

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Influence of Acculturation Strategies on the Judgment of a Violent Act Committed by a North African Woman

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The aim of this research was to examine how judgment of an aggressive act committed by a North African immigrant woman was influenced by the perpetrator's acculturation strategies and the participants' level of social dominance orientation (SDO). Two hundred seven students read a scenario describing a physical assault committed by a North African woman. She was described as having one of four acculturation profiles (assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization). The consequences of the assault were manipulated (low impact vs. high impact). Participants judged both the act and its perpetrator on different dimensions. When the aggressor had not adopted French culture and/or had maintained her original culture, the offense was explained by internal causes and was judged more severely, and the offender was judged more negatively and was perceived as having more masculine characteristics than in the other conditions. These results were particularly true for participants with a high level of SDO. SDO level also affected how participants rated the feminine characteristics of the offender. The acculturation strategy adopted by the aggressor as a factor not directly related to the act and SDO level played a crucial role in the way participants judged a North African woman carrying out a physical assault. The implications and issues of this study are discussed.

Keywords: physical assault; acculturation strategies; judgments; North African woman; social dominance orientation

In a judicial context or in everyday life, different factors are taken into consideration when judging a criminal act and a perpetrator. Two categories of factors can be observed: judicial factors (directly related to the offense, such as the nature of the crime or the consequences for the victim) and extrajudicial factors (with no direct link to the crime, such as the sex of the victim or the offender's age) (Sabatier & Schadron, 2010). Among these factors, the ethnic origin of the perpetrator and the relationship between his/her original culture and the host culture can have an influence on the judgments.

In the present study, we investigated the judgments made against a North African woman who carried out a proven aggressive act against a French woman. More specifically, we simultaneously examined how judgments of a criminal act and of the woman who committed it were influenced by the latter's relationship with France (acculturation strategies).

Women and crime

The French National Crime Monitoring Board reported that between 2008 and 2013, the number of intentional physical assaults committed by women increased by 0.8%, while the number committed by men decreased by 0.9% (Le Graët, 2014). These statistics demonstrate that women can commit acts of violence against others. Nevertheless, the idea that a woman could be the perpetrator of a physical assault is not widely accepted (Burricand & Grobon, 2015). Aggressiveness is associated more with male stereotypes, while gentleness is associated with female stereotypes (Bem, 1984; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Mateo & Fernandez, 1991). In view of the strong prescriptive and proscriptive value of gender stereotypes (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Prentice & Carranza, 2002), a woman who commits a physical assault infringes the stereotyped norm.

Moreover, gender stereotypes have a strong influence on court judgments (Lelièvre & Léonard, 2012). The proportion of women sentenced by the courts is lower than that of men, and they are not given the same sentences for similar criminal acts (Blatier, 2002). In judicial cases, it would appear that women are entitled to a more lenient judgment than men. Indeed, some authors have shown that the involvement of women in criminal cases is often considered as secondary, in other words, that they did not initiate the offense (Duprez & Kokorff, 2000). According to the "Subtyping theory" (Richards & Hewstone, 2001), a

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woman who commits a physical assault can be considered as the exception that proves the rule. Such an act is seen as being more typical of men than of women.

One category of women seems to be particularly prone to stereotyping, namely women from Middle Eastern and traditional cultures (Hofstede, 1980). For instance, North African women are often considered as dependent, dominated by their husbands, and forced to look after the home (Boukhobza, 2005; Guénif-Souilamas, 2000). Nader (2006) explains how westerners use the subordination of women as a moral reference to establish the domination of the western world over the Orient. Thus a North African woman could be judged more feminine if she responds to this subordination fuelled by stereotypes relative to her original culture than if she identifies with western women. We can observe that immigrant women are overrepresented in jobs that are associated mainly with women (Durand-Delvigne, Castel & Boza, 2017). Thus, ethnic origin is another factor that may affect how a woman is perceived in relation to a criminal act and how she conforms to the stereotype.

Ethnicity and acculturation strategies

Many studies in North America have highlighted the central role of ethnic and racial origin in the way criminal acts and their perpetrators are judged (Beaton, Dovidio & LeBlanc, 2011; Calverley, 2010). In France, people from Northern Africa have been the subject of prejudices and stigmatization for decades, and they are commonly associated with criminal behavior (Mucchielli, 2003; Sorel-Sutter, 2011). A defendant who is categorized as foreign because of his skin color, his physique, or his name will be judged more severely and will be given a harsher sentence than one who is not categorized as such (Calverley, 2010). There is a positive correlation between the ethnic dissimilarity between jury and accused and the severity of the sentence (Chadee, 1996). Moreover, when the perpetrator of a criminal offense belongs to a social group with a negative stereotype, the jurors seem to give priority to explanatory factors related to personality (internal) rather than to the situation (external). The gravity of the act is thus accentuated, as the defendant is unable to benefit from extenuating circumstances (Jones & Kaplan, 2003).

