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Reluctance to Use Host Social Services by Ethnic Minorities: The Role of Consensual Separation, Threat to Heritage Culture and Misunderstanding of the Host Society Language

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Abstract The main goal of this study was to examine the relationships between two types of separation orientations, namely forced and consensual separation, and the use of French social service community centers. Participants were two groups of young women, both members of ethnic minorities: Turkish ($n=42$) and North African ($n=41$). The results showed that young Turkish women were more oriented towards consensual separation than young North African women. Preference for a separation strategy was positively associated with both the perception of a threat to heritage culture and difficulties in understanding the language of the social workers. The more participants perceived social workers as a source of threat to their heritage culture and as speaking a language they had difficulty understanding, the less frequently they made use of the services offered at the community centers. Socio-demographic variables such as education level and marital status were found to play a significant role in these findings.

Keywords Consensual separation · Threat to heritage culture · Host social services

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France is the oldest country of immigration in Europe. Recent surveys (Tavan 2005) indicate that in this country, immigrant people are more exposed to unemployment than members of the host society and that immigrant women are more economically inactive than their male counterparts and than non-immigrant women (Brinbaum and Werquin 2004; Okba 2014). This predominantly concerns women from two important non-European minorities in France: North African and Turkish women (de Tapia 2009). According to these surveys, these socio-economic problems would be stressed among those who have a lack of qualifications and difficulties with the French language (Monso and Gleizes 2009). The present paper was then particularly interested in the worrying situation of these young immigrant women, a usually understudied population in this area of research.

In France, as recommended by the Schwartz report (Schwartz 1981), the government created social service community centers ("Missions Locales" in French) as a first initiative to provide social and professional guidance for young people experiencing serious socio-economic difficulties. According to a report of the labor inspectorate, the clients of these centers are predominantly youth from ethnic minorities (IGAS 1992). With them, social workers attempt to foster adaptation to the French society while assisting them in their job search. Obviously, in order to increase their chances, it is essential that immigrant young people make use of these French community centers. However, their visits are on a voluntary basis, and research has already shown that some ethnic minorities would be more reluctant to use host society services than majority members. For example, ethnic disparities in access and use of health services have been shown repeatedly regarding a wide range of health problems (e.g., Fassaert, Hesselink, and Verhoeff 2009; Satcher and Higginbothan 2008; Smaje, and Le Grand 1997). According to Fassaert et al. (2009), acculturation is an important factor that can be used to understand these differences (e.g., Arcia et al. 2001; Calderon-Rosado, Morrill, Chang, and Tennstedt 2002).

The main goal of the present study was to examine the relationships between acculturation orientations held by two different groups (i.e., North African and Turkish young women) and their use of French social service community centers.

North African and Turkish immigrants in France and their Acculturation Orientations

Berry (1980) developed a model which dealt with acculturation at both group and individual levels (Berry et al. 1989). The Acculturative Model proposed that acculturation involved two distinct dimensions, which should be measured separately. The first one described the degree to which the immigrants related to the native community: i.e., whether their relationships with other persons or groups in the host society were valuable enough to seek them out. The second one described the degree to which they maintained their heritage culture: i.e., whether they considered their cultural identity sufficiently valuable to be maintained in the host society. The combination of responses to these two dimensions produces a matrix with four acculturation orientations: "Integration" (Yes/Yes), "Assimilation" (Yes/No), "Separation" (No/Yes), and "Marginalization" (No/No). A refinement of Berry's model proposed Individualism as an additional acculturation orientation, referring to those people who preferred identifying themselves as individuals rather than as members of a group (Bourhis and Bougie 1998).

In France, depending at least partially on the historical context of immigration, Turkish and North African immigrants would not totally endorse similar acculturation orientations. Even though both groups are often derogated and discriminated by members of the host society (Guimond 2004), their immigration history is quite different. Contrary to certain countries of the Maghreb, Turkey was never colonized by France. Due to this past of colonization, people native from the Maghreb share cultural references with France and maintain relationships even if these latter are sometimes conflicting. On the other hand, people native from Turkey maintain a relation of exteriority with France, and relationships are especially made within a close network of people from the same village or the same area in Turkey (Bozarslam 1996).

In the European space, France, after Germany, constitutes the second destination for the migrants originating from Turkey. France was one of the last countries to sign, in 1965, an exchange agreement with Turkey to accept workers from that country. The Turkish population in France was approximately estimated at 610,000 in 2013. While this is not France's most salient immigrant population, it can be very significant in some cities, such as the one where this research took place.

