization frequency of visits to Germany *(N=59)* into intergroup contact *(N = 59)*
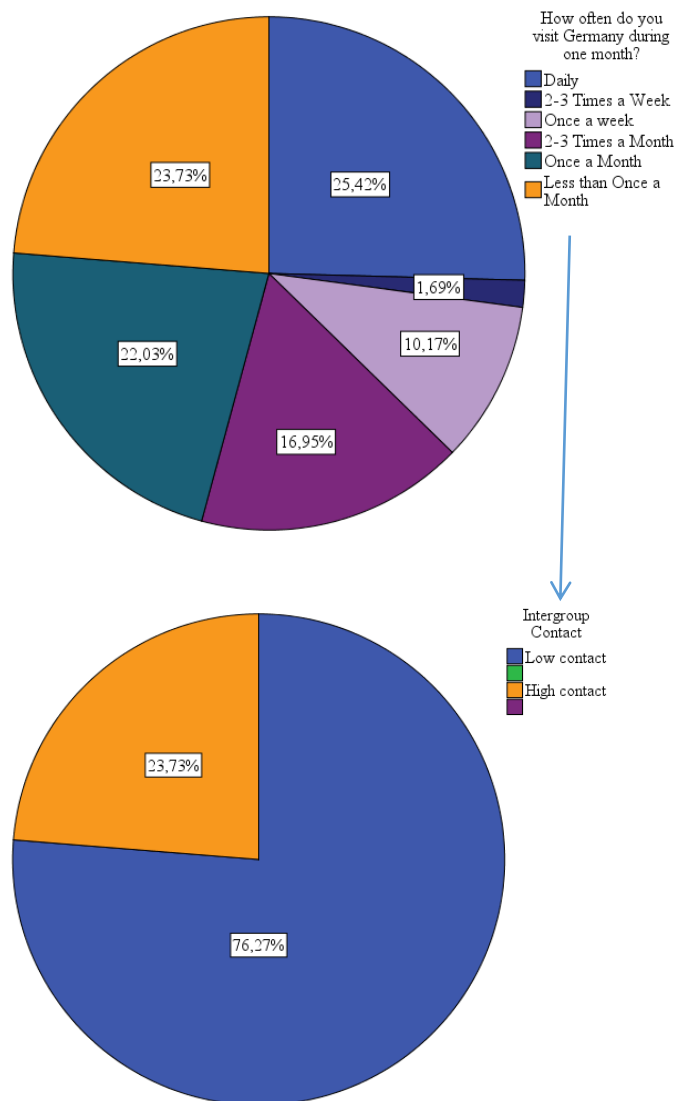

Perceived group power. Questions concerning group power were based on items from earlier research, where those items had been used as manipulation checks (Lücken & Simon, 2005) and had proven to be valid measurements. Example of the items are "To what extent do you agree that German students can influence policies of the University of Twente to their benefit?" or "To what extent do you agree that you are in control over group projects when working with Dutch students.". Items on this scale were to be rated by participants on a 7 point Likert-scale (1 = completely agree to 7 = completely disagree). A confirmative factor analysis confirmed that all four items loaded on one factor explaining 48% of the variance. The factor

was labelled Group Power. Reliability of Group Power was good after removing one item (GP3: "To what extent do you agree that the influence of Dutch students on study-related policies is obvious."), Cronbach's α = .70. Further analysis made used of a mean score based on the scores on all three items.

Perceived group status. Four tems were formulated based on the general definition provided by Tajfel and Turner (1986), Sachdev and Bourhis (1991), and Kamans, Otten, Gordijn, Spears, and Livingstone (2009), measuring the group's status in terms of its general reputation. Example of the items are "There is not much respect for German students.", or "As a German, I feel welcome by Dutch students.". Based on principle component analysis, one factor could be extracted from the four items of the scale showing acceptable Eigenvalues > 1.00, explaining 59% of the variance. Again, varimax rotation could not be applied because only one factor could have been extracted which was named Group Status. There was strong support for reliability of Group Status, Cronbach's α = .76. Again, a mean score was computed based on the score on all four items.

Perceived group size. It is important to note that none of the offered options reflected the actual distribution of Dutch and German students, as the aim was to examine the perception of the participants regardless of its correctness. Configuration of this item built on research by Lücken and Simon (2005), who had asked participants to recall the ratio of their own group compared to another group of participants. In the present research, participants were offered five graphics, each depicting a pie chart with a made up distribution of German and Dutch students at the University of Twente, without percentages displayed.