Factors that may affect perceived similarity/dissimilarity between the judge and the perpetrator include acculturation strategies. Acculturation is defined as the set of adjustment processes resulting from the confrontation of socialized groups from different cultures, which generates upheavals and changes in both groups (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936). Berry (2005) developed a two-dimensional model, which postulates that immigrants evolve in two distinct ways: first, maintenance of the cultural traditions of their home country, and secondly, a wish to establish relationships with the host group and adopt the host culture. Based on this model, four acculturation strategies can be identified: (1) assimilation, whereby the individual gives up his/her own cultural identity and adopts the host culture; (2) integration, whereby the individual maintains his/her own cultural identity and adopts the host culture; (3) separation, whereby the individual maintains his/her own cultural

identity and refuses to adopt the host culture; and finally, (4) marginalization, whereby the individual rejects both his/her own cultural origins and the host culture (Berry, Kim, Power, Young & Bujaki, 1989). Subsequently Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault and Sénécal (1997) stressed the importance of the expectations of the host population, as these could influence the way in which the immigrant integrates; the relations between the two groups thus depend on this interaction. Studies on the influence of acculturation strategies have shown that the way the host population judges an immigrant depends on the latter's acculturation strategy (Maisonneuve & Testé, 2007). Thus, a number of studies have shown that when immigrants adopt the culture of the host country, in other words, when they adopt a strategy of assimilation or integration, they are judged more positively by members of the host country than if they maintain their heritage culture (Maisonneuve & Testé, 2007; Maisonneuve, Testé, Taillandier-Schmitt & Dambun, 2014).

Successful integration in France involves adoption of French culture (Guimond, 2010). Thus, an immigrant offender can be expected to benefit from a more lenient judgment if he adopts French culture than if he does not. However, the characteristics of the offender are not the only factors involved when making a judgment; the characteristics of the person making the judgment, particularly regarding their ideological orientation, also play a role (Fosterlee, Horowitz, Fosterlee, King & Ronlund, 1999). Thus, Mahfud, Badea and N'Gbala (2015) found that ideological orientation influenced the perception of cultural distance with the immigrant, involving a greater or lesser degree of prejudice. To investigate the extent to which acculturation strategy affects the judgment of an offender belonging to an outgroup and the perception of cultural distance, we examined the role of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO).

Social Dominance Orientation

Noting the pervasiveness of prejudices and oppression between groups, Sidanius and Pratto (1999) developed the Social Dominance Theory, which summarizes previous theories about intergroup relations. The authors postulated that societies minimize intergroup conflicts by creating consensus on ideologies that promote the superiority of one group over the others. Based on this theory, they created the Social Dominance Orientation scale (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth & Malle, 1994). This tool measures the general orientation of individuals towards intergroup relations, reflecting a preference for either egalitarian or hierarchical relationships. SDO constitutes the strongest predictor of intergroup attitudes and behaviors (Ho & al., 2012). Recent studies have also found correlations between acculturation strategies and SDO (Levin & al., 2012). Thus it can be assumed that, in contrast to individuals who want egalitarian relations between groups (low SDO level), individuals who wish to maintain hierarchical relations between groups (high SDO level) will be particularly inclined to reject a member of the outgroup if he/she is accused of an offense, passing a more negative judgment and proposing a more severe sanction. In certain media or sometimes in political debates in France, criminal behavior tends to be asso-

ciated systematically with immigrants, particularly those from North Africa (Mucchielli, 2003). A study in France has shown that participants consider an aggressive act committed by a man of North African origin to be less serious and judge the person less severely when he adopts French culture than when he does not (Taillandier-Schmitt & Combalbert, 2017). Moreover, participants with a high SDO level judged him more harshly and attributed the act to his personality rather than to the context. In view of these studies and the work of the French Crime Monitoring Board, which revealed an increase in the percentage of women committing offenses involving physical harm – in contrast to the female stereotype – it seems essential to gain a better understanding of the effects of the acculturation strategy adopted by these offenders on the way both the act and the perpetrator are judged, and on how the act is explained. More specifically, this study, involving a lay student population, examines the effects of three factors: 1) the influence of the consequences of the act (low or high impact) on the victim (factual variable), 2) the influence of the perpetrator's acculturation strategy (assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization), 3) the influence of the participants' SDO level on how they evaluate the severity of the act, how they explain the act, and how they judge the aggressor.

Hypotheses

We assumed that the consequences of the assault on the victim would influence the way the participants judged both the act and its perpetrator. Thus, when the act has minimal consequences, it will be judged less harshly, it will be explained externally, and the perpetrator will be judged more positively and as being less violent, with fewer masculine traits, than when the act has serious consequences for the victim (H1).

The acculturation strategy adopted by a North African woman who commits an assault will influence the participants' judgment of the act and the aggressor. Thus, when the woman is described as having adopted the culture of the host country (assimilation or integration strategy), she will be judged less severely and the act will be explained externally, compared to a situation where she is described as not having adopted French culture (separation or marginalization profile) (H2).

This effect of adopting the culture of the host country would be particularly observed among participants with a high SDO level (H3).