Tribalat (1995) showed that the Turkish population in France is relatively isolated. Its social life is very rich yet people rarely interact with the majority French population; mixed marriages are almost non-existent. There is also little professional mobility: children have often the same profession as their parents. The Turkish community is considered to be the least integrated immigrant community in France (Hargreaves 2007), partly due to their strong attachment to their country of origin (Çitak 2010). Actually, Ersanilli and Koopmans (2011) found that across the three immigration countries they studied (France, Germany, and the Netherlands), the degree of ethnic retention among Turkish immigrants and their descendants is high, and the level of orientation on the host country culture is substantially lower. Turks in these three countries identify much more strongly as Turks than as nationals of their countries of residence, and they predominantly speak Turkish. This is in line with another study conducted in France by Akıncı and Jisa (2000), showing that Turkish is spoken exclusively at home by 77 % of families, and that Turkish children are monolingual in the Turkish language until they start school. Even for those who use French more than Turkish in their daily lives, these immigrants still emphasize the importance of Turkish as the language of the family and the foundation of their group identity (e.g., de Tapia 2009). Thus, there is a high degree of language maintenance in the Turkish community; frequent holidays to Turkey, the easy access and use of Turkish media, and the density of social networks help maintain their language (Backus 2008). Then, Turkish immigrants have less knowledge of the French language, compared to other Muslim immigrants who have emigrated from French-speaking countries (Bozarslam 1996).

The North African population is very important in France and represents 30 % of its immigrant population. It consists of Moroccans (11 %), Algerians (13.3 %), and a marginal percentage of Tunisians (Sabatier and Boutry 2006). Their history of colonization (i.e., protectorate for Morocco and Tunisia, colony for Algeria) provides them with a very different context. During the 60s, men from North Africa were encouraged to work in France, and during the 1970s, regrouping families moved to the (new) French suburbs (Grémion 2004). The Algerian war of independence (1954–1962) put immigrants from that country in a particular context. Studies usually indicate that North

Africans in France strongly endorse integration (Kamiejski, Guimond, De Oliveira, Er-Rafiy, and Brauer 2012) and individualism (Barrette et al. 2004), whereas assimilation, marginalization, and separation are significantly much less chosen.

There are few comparative studies on Turkish and North African minorities in France. Amin and Vinet (2014) showed that if integration is usually the most chosen orientation among both North African and Turkish students, North Africans are significantly more oriented towards integration but less oriented towards separation than Turkish students. This is consistent with some studies showing that in Germany, the first European country of Turkish immigration, Turks are the ethnic group that, unlike other groups, expresses the strongest preference for separation (Ersanilli and Koopmans 2011). Finally, North African women seem to be more positively oriented towards integration and assimilation than both North African men and Turkish women in France (Gerraoui 1997). They are more integrated in the social life of the host community, use more French when communicating with their families, and marry outside their ethnic group more often (Tribalat 1995).

In the context of the present study, the above differences led us to particularly focus on separation. This strategy implies a rejection of the culture of the host society, in avoiding social interactions with its members among other things. Then, we can hypothesize that migrant women endorsing this strategy would logically be more reluctant to frequent organizations, such as social service community centers, run by the dominant group.

An original contribution of the present research was to examine the separation orientation in a more precise way that it is usually done, in order to distinguish between the main reasons why minorities choose to keep their culture of origin in the host society. Two types of separation strategies can be differentiated. Immigrants can adopt separation by individual choice in order to protect their ethnic identity (Phinney 1990), what we called here "consensual separation". But it is also possible that they face injunctions to shield ethnic identity from their cultural group who may perceive adaptation to majority culture as a threat to the group identity and distinctiveness (Kunst and Sam 2013; Verkuyten and Thijs 1999), what we called "forced separation." In France, the Turkish community often exerts a social control, particularly towards women and children (Bozarslam 1996). Then some migrants could also turn towards separation, not by personal choice, but primarily because of the normative pressure exerted by their own cultural group and the threat to be psychologically and socially sanctioned by it (Castillo et al. 2007).

In an exploratory way, we took into account these two unstudied strategies of separation for a better understanding of their respective influence on host community centers attendance.

In sum, we predicted that young Turkish women would be more oriented towards both consensual and forced separation than young North African women. As a consequence, Turkish women would use the community centers less frequently.

In addition, since going into these centers implies necessarily strong interactions with social workers, we predicted a more complex relationship in which two specific variables linked to these social contacts would mediate the relationship between (consensual and forced) separation and the frequency of visits to the community centers: (1) perception of the threat to heritage culture, and (2) difficulties in understanding the dominant language.

Perception of the Threat to Heritage Culture

The Concordance Model of Acculturation (CMA) proposed by Piontkowski et al. (2002) postulates that agreement or disagreement between the host society and immigrants on the preservation of the migrants' heritage culture should have a strong influence on the relationships between the two groups. According to this model, if the host group does not accept the immigrants' attempts to preserve their heritage culture (particularly by asking them to assimilate entirely or at least in the public area), this could threaten their group identity since preservation of some aspects of one's heritage culture is crucial for their ethnic identity. As an example, Rohmann et al. (2006) showed that in Germany, Turkish immigrants perceived host members as being more identity threatening than did Italian immigrants, and this effect was strongly mediated by discordance regarding the preservation of the heritage culture (i.e., Turkish wanted to maintain their culture to a higher degree than what they perceived as being approved by the host members). Then, perceived threat would be especially experienced by migrants who choose to preserve their own cultural values, identity, and characteristics and reject those of the host society, that is who adopt separation. In other words, for these migrants, the assimilation expected by host members would undermine their ethnic identity and would form a perceived threat to their heritage culture (e.g., Brug and Verkuyten 2007; Verkuyten 2005; Wolsko, Park, and Judd 2006).