Figure 2. Perceived Group Size Scale
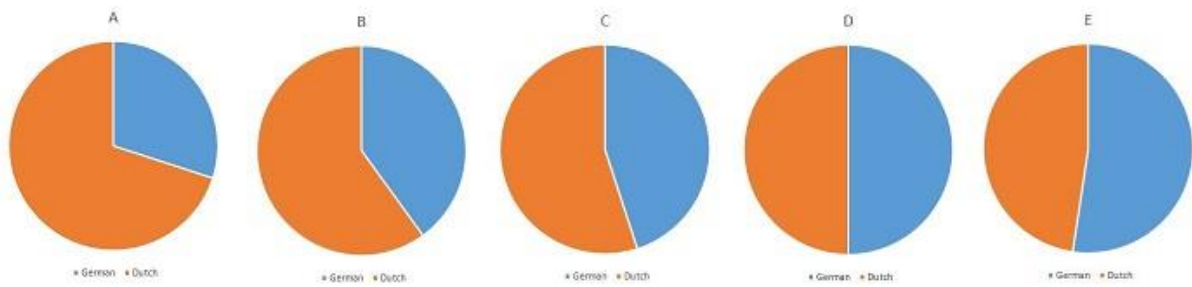
Figure 2. One of the five graphic depictions to choose from to indicate how the distribution of Dutch and German students at the University of Twente is personally perceived.

Culture maintenance. All 29 items had been extracted from the Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale (SMAS), a 31-item tool to measure common processes among different cultures that tend to occur with acculturation. The four items that had not been included in the present research primarily focused on language skill of the native language. In the present research context concentrated on the extent to which German participants maintained their own culture, whereas language skill did not appear relevant for this measure. SMAS measures the extent of immersion in dominant (MM) and ethnic (ESI) societies on two subscales (Stephenson, 2000). Evaluating the scale, Stephenson (2000) had found strong support for its overall reliability (Cronbach's alpha: .86) and subscales' reliabilities, MM (Cronbach's alpha:.97) and ESI (Cronbach's alpha: .90) with inter item correlations ranging from .51 to .87 for MM and .57. to .83 for ESI. In the current research, the construction of the subscales was based on the wording of the items, so that all items containing notions of the German culture belonged to the ESI-scale, whereas items containing notions of the Dutch culture belonged to the DSI-scale. This goes in hand with the approach of Stephenson (2000), who had also used this approach to define the two subscales. The wording of the items was adapted to the context of the participants of the present research by changing the original "native" to "German" and "American" to "Dutch". As repeatedly announced, the present research focused on culture maintenance and involvement with the majority, scales were named according to the description of adaptation processes, offered by Berry (1997). MM was therefore renamed to *majority involvement* (MI), and ESI was renamed to *minority maintenance* (MM). Examples for items of the MI scale were therefore "I understand Dutch, but I am not fluent in Dutch.", "I am informed about current affairs in the Netherlands.", "I feel at home in the Netherlands.".

Examples for items of the MM scale were "I feel comfortable speaking German.", "I am informed about current affairs in Germany.", "I eat traditional foods from Germany.". Items on both MI and MM were to be rated by the participants on a 7 point Likert-scale (1 = completely agree to 7 = completely disagree). The reliabilities of each of the scales ranged from very good to mediocre. For MM, reliability could be strongly supported with Cronbach's α = .83 whereas MI showed acceptable support for reliability, Cronbach's α = .69, yielding comparable reliabilities as established in Stephenson (2000). This provided a strong argument for using these scales as well in current research. Main scores for MI and MM respectively were computed for further analysis.

Materials

Online survey. The survey had been configured at www.qualtrics.com. and had been made accessible through clicking on a link that had been distributed via the Social Media platform *Facebook*. The survey was available in English and consisted of 38 multiple choice items, of which four items measured perceived group status, another four measuring perceived group power, one measuring perceived group size. All items had been customized to the participant's context, being a German student at the University of Twente. The survey also included questions about demographic information, such as gender, nationality, study, frequency of visits to Germany, current place of residence, etc. "Nationality" also served as a control question to provide an option for later analysis to include German students only.