The way the participants judge the offense and its perpetrator would vary according to their SDO level. Thus, participants with higher levels of social dominance orientation will judge the act and its perpetrator more severely and negatively, and will show a greater tendency to explain the act internally (H4).

The acculturation strategy adopted by a North African woman involved in a physical attack would influence the perception of her masculine and feminine characteristics. Thus, when she maintains her original culture (integration or separation), she will be described as being more feminine than if she adopts a different acculturation strategy (assimilation or marginalization) (H5).

Method

Participants

Two hundred seven students (123 women and 84 men), aged 17 to 42 ($M = 20.79$; $SD = 3.15$), participated in the study. They were recruited from the university libraries of two French Tours et Blois and were French nationals. They had different academic backgrounds: psychology (23%), law (20%), medicine and pharmacy (11%), biology and science (13%), arts and humanities (13%), management and economy (8%), engineering (9%), geography (2%), and languages (1%). The participants were free to refuse to participate. Those who agreed to participate were informed that the theme of the study was "Judgment and Responsibilities".

Material and procedures

The experimental design of the study was 2 (consequences of the act: low/high impact) \times 4 (acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, marginalization). The variables were manipulated through scenarios, and the participants were randomly assigned to eight experimental conditions.

First, the scenarios described an altercation in which a woman called Jamila physically assaulted another woman (Valérie). The consequences of the assault were manipulated: in the first condition (1), the victim managed to run away (low impact); in the second condition (2), the victim was knocked unconscious (high impact) (Appendix I). Next, participants were given a description of Jamila L. based on one of the four acculturation strategies (Maisonneuve & Testé, 2007): (1) she had adopted French culture and had not maintained her original culture (assimilation); (2) she had adopted French culture and maintained her original culture (integration); (3) she had maintained her original culture and rejected French culture (separation); and (4) she had not maintained her original culture or adopted French culture (marginalization)¹ (Appendix II).

Measures

After reading the scenario, the participants were asked to respond to the different items of the questionnaire using 7-point Likert scales.

Judgment measures

Judgment of the act. The participants rated the act in terms of its seriousness and the severity of the sentence that should be given, on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Extremely/Totally). Five dimensions were assessed (seriousness of the act, legitimacy of the sanction, severity of the sentence, conditional imprisonment). The notions of imprisonment and conditional sentences were explained to the participants.

Explanation of the behavior. The participants indicated whether they attributed the criminal behavior to the person (internal factor) or to the context (external factor). We calculated an internality score: score assigned to the person – score assigned to the context. Thus, higher scores indicated greater use of an internal explanation to account for the act; lower scores indicated greater use of

an external explanation. The participants also had to indicate to what extent (from 1 = Not at all, to 7 = Absolutely) they took into account aggravating and extenuating circumstances (“In your opinion, can Jamila L. benefit from extenuating circumstances?”, “In your opinion, are there any aggravating circumstances?”). The notions of extenuating and aggravating circumstances were explained to the participants.

Judgment of the perpetrator. Participants judged the aggressor on several dimensions. First, they judged her guilt by answering yes or no (“In your opinion, is Jamila guilty of the act of which she is accused?”) and indicated the level of certainty of their answer on a 7-point scale. We combined the two answers to obtain a judgment confidence score (Kassin & Wrightsman, 1981).

The participants were then asked to what extent they considered Jamila to be violent, dangerous and aggressive (from 1 = Not at all, to 7 = Absolutely). As these three items were positively correlated (*Cronbach's Alpha* = .89), we calculated a composite score. For convenience, we will use the term “violent” to refer to the composite score calculated from the three items (violent, dangerous, and aggressive), and not just to the item “violent”.

The participants also gave their general impression of Jamila on a scale of 1 (Very bad) to 7 (Very good).

Finally, they indicated the extent to which they thought the perpetrator presented a risk of re-offending. The risk of recidivism is usually related to personality traits rather than to contextual factors. In addition, it is positively correlated with the perceived violence ($r = .619, p = .001$) and negatively correlated with the general impression ($r = -.405, p = .0001$).

Attribution of masculine/feminine traits

The participants were asked to what extent certain traits characterized Jamila (e.g. “In your opinion, is Jamila authoritarian?”) on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Absolutely). There were six items related to gender stereotypes (Bem, 1984; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Mateo & Fernandez, 1991): three items related to masculine stereotypes (strong personality, makes decisions easily, authoritarian) and three to feminine stereotypes (emotional, sensitive to the needs of others, gentle). We calculated an overall score for the male dimension by removing the item “makes decisions easily”, which was weakly correlated to the others, keeping the items “strong personality” and “authoritarian” ($r = .43, p = .0001$). Similarly, for the feminine dimension, the item “emotional” was removed, and the inter-item correlation ($r = .447, p = .0001$) allowed the calculation of an overall score.

Social Dominance Orientation scale

The SDO was measured using a 10-item scale translated into French and adapted by Darte, Dambrun and Guimond (2004) from the work of Sidanius and Pratto (1999). High scores indicate preference for hierarchies between social groups and little concern for social equality. The items were positively correlated (*Cronbach's Alpha* = .84), and we calculated a composite score.