Rather often, majority groups just tend to expect assimilation from ethnic minorities, which requires migrants to conform to dominant values and abandon their minority group identity (e.g., Van Oudenhoven, Prins, and Buunk 1998; Verkuyten 2005). This is the case in France: the French Republic has a policy wherein new immigrants are expected to assimilate into the dominant French culture, placing high value on a republican orientation (Sabatier and Boutry 2006). France tries to maintain a universal public sphere that is free of particularistic identities. Thus, to be accepted, immigrants have to assimilate entirely, or at least they have to assimilate in the public domain while preserving their culture of origin in private.

In the social service community centers, social workers act as intermediaries between immigrants and various French institutions. Part of their task is the social and professional integration of their clients (Mokounkolo 2002), mediating between young people and business corporations (Jovelin 2002; Verbunt 2004). Then, we can presume that in order to foster migrants' adaptation, these professionals expect them to adopt the dominant values of the host society, at least in the public area. It was exactly what Taillandier-Schmitt et al. (2012) found in their study: French social workers indicated that when doing their job with immigrants in community centers, they followed the prescription of their institution (Khettab 2010) and expected as professionals, integration and public assimilation from immigrants; that is for this last orientation, minorities were expected to adopt the traditions of the host society in the public area (including the community centers) while keeping their cultural traditions in private. We can notice that when questioned on their personal attitudes, their answers were a little bit different from their professional practices: indeed, social workers rather favored individualism and integration in North African and/or Turkish immigrants in France (Taillandier-Schmitt et al. 2012; Wagner et al. 2014).

On this basis, we predict that Turkish women, more oriented towards separation than North African women, would be more likely to perceive their heritage culture as being threatened by social workers. This would lead them to make use of the community centers less often than their North African counterparts.

In sum, we predicted the following two-step mediation model (hypothesis 1): First, the relationship between ethnic background (Turkish vs North African) and perception of the threat to heritage culture would be mediated by (consensual and forced) separation strategies. Second, the relationship between separation strategies and frequency of visits to the community centers would be mediated by perception of the threat to heritage culture.

Ethnic background (Turkish vs North African)→Separation→Perception of threat to heritage culture→Frequency of visits to CC

Difficulties in Understanding the Language of the Host Society

In the acculturation process, both learning and mastering the language of the host society play a central role in the adaptation and integration of immigrants into the dominant culture (Gaudet and Clement 2009; Noels and Clement 1996). Immigrants have a better understanding of their host society when they have mastered the dominant language (Wallen, Feldman, and Anliker 2002). When proficiency in the dominant language is poor, communication is more difficult and frequently leads to misunderstandings between the immigrants and members of the host society.

Different acculturation orientations lead to distinct practices in terms of language. When the native language is different from the dominant language, integration is related to bilingualism (i.e., to the use of both languages), whereas separation tends towards monolingualism with people resistant to learn the dominant language when it is not the same as their native one (de Tapia 2009). The primary language is the ethnic one; it allows the maintenance of the group's original ethnic identity (Bourhis 1979) and the preservation of in-group identity (Landry and Allard 1997). With respect to the IAM and the CMA, a consensual language level is attained when both groups (i.e., host society and immigrants) agree on the way they should communicate together, whereas a conflictual language level appears when there is disagreement between the groups about language use. Language concordance would favor optimal communication and understanding, while language discordance would be associated with dysfunctional communication and misunderstandings, then creating real barriers to interpersonal exchange and relationships. In this vein, Ramelli, Florack, Kosic, and Rohmann (2013) recently showed that among Spanish-speaking immigrants in Switzerland and in Italy, perceived communication effectiveness at arrival in the host society fostered contact with native members at later stages of the acculturation process.

Turkish migrants in France have surely more language problems than North African migrants when interacting with host members. Indeed, social workers speak French in the community centers. North African migrants are from countries in which French is a rather common, sometimes official, language, contrary to Turkish migrants whose native language, in addition, is a crucial part of their ethnic identity (de Tapia 2009). Then, these last ones are asked to give up much more of their ethnic identity than North Africans (this could also affect the perception of threat to the heritage culture).

In sum, because young Turkish women would tend to be more oriented towards separation than North Africans, they would show more resistance towards the dominant language. Then, they would have less fluency in this language and a lower effectiveness in communication with members of the host society (especially as their native

language is not French). As a result, they would be less able to understand the language used by the social workers and various difficulties in intercultural contact would ensue. This would then lead Turkish women to visit the community centers less frequently than their North African counterparts.

We predicted the following, second, two-step mediation model (hypothesis 2): First, the relationship between ethnic background (Turkish vs North African) and language misunderstanding would be mediated by (consensual and forced) separation strategies. Second, the relationship between separation strategies and frequency of visits to the community centers would be mediated by language misunderstanding.