Procedure

German participants were approached on the social media platform *Facebook* and were provided with a link to the survey, which they could choose to follow at any time. The survey was introduced with an on-screen text including general information about the general purpose of the study, but also withheld that German participants were considered a minority group and that the purpose of the study was to investigate the identification processes concerning this matter. In the same text participants were also informed about the handling of their data (anonymity and no further distribution to third parties) and of their freedom to cancel their participation at any time. After reading this general description of the study, participants were asked to give their informed consent. Once they agreed to the informed consent form by choosing the provided option "I agree", they were forwarded to the beginning of the actual survey on the next screen. Participants were first asked to answer the demographic questions, then questions about perceived group power, group status and group size followed. Thereafter,

participants answered the questions on culture maintenance. Once they had answered the last question of culture maintenance, a last screen containing the debriefing was displayed, which marked the end of the survey. Participants could choose to request a final report of this research, providing their email address.

Results

For all variables used in the analyses, mean scores, standard deviations and correlations analyses were computed. Table 1 provides a full overview of all used variables and their values. In the following, a short overview over the mean scores on the scales will be provided and the distribution of the scores will be discussed. Afterwards, results for each of the hypotheses will be discussed separately.

Minority perceptions

Group Power. On average, all participants tended to rate the power of their own group relatively high ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.1$) on a 7 point Likert scale. This was regardless of the extent to which participants had high or low intergroup contact.

Group Status. On average, all participants tended to rate the reputation of their group in terms of group status as relatively high (M = 4.19, SD = .83) on a 7 point Likert scale. This score applied to the total sample of participants (thus, regardless of the extent to which intergroup contact was kept).

Group Size. Compared to scores on the scales for group power and group status, it is noticeable that participants on average (regardless of intergroup contact was high or low) tended to rate their own group size as small on a 7 point Likert scale, as indicated by the relatively low mean score ($M = 2.12$, $SD = 1.38$).

Culture Maintenance

Majority Integration (MI). On average, participants' score on the 7 point Likert scale for majority integration was medium to low (M = 3.83, SD = .95).

Minority Maintenance (MM). On average, participants' score on the 7 point Likert scale was low (M = 2.76, SD = .68).

Table 1: Summary of means, standard deviations and correlations for all variables used in the analyses (N = 59)

	M	*SD*	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Intergroup contact	*1.23*	*.42*	-	-.136 (-.204)	.001 (.045)	.069 (.037)	-.258* (-.226)	.543** (.474*)
2. Group Size	*2,12*	*1,38*		-	-,017 (-,078)	-,183 (-,224)	,031 (,073)	,022 (-,033)
3. Group Status	*4,19*	*,83*			-	-,006 (,001)	-,024 (-,034)	-,015 (-,025)
4. Group Power	*4,68*	*1,1*				-	-,177 (-,143)	,154 (,092)
5. MI	*3,83*	*,95*					-	-,540** (-,525**)
6. MM	*2,76*	*,68*						-

NOTE: correlations of non-parametric test *Spearman's rho* are displayed within brackets.
* p < .01, ** p < .05

Tests of normality. In order to identify appropriate tests for hypothesis testing, all variables were tested for normality, using the measurement of Kolmogorov-Smirnov. Non-Normality was confirmed for Frequency visits home country ($D(59) =.193$, (59), *p<.001)*, perceived group size ($D(59) =.266$, *p<.001*) and perceived group power ($D(59) =.194$, *p<.001*). Normality was confirmed for perceived group status ($D(59) =.103$, *p =.189*) and both subscales of culture maintenance, MM ($D(59) =.050$, *p =.200*) and MI ($D(59) =.089$, *p=.200*). Facing both normality and non-normality among the variables, it was decided to run correlation analyses using both non parametric and parametric tests, in order to examine if there were any larger differences in the value. It is argued that, according to the central limit theorem, normal distribution of the samples will eventually be achieved once the sample is large enough (Field, 2009).

Hypothesis 1: Increased intergroup contact leads to an increased perception of the own group as a minority compared to low perceived minority perception, when intergroup contact is also low

The first hypothesis sought to investigate if participants' perception of their own group as minority in terms of group power, group status and group size was affected by intergroup contact. First analyses examined the strength of each of the relationships between intergroup contact and group power, group scale and group size. Secondly, three independent samples t-tests were conducted to test whether participants who had displayed high intergroup contact,

scored lower on group power, group status and group size than participants who displayed low intergroup contact. The next sections will discuss the results of correlation tests and conducted t-tests in each an own section for group power, group status and group size.

Group Power. There was no significant relationship between intergroup contact and group power, $r = .069$, $p = .606$ (Spearman's rho, $r_s = .037$, $p = .783$). Contrary to what was expected, participants displaying high intergroup contact did not score higher on group power ($M = 4.81$, $SE = .83$) than participants displaying low intergroup contact ($M = 4.64$, $SE = 1.15$). The difference between the means of the samples of high and low intergroup contact in terms of group power was not significant, $t(57) = -.52$, $p = .606$). This means that participants evaluated their group in terms of group power equally regardless of high or low intergroup contact.