Results

To examine the respective effects of “retention of the original culture” and “adoption of the culture of the host country”, based on Berry's bi-dimensional model (1980, 2005), and in order to carry out our statistical analyses, the four acculturation strategies were recoded on two dimensions (retention and adoption). In this way, assimilation was recoded $-1/1$, integration $1/1$, separation $1/-1$, and marginalization $-1/-1$. Factorial regression analyses were conducted on all of our measurements in order to test the moderating effect of SDO (Cohen, Cohen West & Aiken, 2013). To this end, we first verified that the manipulated variables had no effect on the SDO level of the participants by conducting a 2 (retention) \times 2 (consequences of the act) ANOVA, taking the SDO level (composite score) as the dependent variable. No significant effects were observed. The factorial regression analyses were performed using a 2 (adoption of the French culture, coded $-1/+1$) \times 2 (retention of the original culture, coded $-1/+1$) \times 2 consequences (low, coded -1 , and high, coded $+1$) \times SDO (reduced centered) design.

Only significant results will be presented in this section.

Judgment of the act. The statistical analyses revealed no significant effect of the different variables on the seriousness of the act and of the conditional sentence measures. We calculated an overall score for the severity of the sanction from the items concerning the legitimacy of the sanction, severity of the sanction and unconditional imprisonment (*Cronbach's Alpha* = .71). It is important to point out that a prison sentence is seen by the public as the harshest form of punishment (Jobard & Névanen, 2007).

As expected, the analyses revealed a main effect of the consequences of the act on the measure of severity of the sanction (composite score), $F(1, 191) = 9.274, p = .003, \eta^2 = .05$. When the consequences were serious, the participants advocated a harsher sentence ($M = 4.079; SD = 1.126$) than when they were minimal ($M = 3.67; SD = 1.079$).

Contrary to our assumptions, no main effect of the adoption of the host culture or the SDO level of the participants was observed on judgment of the act. On the other hand, we observed different interaction effects between these variables.

An interaction effect between adoption of the French culture and retention of the original culture was observed on the measure of the sentence severity (composite score), $F(1, 191) = 7.931, p = .005, \eta^2 = .04$. The post-hoc comparisons (Fisher's LSD, $p < .01$) revealed that participants advocated a harsher sentence when Jamila had not adopted French culture and retained her original culture (separation strategy, $M = 4.22; SD = 1.015$) than when she adopted a strategy of integration ($M = 3.587; SD = 1.108$) or marginalization ($M = 3.686, SD = .984$) (**Table 1**).

The analysis revealed an interaction effect between participants' level of SDO and adoption of the host culture, $F(1, 191) = 5.832, p = .017, \eta^2 = .03$. To examine this interaction in greater depth, we conducted simple regression analyses for the “no adoption” and “adoption” conditions. The results show that the participants' level

Table 1: Means and standard deviations of measures related to retention of the original culture and adoption of French culture.

	No retention		Retention	
	No adoption (<i>marginalization</i>)	Adoption (<i>assimilation</i>)	No adoption (<i>separation</i>)	Adoption (<i>integration</i>)
Severity of the sentence	3.686 (0.984)	4.007 (1.267)	4.22 (1.015)	3.587 (1.108)
Aggravating circumstances	2.538 (1.863)	3.288 (1.672)	3.019 (2.094)	2.46 (1.541)
General impression	3.404 (1.142)	3.269 (1.206)	2.623 (1.259)	3.68 (0.87)
Perceived violence	3.923 (1.382)	4.199 (1.623)	4.856 (1.467)	4.027 (1.328)
Attribution of masculine traits	4.692 (1.358)	4.99 (1.258)	5.65 (1.112)	5.02 (1.06)