Ethnic background (Turkish vs North African)→Separation→Difficulties in understanding the language of host society→Frequency of visits to CC

Summary of Predictions

We predicted a path model in which Turkish women would be more oriented towards separation than North African women and would visit the French community centers less frequently for two reasons: (1) because separation would be related to a perception that the heritage culture is threatened, and (2) because separation would be linked to poor French language skills making difficult for the Turkish women to understand the language of the social workers, which in turn would lead this population to avoid contact with them. This path model was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM).

Method

Participants

Forty-two young Turkish women (mean age=24.31; SD=5.11) and 41 young North African women (mean age=21.83; SD=2.22) participated in this study. The young Turkish women had, on average, lived in France for about 15 years. Thirty three percent were born in France and 66.7 % were born in Turkey. The majority of these young women were married (78.6 %) and unemployed (88.1 %). Only 9.5 % had a job and 2.4 % were students. On average, the young North African women had lived in France for 17.9 years. Unlike the Turkish women, the majority of them was born in the host country (63.4 %), and 36.6 % were born in North Africa (mainly Algeria and Morocco). Most were single (68.3 %), 56.1 % were unemployed, 24.4 % were employed, and 19.5 % were students. North African women had achieved a higher education level than Turkish women: 38.8 % of the former and 16.7 % of the latter had a baccalaureate degree or more.

Procedure

Young women belonging to an ethnic minority are usually very reluctant to participate in research studies and fear being stigmatized because of their cultural differences. It was challenging to get their support to take part in the study. They were approached in

the community centers, in literacy classes. It was of course not possible to obtain data from the young migrant women who never came into the community centers. Thus, our sample was limited to those who actually did visit the centers.

All respondents received a questionnaire and a cover letter with instructions on how to complete it. They were assured that their participation was voluntary and that their responses would be anonymous and confidential. They all completed the questionnaires individually.

Questionnaire

Because of the low level of literacy among some Turkish women, the questionnaire was presented both in French and in Turkish and independently back translated by two bilingual interpreters. It was pre-tested among some Turkish and North African women to make sure it was easily understood, and suggestions for improvement were incorporated before final distribution.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections: Separation acculturation orientations, questions concerning objections towards visiting the community centers (related to the perception of threat to heritage culture and difficulties in understanding the host society language), questions about the frequency with which the participants visited the community centers, and socio-demographic information.

Separation Orientations

Six items were used to measure both forced and consensual separation[1]. "Consensual separation" referred to keep the original culture in the host society whatever the situations, by personal choice. "Forced separation" referred to adopt separation mainly because the injunctions of the ethnic group to maintain the culture of origin are stronger than the assimilation injunctions of the host society. These items were derived from several existing questionnaires: the EIA scale (Berry et al. 1989) revised by Bourhis and Bougie (1998)), the scale used by Jasinskaya-Lahti (2000) and developed by the International Comparative Studies of Ethnocultural Young (ICSEY) and the scale used by Safdare, Lay, and Struthers (2003). These items were adapted for our populations.

These acculturation strategies were assessed in three distinct domains of life: clothing, language, and cultural traditions. For example, for young Turkish women, the items referring to cultural traditions were as follows: (1) "I think that Turkish people must always keep their Turkish cultural traditions whatever the situation, and never adopt the French cultural traditions" (consensual separation); and (2) "I think that Turkish people must always keep their Turkish cultural traditions whatever the situation, because the Turkish community insists on that, even if it is not my personal choice" (forced separation).

Participants had to rate all items in the questionnaire on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Scores were averaged across the three domains of life resulting in two specific measures of acculturation orientations. Both measures provided an adequate internal reliability (α=0.67 for consensual separation and α=0.62 for

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[1] Several complementary acculturation orientations were originally measured into the questionnaire (e.g., integration, assimilation). However, because of their low internal reliability, we chose to not use them.

forced separation), and the six items loaded appropriately on two distinct factors in a factor analysis[2]

Perception of the Threat to Heritage Culture and Difficulty in Understanding the Host Society Language as Reasons for not Visiting the Community Centers

In order to discover why young Turkish and North African women were reluctant to visit the community centers, they were asked to indicate the reasons for not visiting them.

Three items assessed their perception of the threat to heritage culture (α=0.86): (1) "I don't like the way professionals at the community centers behave towards the Turkish (North African) population;" (2) "I have a feeling that people in the community centers think badly of me if I show that I want to keep my Turkish (North African) culture;" (3) "The staff at the community centers would like me to give up some important aspects of my Turkish (North African) culture."

Another item assessed their difficulty in understanding the host society language: "It is difficult for me to understand the social workers, because they only speak French." The participants had to rate each of these reasons on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree).

Frequency of Visits to the Community Centers

Participants were asked to rate the frequency with which they visited the community centers on a scale ranging from 1 (never) to (4) regularly.