Group Status. There was also a non-significant relationship between intergroup contact and group status, $r = .001$, $p = .994$ (Spearman's rho, $r_s = .045$, $p = .737$). On average, participants who displayed high intergroup contact scored almost equally on group status ($M = 4.19$, $SE = .83$) as participants who displayed low intergroup contact ($M = 4.19$, $SE = .87$). The difference between the means of the samples of high and low intergroup contact on group status was therefore also not significant, $t(57) = -.008$, $p = .994$.

Group Size. There was also no significant relationship between intergroup contact and group size, $r = -.136$, $p = .305$ (Spearman's rho, $r_s = -.204$, $p = .122$). In contrast to what was expected, participants who displayed high intergroup contact on average did not score lower on group size ($M = 1.79$, $SE = 1.48$) than participants who displayed low intergroup contact ($M = 2.22$, $SE = 1.35$). The difference between the means of the samples of high and low intergroup contact in terms of group size was not significant, $t(57) = 1.036$, $p = .305$.

In conclusion on the findings of the first hypothesis, it can be stated that participants' perceptions of their own group's power, status and size were not related to the amount of contact with the majority group.

Hypothesis 2: Intergroup contact and (1) integration in majority culture (MI) and (2) maintenance of own culture (MM)

According to the second hypothesis it was expected that participants who engage in high intergroup contact, would also display higher tendencies towards integration in the majority culture (MI) than participants who displayed low intergroup contact. It was assumed that

intergroup contact would go together with increased awareness of differences between the own and the host culture. Therefore it was also expected that maintenance of the own culture (MM) would be higher in participants who displayed high contact, than participants who displayed low contact. The next sections discuss the results of the analyses for MM and MI separately.

Majority Integration (MI). Intergroup contact was significantly correlated with MI, $r = -.258$, $p = .048$, when using a parametric test, but not significant when using the non-parametric test, Spearman's rho, $r_s = -.226$, $p = .085$. Further analysis of the main scores revealed that participants who displayed high intergroup contact scored on average lower on MI ($M = 3.40$, $SE = .1.01$) than participants who displayed low intergroup contact ($M = 3.96$, $SE = .89$), which went in opposition to what had been expected. The difference between the means of the samples of high and low intergroup contact in terms of MI was significant $t(57) = 2.016$, $p = .048$.

Minority maintenance (MM). There was a significant relationship between intergroup contact and MM, $r = .543$, $p < .01$ (Spearman's rho, $r_s = .474$, $p < .01$). Results of further analysis showed that participants who displayed high intergroup contact scored higher on MM ($M = 3.41$, $SE = .673$) than participants who displayed low intergroup contact ($M = 2.55$, $SE = .542$). This difference was significant, $t(57) = -4.88$, $p < .05$.

In conclusion, on the second hypothesis it can be stated that high intergroup contact with the majority can be associated with an increase of minority maintenance and a decrease of majority integration.

<center>**Discussion**</center>

The aim of the study was to examine the role of contact between ethnic minorities and majorities on the minority group's perceptions of the ingroup as a minority, and whether intergroup contact would enhance or inhibit the identification process of minority group members as minority in terms of culture maintenance. Building on notions by Hutnik (1991) and findings by Verkuyten (1997), the present research thereby attempted to put an emphasis on the balancing act of minorities in achieving an identity that reflected adaptation to the majority group while maintaining treasurable values of the own culture as well. It was therefore attempted to move beyond a simple differentiation between minority and majority by making use of the perceived group power, size and status of the minority group as well as their preferences on adapting to the majority. In contradiction to earlier research about Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954) and Common Ingroup Identity (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000), the present research assumed that intergroup contact would enhance minority perceptions, as well as leading to an increased maintenance of the own ethnic culture, which would indicate an enhanced identification with one's own ethnic group. The current research involved German students of the University of Twente in the Netherlands as they can be referred to as Western immigrants, and earlier research had merely involved non-Western immigrants (e.g. Verkuyten, 1997). Results of the analyses were in partial alignment with expectations. In the following sections, the results of the hypotheses will be discussed separately. In closing, practical implications, limitations of the study and implications for future research will be given.

Intergroup contact and minority perceptions

It was assumed that intergroup contact with the Dutch majority group would enhance minority perceptions of the German minority group due to confrontation with cultural differences. This was not the case. German students did not perceive their own group as a minority significantly different as the amount of contact with Dutch students varied. Therefore, the assumption that intergroup contact would increase intergroup comparisons by raising the awareness of differences, could not be confirmed.