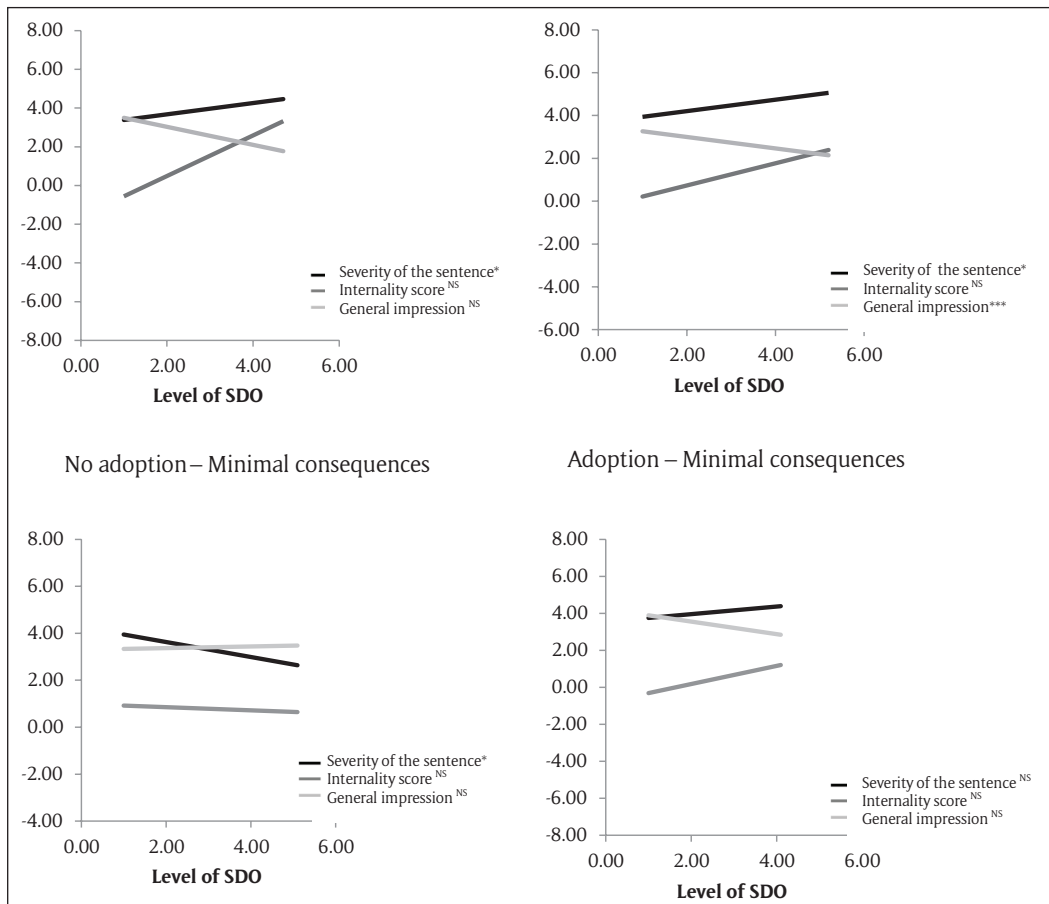


Figure 1: Interaction effects on participants' judgments, between level of SDO, consequences of the act and adoption of French culture.

of SDO positively predicted the severity of the sentence they recommended, $\beta = .25$, $t(103) = 2.62$, $p = .01$. In other words, when the aggressor had not adopted the host culture (separation and marginalization), participants with a high level of SDO were more likely to advocate a harsh sanction. SDO seemed to play a different role depending on whether Jamila did or did not adopt the host culture. This result is consistent with our hypothesis 3.

The analysis revealed an interaction effect between the participant's level of SDO, adoption of the host culture, and the consequences of the act, $F(1, 191) = 3.88$, $p = .05$,

$\eta^2 = .02$. To examine this interaction further, we conducted simple regression analyses for the "no adoption/minimal consequences", "no adoption/serious consequences", "adoption/minimal consequences" and "adoption/serious consequences" conditions. The results revealed that participants' level of SDO predicted positively the severity of the sanction for the "no adoption/minimal consequences" condition, $\beta = .30$, $t(47) = 2.18$, $p = .03$. Thus, when Jamila had not adopted French culture (separation and marginalization) and the consequences of the act were minimal, participants with higher SDO levels advocated a harsher sanction (Figure 1).

Explanation of the offense. Contrary to our hypotheses (H1 and H2), we observed no main effect of the consequences of the act or the “adoption” variable on the internality score, mitigating circumstances or aggravating circumstances. However, as expected (H4), we observed a main effect of participants’ level of SDO on the internality score, $F(1, 191) = 4.653, p = .032, \eta^2 = .02$. The participants with a higher level of SDO were more likely to explain the behavior on the grounds of internal causes (related to the person’s characteristics); by contrast, participants with lower levels of SDO were more likely to take the context into account. We observed an interaction between the adoption of French culture, the consequences of the act, and the level of SDO, $F(1, 191) = 4.604, p = .033, \eta^2 = .02$. To examine this interaction in more detail, we conducted simple regression analyses for the “no adoption/minimal consequences”, “no adoption/serious consequences”, “adoption/minimal consequences” and “adoption/serious consequences” conditions. The results revealed that the participants’ level of SDO positively predicted the internality score for the “no adoption/minimal consequences” condition, $\beta = .36, t(47) = 2.64, p = .01$. Thus, when Jamila had not adopted French culture (separation and marginalization), and the consequences of the act were minimal, the participants with higher levels of SDO were more likely to explain the act by internal reasons (**Figure 1**).

Regarding mitigating circumstances, an interaction effect was observed between retention of the original culture and the consequences of the act, $F(1, 191) = 4.25, p = .041, \eta^2 = .02$. The post-hoc test (Fisher’s LSD) revealed that when the consequences were serious, the participants allowed more mitigating circumstances when the aggressor had not retained her original culture ($M = 3.70; SD = 1.93$) than when she had ($M = 2.74; SD = 1.68, p = .007$).

Finally, regarding aggravating circumstances, we observed an interaction effect between retention and adoption, $F(1, 191) = 5.371, p = .022, \eta^2 = .03$. The post-hoc tests (Fisher’s LSD) revealed that when Jamila had adopted French culture, participants gave more weight to aggravating circumstances if she had not retained her original culture (assimilation, $M = 3.288; SD = 1.672$) than if she had (integration, $M = 2.46; SD = 1.541, p = .02$) (**Table 1**).