Socio-Demographic Information

A number of socio-demographic characteristics were measured. They included nationality, age, country of birth, duration of residence in France, education level, marital status, and employment status. The directors of the community centers with which we collaborated considered religion as an extremely sensitive topic; therefore, we were not given authorization to ask information on religious beliefs and practices.

Results

Relationships Between Separation Strategies and Socio-Demographic Variables

First, we examined the relationships between various socio-demographic variables (see Table 1). Ethnic background was significantly related to education level, country of birth, marriage, and employment. Young Turkish women had a lower level of education, were more often born in their country of origin, married, and unemployed than

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[2] A principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation of the 6 items disclosed two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. The first factor accounted for 37 % of the explained variance and regrouped the 3 items assessing consensual separation (eigenvalue=2.20; factor loadings ranged from 0.62 to 0.86). The second factor accounted for 25.5 % of the explained variance and regrouped the 3 remaining items assessing forced separation (eigenvalue=1.53; factor loadings ranged from 0.71 to 0.77).

Table 1 Means, SDs and zero-order correlations between separation strategies and socio-demographics variables (*n*=83)

	M	SD	Time spent in France	Education level	Country of birth	Marriage	Working
Ethnic background	–	–	0.19+	0.56***	0.30**	−0.61***	0.42***
Consensual separation	2.52	0.94	−0.33***	−0.53***	−0.29**	0.50***	−0.45***
Forced separation	1.96	0.76	−0.25*	−0.19+	−0.22*	−0.11	−0.18+
Perception of the threat to heritage culture	2.10	0.90	−0.28**	−0.32**	−0.27*	0.10	−0.35***
Perception of language misunderstanding	1.93	1.1	−0.50***	−0.35***	−0.27*	0.20+	−0.48***
Community centers frequentation (*ln*)	0.85	0.46	0.30***	0.39***	0.23*	−0.18	0.36***

Ethnic background +1 (North Africans), −1 (Turkish); *education level* from 1 (no education) to 7 (university degree); *country of birth* from−1 (native country) to 1 (France); *marriage* from−1 (not married) to 1 (married); *working* from−1 (without any job) to 1 (with a job)

*$p<0.05$; **$p<0.01$; ***$p<0.001$; +$p<0.10$, $n=83$

young North African women. Time spent in France, education level, and country of birth all showed similar relations to separation strategies. They correlated significantly and negatively with consensual separation, with objections to visiting the community centers (i.e., threat to heritage culture and language misunderstanding) and positively with visits to the community centers. Women who were born or had spent more time in France and had a higher level of education were associated with a lower support for separation and a lower level of objections to use the community centers, and thus with more frequent visits. Married women were significantly more supportive of a consensual separation strategy than unmarried women. Finally, unemployed women were more oriented towards both consensual and forced separation and had greater objections to visiting the community centers than professionally active women.

Separation Strategies as a Function of Ethnic Background

To examine young women's preferences in terms of separation strategies, we performed a 2 (ethnic background: North African vs Turkish)×2 (type of separation strategy: consensual vs forced) mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA). This analysis revealed a main effect of the type of separation strategy ($F (1, 81)=27.30, p<0.001, \eta2=0.25$) and a significant interaction between separation strategies and ethnic background ($F (1, 82)=26.46, p<0.001, \eta2=0.25$). As shown in Table 2, Turkish women were significantly more oriented towards consensual separation than North African women. No difference was found between the two groups on forced separation.

Reasons for not Visiting the Community Centers: Differences in Perceived Threat and Language Problems

We performed a one-way (ethnic background: North African vs Turkish) ANOVA on the scores measuring objections to use the community centers.

Table 2 Separation strategies and community centers frequentation of young women as function of their ethnic background

	Young women ethnic		
	North African (*n*=41)	Turkish (*n*=42)	*F*
Consensual separation	2.06a (0.72)	2.98b (0.92)	25.53***
Forced separation	2.05a (0.74)	1.88a (0.77)	1.01
Perception of the threat to heritage culture	1.92 (0.87)	2.29 (0.91)	3.57+
Perception of language misunderstanding	1.66 (0.85)	2.19 (1.25)	5.07*
Community centers frequentation (*ln*)	0.95 (0.31)	0.74 (0.55)	4.56*

By column, means of separation orientations with different letters differ at the level of 0.05

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001; +p<0.10

First, the analysis indicated that young Turkish women had marginally more frequent objections about their heritage culture being threatened than did North African women (F (1, 82)=3.57, $p<0.06$, η2=0.04). Young Turkish women also reported more frequent difficulties in understanding the host society language of the social workers than did North African women (F (1, 82)=5.07, $p<0.03$, η2=0.06).

Frequency of Visits to the Community Centers

Because this variable was not normally distributed, we performed a *ln* transformation. In our selected sample, Turkish women (transformed $M=0.74$) visited the community centers less frequently than the North African women (transformed $M=0.95$; F (1, 82)=4.56, $p<0.04$).