Viewed separately from intergroup contact, German participants in general however perceived their own group as small in numerical terms, whereas group status, group power were perceived as relatively high. This finding goes in line with the example of South Africa in Sachdev and Bourhis (1991), which demonstrates that minorities in terms of smaller numerical do not necessarily can be considered to inhabit a lower position in terms of group status or

group power as well. The perceptions within minority perceptions thus contradicted, which was not expected in the present research and could thus be not explained by linking minority perceptions with intergroup contact. The link between group size and group power and group status respectively therefore remains ambiguous and considering the perception of a smaller group size, it is advised to look for further factors that can explain the observed contradictions within minority perceptions. For instance, the present research investigated the relation between minority perceptions and intergroup contact in general. According to the Contact Hypothesis by Allport (1954), intergroup contact must occur under certain circumstances to successfully decrease intergroup bias. Future research could therefore focus on identifying the specific circumstances under which minority perceptions change, so that models such as the Common Ingroup Identity Model could include precautions to ensure intergroup harmony. There are some side notes on the methodology for the assessment of minority perception as well. All three scales of minority perceptions consisted of a limited number of items so that only a rough overview could be provided whereas more items probably would have led towards a more nuanced image of how group power, group status and group size were perceived. Due to non-significance of the results, the present research concludes that there is not enough evidence to link high intergroup contact with a raised awareness of being a minority. Residing daily or only occasionally in the Netherlands made participants not more aware of differences between the own culture and the host culture, neither did it provide an insight to the perception of the minority group in terms of group power, group status and group size.

Intergroup contact and adaptation to the majority

Intergroup contact was hypothesized to increase maintenance of the own ethnic culture and a decrease of adaptation to the majority, which would indicate an enhanced identification with one's own ethnic group that could be caused by enhanced awareness of the differences between the own group and the majority group. The results of the current research confirmed this expectations. Contact with the Dutch majority group could therefore be associated with increased attempts of the German minority to maintain the own ethnic culture. On the same note, intergroup contact could also be linked to decreased attempts to adapt to the Dutch majority. This finding goes in hand with Dovidio, et al. (2007), who had found that minority groups showed preferences towards integration, as this allowed them to maintain values of the own culture but also confirms findings of Saguy et al. (2008) who found that minority groups preferred to discuss group differences over discussing group commonalities, when being made aware of group differences. This finding also strengthens the implications for future research

from the first hypothesis, as it clearly indicates that intergroup contact does not necessarily imply intergroup harmony since minorities may feel the need to refrain from further adaptation to the majority to maintain important cultural values that play a significant role in defining an identity. In the context of the current research, increased intergroup contact seemed to have a rather negative effect on Germans' attempt to adapt to the Dutch majority, as being demonstrated through increased minority maintenance and decreased majority integration. Concrete causal relationships do need to be specified though and it is therefore feasible to stress that optimal circumstances for intergroup contact need to be specified to ensure intergroup harmony, as stated in the Contact Hypothesis by Allport (1954).

Limitations and implications for future research

Although significant differences between high and low intergroup contact could be observed, the methodology of the research might diminish the generalizability of these results. One of the main issues was the lack of a direct variable to indicate group contact with the majority of the group. Based on the frequency of visits to the home country it was assumed that participants (German students) would have more contact with the majority group (Dutch student), but this does not need to be necessarily the case. It was not further specified to whom those participants, who had indicated to visit their home country less often, had contact, so that German students could not fully get cued to reflect on their contact with Dutch students in cases where no contact with Dutch students was available to reflect on. Future research should let participants therefore specify precisely the kind of groups they would have contact with. This can be done by a simple multiple choice question where participants indicate if they have regular contact with Dutch acquaintances, for instance by asking "How regularly do you have contact with other Dutch students." and again providing a Likert-scale with options such as "Everyday", "Occasionally", "Never". In order to provide a reference frame, future research could also involve members of other minority groups, so that the strength of relationships between intergroup contact and minority perceptions can be compared across different minority groups, while also taking into account cultural specific differences.

The present research can conclude that intergroup contact does not seem to have a role in the minority perceptions. Intergroup contact could be linked though with the extent to which minority members attempt to adapt to the majority or to maintain their own values. The present research concludes that intergroup contact might consist of many facets of which the effects on

minority perceptions are yet to be discovered. The same notion applies to minority perception, where relationships between group size with group status and group power remain complex.

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