Judgment of the aggressor. No effect of the different variables on guilt was observed.

The analyses revealed several main effects in line with our hypotheses (H2 and H4). First, we observed a main effect of host culture adoption on the general impression, $F(1, 191) = 7.047, p = .009, \eta^2 = .04$; when Jamila had adopted French culture she was perceived more positively ($M = 3.47; SD = 1.07$) than when she had not ($M = 3.01; SD = 1.26$). There was also a main effect of participants’ level of SDO, $F(1, 191) = 8.76, p = .003, \eta^2 = .04$, a higher level of SDO leading to a more negative general impression. We also observed several interaction effects. First, between retention of the original culture and adoption of the host culture, $F(1, 191) = 14.366, p = .0002, \eta^2 = .07$; the

post-hoc analyses (Fisher’s LSD) revealed that when Jamila had retained her original culture she was perceived more positively if she had adopted French culture (integration, $M = 3.68; SD = .87$) than if she had not (separation, $M = 2.623; SD = 1.259, p < .0001$) (**Table 1**).

Secondly, there was an interaction effect between the consequences of the act, host culture adoption, and participants’ level of SDO, $F(1, 191) = 3.965, p = .048, \eta^2 = .02$. To examine this interaction further, we conducted simple regression analyses for the “no adoption/minimal consequences”, “no adoption/serious consequences”, “adoption/minimal consequences” and “adoption/serious consequences” conditions. The results revealed that level of SDO predicted negatively the general impression for the conditions of “no adoption/minimal consequences”, $\beta = -.345, t(47) = -2.519, p = .015$, and “adoption/serious consequences” $\beta = -.297, t(48) = 2.64, p = .01$ (**Figure 1**).

For perceived violence (composite score), the analyses revealed a main effect of participants’ level of SDO, $F(1, 191) = 8.847, p = .003, \eta^2 = .04$; participants with higher SDO levels were more likely to consider the aggressor to be violent. Moreover, we observed an interaction effect between retention of the original culture and adoption of French culture, $F(1, 191) = 6.863, p = .01, \eta^2 = .03$. The post-hoc analyses (Fisher’s LSD) revealed that when Jamila had not adopted French culture, she was perceived as being more violent if she had retained her original culture (separation, $M = 4.856; SD = 1.467$) than if she had not (marginalization, $M = 3.923; SD = 1.382, p < .005$) (**Table 1**).

Finally, regarding the risk of recidivism, we observed a main effect of retention of the original culture, $F(1, 191) = 3.93, p = .049, \eta^2 = .02$, and a main effect of adoption of French culture, $F(1, 191) = 13.224, p = .0004, \eta^2 = .06$. The participants considered that there was a higher risk of recidivism when the aggressor had retained her original culture ($M = 4.311; SD = 1.782$) than when she had not ($M = 3.788; SD = 1.862$). When she had not adopted French culture, the risk of recidivism was perceived as higher ($M = 4.505; SD = 1.887$) than when she had adopted it ($M = 3.578; SD = 1.668$). We also observed a main effect of participant’s level of SDO, $F(1, 191) = 3.90, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$; participants with higher levels of SDO were more likely to consider that there was a high risk of recidivism.

Attribution of masculine/feminine traits. With regard to masculine traits, the statistical analyses revealed a main effect of retention of the original culture (overall score), $F(1, 191) = 6.295, p = .013, \eta^2 = .03$. When Jamila was described as retaining her original culture, the participants saw her as having more masculine traits ($M = 5.345; SD = 1.129$) than when she was described as not retaining it ($M = 4.841; SD = 1.311$).

Our analyses highlighted an interaction effect between retention of the original culture and adoption of French culture, $F(1, 191) = 6.915, p = .009, \eta^2 = .03$. The post-hoc tests (Fisher’s LSD) revealed that when Jamila had not adopted French culture, the participants ascribed more masculine traits to her when she had retained her original

culture (separation, $M = 5.65$; $SD = 1.112$) than when she had not (marginalization, $M = 4.692$; $SD = 1.358$, $p = .009$) (Table 1).

With regard to feminine traits, we observed a main effect of level of SDO, $F(1, 191) = 8.575$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .04$; participants with high levels of SDO tended to perceive the perpetrator as less feminine ($\beta = -.198$, $t(205) = -2.886$, $p = .004$). However, this result should be seen in relation to the interaction effect between the consequences of the act and participants' level of SDO, $F(1, 191) = 7.262$, $p = .008$, $\eta^2 = .04$, which we observed when the consequences of the act were minimal ($\beta = -.373$, $t(99) = -3.997$, $p = .0001$). By contrast, when the consequences of the act were serious, the participants ascribed similar feminine traits to the aggressor, whatever their level of SDO ($p > .67$). Finally, we observed an interaction effect between the consequences of the act, retention of the original culture, and level of SDO, $F(1, 191) = 4.691$, $p = .0316$, $\eta^2 = .02$; in the condition where the aggressor had retained her original culture and the consequences were minimal, level of SDO predicted the femininity score negatively ($\beta = -.494$, $t(48) = -3.937$, $p = .0003$).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that may influence the way people judge a North African woman who carried out an aggressive act. We hypothesized that the type of acculturation strategy adopted by the aggressor, the consequences of the act on the victim, and the participants' level of social dominance orientation would influence the judgment of both the act and its perpetrator. Consistent with studies on the effect of acculturation strategies on judgments (Maisonneuve & Testé, 2007; Maisonneuve et al., 2014; Taillandier-Schmitt & Combalbert, 2017), our results are clearly in line with this general hypothesis.