Because the variances were heterogeneous, we performed an additional non-parametric test, which revealed a marginal effect ($z=1.30$, $p<0.069$).

Relationships Between Separation Strategies, Types of Objections to use Community Centers, and Frequency of Visits

In order to examine the relationships between separation strategies, the types of objections to visiting the community centers, and the frequency of visits, we calculated the correlations between these variables (see Table 3). As expected, the more immigrant women endorsed both separation strategies, the more they perceived their heritage culture to be threatened, and the more they had serious difficulties in understanding the language of the social workers. However, only consensual separation significantly predicted the frequency of visits. Consequently, only consensual separation was used in future path-analyses.

Path Analysis Consensual separation, perception of the threat to the heritage culture, and difficulty in understanding the host society language as consecutive mediators of the effect of ethnic background on frequency of visits to the community centers.

In order to test our two-step mediation model in which (1) consensual separation mediates the effect of ethnic background on both the perception that the heritage culture is being threatened and difficulties in understanding the language of the social workers, and

Table 3 Relationships between separation strategies, causes of refuse to frequent the community centers and frequentation of the community centers (zero-order correlations; $n=83$)

	Perception of the threat to heritage culture	Perception of language misunderstanding	Community centers frequentation (ln)
Threat to heritage culture	–	–	−0.426***
Language misunderstanding	0.525***	–	−426***
Consensual separation	0.380***	0.294**	−0.331**
Forced separation	0.270*	0.220*	−0.068

*$p<0.05$; ***$p<0.001$; **$p<0.01$; +$p<0.10$

(2) these two variables mediate the effect of consensual separation on the frequency of visits, we performed a path analysis using structural equation modeling (EQS). Because our sample was small, we calculated the F-statistic using the robust method (RM) instead of calculating $\times 2$ using the normal theory maximum likelihood (ML) estimation, as has been recommended by Yuan and Bentler (1999). The predicted model is presented in Fig. 1. This model fitted the data. The F-statistic was not significant (F (4, 79)<1, $p=$ 0.45), and the various indices[3] were all adequate ($NFI=0.96$; $NNFI=1$; $CFI=1$; and $RMSEA=0.00$). Thus, the following consecutive variables mediated the effect of ethnic background on the frequency of visits: (1) consensual separation, and (2) perception of the threat to heritage culture and language misunderstanding. Following the procedure advocated by Preacher and Hayes (2008), we tested the significance of the mediation.
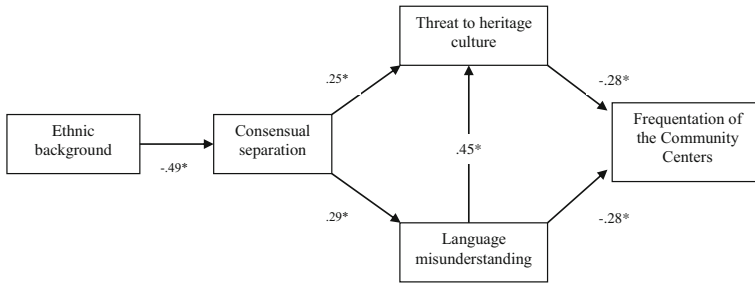
First, a simple mediation procedure was used to determine whether consensual separation significantly mediates the relationship between ethnic background and the two mediators (i.e., perception of the threat to heritage culture and language misunderstanding). Bootstrapping analyses (5000 resamples were taken for the analyses; IC= 95 %) reveal that consensual separation significantly mediates the relationship between ethnic background and perception of the threat to the heritage culture ($z=2.61$, $p<0.01$) and marginally mediates the relationship between ethnic background and language misunderstanding ($z=1.75$, $p<0.08$). Second, a multiple mediation analysis procedure was used to determine whether the two proposed mediators (i.e., perception of the threat to heritage culture and language misunderstanding) significantly mediate the relationship between consensual separation and the frequency of visits.

Using bootstrapping (5000 resamples; IC=95 %), the results reveal that the relationship between consensual separation and the frequency of visits (total effect: b= −0.16, $p<0.002$) was significantly reduced ($z=2.72$, $p<0.01$) by the set of two mediating variables (remaining direct effect: b=−0.08, $p>0.11$). Both perception of the threat to heritage cultures preservation ($z=1.73$, $p<0.08$) and language misunderstanding ($z=1.77$, $p<0.07$) marginally mediate this relation.

Providing additional validity for our model, we did not find support for alternative models[4]

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[3] CFI, NFI and NNFI superior or equal to 0.90 indicate good fit of the model (Hu and Bentler 1998, 1999). RMSEA equal or inferior to 0.08 indicates a reasonable error of approximation (Hu and Bentler 1999).

[4] For example, threat to heritage culture did not mediate the relationship between ethnic background and consensual separation ($z=1.55$, $p>0.10$). Similarly, language misunderstanding did not mediate the same relationship ($z=1.37$, $p>0.10$).
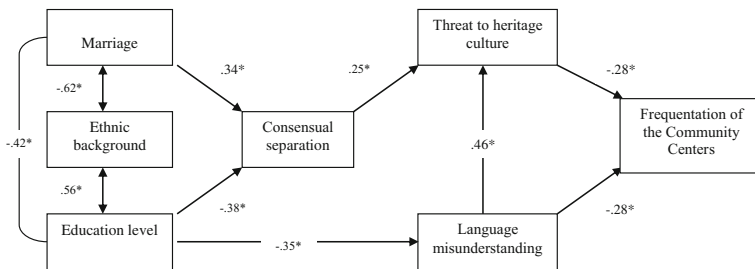
$F(4, 79) = .93, p > .45; NFI = .96, NNFI = 1, CFI = 1, RMSEA = .00$

Fig. 1 Path model 1: consensual separation, perception of the threat to heritage culture, and language misunderstanding as consecutive mediators of the effect of ethnic background on frequency of visits to the community centers (CC)

Finally, because several socio-demographic variables were found to correlate strongly with various variables in this model (see Table 1), we performed a new path analysis in which the most relevant socio-demographic variables were included.

Because it is likely that the different socio-demographic variables shared some degree of variance, we performed a multiple regression analysis with consensual separation as a dependent variable, ethnic background as an independent variable, and the diverse socio-demographic variables as covariates. This analysis revealed that only two socio-demographic variables were robustly related to consensual separation: Education level ($\beta=-0.29$, $p<0.05$) and marriage ($\beta=0.24$, $p=0.05$). Consequently, these two socio-demographic variables were added to the model. A series of exploratory analyses revealed (1) that these two variables accounted for the effect of ethnic background on consensual separation, and (2) that education level accounted for the effect of consensual separation on the perception of language misunderstanding. A final path model, depicted in Fig. 2, was tested using the RM. This model fitted the data. The F statistic was not significant ($F(11, 72)=1.15$, $p=0.34$), and the various indices were all adequate ($NFI=0.95$; $NNFI=1$; $CFI=1$; and $RMSEA=0.00$). This model showed that the relationship between ethnic background and consensual separation could be fully accounted for by both education level and marriage. Thus, young Turkish women

$F(11, 72) = 1.15, p > .34; NFI = .95, NNFI = 1, CFI = 1, RMSEA = .00$

Fig. 2 Final path model including education level and marital status as controlled variables

were more oriented towards consensual separation than were North African women because the latter had a higher education level and were less often married, suggesting a direct effect of education and a possible effect of marital influence. Finally, this model also showed that the relationship between consensual separation and perception of language misunderstanding was fully accounted for by education level, suggesting that the higher the level of education attained by the immigrant women, the fewer difficulties they had in understanding the language of the social workers. Thus, it is not consensual separation in itself that is related to the perception of language misunderstanding, but rather, it is the education level that is robustly linked to both consensual separation and perception of language misunderstanding. However, the relationship between consensual separation and frequency of visits still remains robustly mediated by the perception of the threat to heritage culture.

Discussion

The main goal of this study was to focus on the relationship between acculturation strategies of separation and use of French social service community centers, among two important migrant groups in France with socio-economic difficulties (i.e., North African and Turkish young women). The present research also aimed at examining the influence of two key variables on this relationship: Perception of threat to the heritage culture and host language misunderstanding.

In line with previous studies conducted in France (e.g., Amin and Vinet 2014), North African women appeared to be less oriented towards consensual separation than Turkish women (e.g., Perrinel 2005). However, no difference was found between the two groups on forced separation. In other words, in order to protect their ethnic identity, Turkish women would adopt separation more than North African women. This seems to reflect an internalized personal choice rather than a process of compliance to explicit pressures from their ethnic group.

As predicted, the more these women endorsed a consensual separation orientation, the less use they made of the services offered by the community centers. Indeed, consistent with our hypothesis, a first path analysis revealed that this effect was fully mediated by two variables: (1) perception of the threat to heritage culture, and (2) language misunderstanding.

In line with other findings (Ait Ouarasse and Van de Vijver 2005), several determinants of adaptation were related to these acculturation orientations. Length of time spent in the host country and country of birth were significantly related to both separation orientations (e.g., Jayasuriya et al. 1992). A multiple regression analysis revealed that both marital status and education level were two robust predictors of consensual separation. When these two variables were controlled in the model, the path analysis demonstrated some significant results. First, these two socio-demographic variables can help us to better explain why young Turkish women were more oriented towards consensual separation than young North African women (Bozarslam 1996). More precisely, the relationship between ethnic background and consensual separation was fully accounted for by both education level and marital status. These results are consistent with previous research showing that better-educated migrants report

generally stronger involvement with the host culture than less educated migrants (Jayasuriya et al. 1992). Interestingly, these results also suggest a possible effect of marital influence in which Turkish men would encourage, at least implicitly, their wives to maintain their heritage culture and to reject the culture of the host society. Other research has already demonstrated the impact of family dynamics on acculturation choices. Cultural inheritance is usually implicitly transmitted to the young by their parents (e.g., Akgönül 2009; Jasinskaja-Lahti and al. 2000), and men may influence the acculturation practices of their wives (e.g., Webster 1994). Because mixed marriages are almost non-existent in the Turkish community (Akgönül 2009; Tribalat 1995), it is also likely that marriage in Turkish women reveals a conservative attitude and a desire for the maintenance of the heritage culture. Thus, marriage and consensual separation may be robustly related only because both are underlied by the same process of heritage culture conservation.