The perpetrator's adoption/non-adoption of French culture and retention/non-retention of her original culture affected both the participants' judgments and their perceptions of the offender. More specifically, when the aggressor had not adopted French culture or had retained her original culture, the participants perceived the aggressor more negatively, saw a greater risk of recidivism, and advocated a harsher sanction. Furthermore, when the perpetrator adopted a separation strategy (retention without adoption), she was perceived more negatively, as being more violent, and was given a harsher sanction than when she adopted a different acculturation strategy. Moreover, the participants were more likely to allow the benefit of mitigating circumstances if the perpetrator had not retained her original culture, particularly if the consequences for the victim were serious.

North African people are strongly stigmatized in France (Mucchielli, 2003; Sorel-Sutter, 2011); the more a group is devalued, the more their members are perceived as a threat (López-Rodríguez, Zagefka, Navas & Cuadrado, 2014). Some studies have also found correlation between this sense of threat and acculturation orientations (Tip, Zagefka, González, Brown, Cinnirella & Na, 2012); for

instance, the majority population's preference for immigrants to adopt an assimilation strategy is linked to a high perceived sense of threat. In this study, a separation strategy could generate a stronger sense of threat than other acculturation strategies, explaining the more negative judgment in this condition. Furthermore, Mahfud, Badae, and N'Gbala (2015) found a link between perceived cultural distance and prejudice, especially for people from North and sub-Saharan Africa, regardless of the participant's ideological orientation. In this study, it might be considered that not endorsing French culture increases the perception of cultural distance, favouring a more negative judgment.

Another unexpected result deserves our full attention and shows that a separation strategy may not be the only strategy constituting a threat for the in-group. Indeed, when the consequences of the act were serious, the participants found more aggravating circumstances if the aggressor had adopted French culture and had not maintained her original culture (assimilation). This acculturation strategy could enable the migrant to become similar to the dominant group to the point of being part of it. As a perfectly assimilated person, she would somehow have "no excuse", and her behavior would tarnish the image of the group. This result is probably similar to the "black sheep" effect (Marques & Paez, 1994), whereby group members are more severe towards a member of the in-group in order to preserve a positive image of the group. However, this explanation should be treated with caution, because other results suggest that some participants did not consider Jamila as a member of the in-group.

Our results also suggest that the participants' judgments were influenced by the consequences of the act, which are a factual element, although there was an interaction with other variables – notably the aggressor's adoption of French culture and the participants' level of SDO. When the aggression had serious consequences for the victim, differences in ideological orientation (level of SDO) seemed to diminish, and the participants judged the act with the same degree of severity. Nevertheless, participants with a high level of SDO gave a harsher sentence when the aggressor adopted French culture and the consequences were minimal. The perpetrator was also judged more negatively in these conditions, and her behavior was more likely to be explained by her personality. Minimal consequences and adoption of French culture were particularly important for participants with a high level of SDO. Adoption of French culture is an indicator of good integration (Guimond, 2010). With reference to the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982), it can be assumed that adoption of French culture reduces intergroup differences, and participants will more readily categorize the immigrant as an in-group member. This will be especially true for individuals who believe that hierarchies in society are legitimate.

However, the link between participants' level of SDO and acculturation strategies is complex because, according to Durand-Delvigne, Castel and Boza (2017), the acculturation strategy would itself increase the level of SDO

among members of the host population. By acknowledging the dominance of the host culture over the original culture, assimilation could help to reinforce the majority group's sense of dominance. The judgment was thus less severe in this condition than for the other acculturation strategies for which the dominance of the majority group is more in question.

Comparison of participants with low and high levels of SDO reveals that the latter tended to think that the perpetrator was entirely responsible for her behavior, that she would be violent and have a high risk of recidivism. They also advocated a harsher sanction, especially when the aggressor had not adopted French culture. These results are consistent with those obtained previously and show that a high level of SDO induces a more negative judgment of immigrants assimilated to minority and subordinate groups (De Oliveira, Dambrun & Guimond, 2008; Duarte, Dambrun & Guimond, 2004).

This study takes a cross-sectional approach (O'Brien, Blodorn, Adam & Garcia, 2015) to examine how a North African woman is considered to be responsible for an act of physical aggression. With reference to the participants' perception of the aggressor's masculine and feminine characteristics, we hypothesized that participants would attribute more feminine characteristics to an aggressor who had maintained her original culture (separation and integration) than to one who had not. Our results do not support this hypothesis, showing that a North African woman who committed an assault was considered as being more masculine when she adopted a separation strategy than in the other conditions. This result is difficult to interpret.

While gender stereotypes have a strong prescriptive value (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Prentice & Carranza, 2002), this study presents a woman who infringes the stereotypical norm by physically attacking someone. We could even speak of a double transgression, since her behavior also goes against the stereotype associated with North African women. Several authors have shown that a woman who infringes stereotypical norms is subject to negative judgments (Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Delacoelette, Dardenne & Dumont, 2010). Moreover, masculine traits were attributed to the aggressor when she had retained her original culture and had not adopted French culture (separation strategy). It is possible that in this situation one facet of social identity was more prominent than the other (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987) and that Jamila was considered above all as a "North African immigrant", constituting a threat because of her acculturation strategy. Furthermore, in this study the victim was a woman called Valérie, which implies that she is French. The scenario thus concerns an act committed by an out-group member against an in-group member; hence, members of the host population may see the situation primarily as involving a foreigner who undermines their dominant position.

Our hypothesis is based on the stereotype of North African women as submissive and dependent on the authority of their husbands (Boukhobza, 2005), particularly if they adopt a separation strategy. However, this

stereotype does not exclude the possibility that North African women can be dangerous or violent. Recent news related to terrorist attacks has shown women capable of committing very violent acts. In this case, the stereotype related to North African women can be structured around several dimensions. Few psychology studies have examined the perception of North African women in France in a judicial context, and future studies are needed to identify the stereotypes and prejudices of the host population regarding women who commit criminal acts.

Limitations and future directions

Like all research, this study has several limitations. One concerns the fact that our participants were students with different academic backgrounds and at different stages of their studies. Several authors have shown that students are influenced by the prevailing norms of the university environment by the end of their first year (Dambrun, Kamiejski, Haddadi & Duarte, 2008). This study should therefore be repeated with a larger sample and with students on different courses.

A second limitation concerns the ethnic origins of the participants. In order to respect their anonymity, we did not ask them for this information. Furthermore, in France it is not socially acceptable to ask people about their ethnic origins (Clément & Simon, 2006). However, belonging to the same ethnic group as the perpetrator could have influenced the way the participant judged and perceived her.

A third limitation concerns the participants' gender. In fact, it was not possible to take into account this variable, which could be crucial. Men and women will not necessarily judge a female offender in the same way. This variable should be included in future research.

Finally, the scenarios presented in this study described four different acculturation profiles affecting all areas of the perpetrator's daily life. However, the acculturation strategies of an immigrant are likely to be viewed differently in peripheral domains such as work and in more central fields such as the family sphere (Maisonneuve et al., 2014; Navas, Rojas, Garcia & Pumares, 2007). Future studies should take into account these different areas of acculturation.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on how certain extra-judicial factors influence judgments and decision making and how they interact with other more factual variables directly associated with the criminal act. Situations in which individuals must make judgments about others are complex, and it is difficult to separate relevant from irrelevant information. This is particularly true in the field of justice. Although the influence of ethnicity has been studied in some depth, the influence of acculturation strategies has not; this is the innovative aspect of this research. The way in which people perceive an immigrant's relationship with his or her original culture and the culture of the host country, based on their ideological orientation, plays a decisive role in their judgments, because it could determine the degree of proximity they feel with the aggressor and the resulting sense of threat. This research is of particular relevance in

the current situation of terrorist attacks, which has exacerbated prejudice against people from North Africa.

Note

¹ We ensured that participants perceived the scenarios correctly through two control measures. The participants answered two questions about Jamila, one relating to maintenance of her original culture, the other to her adoption of French culture. The ANOVA revealed two significant effects of acculturation strategies. Separation and integration were associated with greater maintenance of the original culture (respectively, $M = 6.83$, $SD = .727$ and $M = 6.46$, $SD = .89$) than the other two strategies (assimilation: $M = 2.423$, $SD = 1.684$ and marginalization: $M = 2.789$, $SD = 1.625$), $F(3, 203) = 167.30$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .71$). Assimilation and integration were associated with greater adoption of French culture (respectively, $M = 5.885$, $SD = 1.542$ and $M = 5.38$, $SD = 1.413$) than the other two strategies (separation: $M = 1.698$, $SD = 1.488$ and marginalization: $M = 1.91$, $SD = 1.159$, $F(3, 203) = 129.27$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .66$).

Additional Files

The additional files for this article can be found as follows:

- **Appendix I.** Presentation of the story of the altercation with minimal or serious consequences. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/irsp.106.s1>
- **Appendix II.** Presentation of the four acculturation strategies. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/irsp.106.s1>

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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How to cite this article: Dougez, C., Taillandier-Schmitt, A., and Combalbert, N. (2018). Influence of Acculturation Strategies on the Judgment of a Violent Act Committed by a North African Woman. *International Review of Social Psychology*, 31(1): 10, 1–11, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/irsp.106>

Published: 20 April 2018

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