When these socio-demographic variables were controlled for, the path model confirmed that the endorsement of consensual separation led Turkish women to perceive, more than North African women, that their heritage culture was threatened by the social workers in the community centers. As Fig. 2 shows, perception of threat to heritage culture maintenance mediates the effect of consensual separation on the frequency of visits to the community centers. This is consistent with the concordance model of acculturation developed by Piontkowski et al. (2002). Since social workers at the community centers preferentially endorse public assimilation in their professional practices (Taillandier-Schmitt et al. 2012), Turkish women perceive their heritage culture threatened and, consequently, are reluctant to use host society service at the community centers. This results in conflictual interpersonal and intergroup relational outcomes between the host majority and the migrant minority (Bourhis et al. 1997). Thus, perception of threat seems to act as a central process in intercultural relationships between the host society and ethnic minorities (see also Rohmann et al. 2006). It is likely a major explanation for why some migrant groups are generally reluctant to visit the French social service community centers. Of course, because the design of our research model is correlational, it is not possible to provide any claims about causality. Threat, which is a theoretical concept already developed (Stephan and Stephan 1996), seems however to be at the core of intercultural issues that must be managed by both natives and migrants in order to lead to more consensual relations.

Finally, language misunderstanding of the social workers was not a robust mediator of the relationship between consensual separation and frequency of visits to the community centers. Language misunderstanding is connected to education level and not to ethnic background or consensual separation. Here, it appears that a socio-demographic difference in terms of education level, rather than a difference in terms of acculturation orientation or ethnic background, plays a key role. This indicates that whatever their ethnic background, women with low education have language problems and they strive for consensual separation. Education, in favoring both learning and mastering the language of the host society (i.e., bilingualism), seems to facilitate both the adaptation (e.g., greater language understanding) and the integration (e.g., greater use of the community centers) of the migrants into the mainstream culture. Thus, a bilingual education leading to language fluency is obviously very helpful in fostering both psychological adjustment and cultural integration within a host culture (e.g., Fassaert et al. 2009; Pi-Ju Yang, Noels, and Saumure 2006).

Limitations and Future Directions

The present results must be interpreted in light of some limitations. Several main caveats need to be mentioned here. First, our research was clearly correlational that prevents any conclusion about the directionality of the results. Future longitudinal studies controlling for initial levels of the dependent variables could be helpful to address the causality issue. We focused here on separation strategy as a determinant of perceived threat to heritage culture and host language misunderstanding. It was not the objective of the present study to examine the interrelations between these constructs, but it is reasonable to assume that a circular causality exists, then it might be also interesting to investigate whether their relationships are bidirectional rather than unidirectional. Perceived threat and language misunderstanding might also predict separation. This possibility was not part of our theoretical model and so further research is needed.

Another limitation concerns the generalizability of our findings, which were obtained on Turkish and North African women in the context of French community centers. Difficulties in finding respondents to the questionnaire led to a too small sample to generalize the results. They require verification on a larger sample of various migrant groups in France and in other countries. Future research will also need to test whether these results generalize to other social contexts and institutions in which intercultural contact is crucial, such as health services, reception centers, or women's refuges. Despite our interest in the situation of young migrant women with socio-economic difficulties, future studies also should test whether the observed effects can be replicated with their males counterparts. Difficulties in recruiting this kind of minority population did not allow us to access to Turkish and North African women who did not visit community centers at all. We can wonder if they have similar reasons (i.e., perceived threat to the heritage culture, host language misunderstanding) than our participants; future research is then needed to answer this question. Finally, because this population is usually very reluctant to participate in research due to fear of being scrutinized and stigmatized because of cultural differences, motivating these young women represented a real challenge. For that reason, we designed the shortest possible questionnaire (through the use of sometimes very brief measures) so that it would be less threatening to them. Consequently, the study was limited in some measures. For example, only one item measured the frequency with which they visited the community centers. More information on the type of use is needed to clarify the comparison between the two migrant groups (e.g., the main reasons they visited the centers, since, when). In the same way, it would have been also interesting to obtain more precisions on the frequency of their visits (e.g., once a week? once a month?).

Conclusion

Despite some limitations, the current field research does make a contribution to the literature. It adds to the understanding of the association between some migrants' acculturation orientations (here, separation orientations) and their use of host social services, among an understudied population.

This research also shows the necessity to distinguish between the two main reasons why immigrants can choose a strategy of separation (i.e., personal choice: "consensual separation", or group pressure: "forced separation") when studying the influence of

acculturation orientations on behaviors. Indeed, in the present study, they did not have the same consequences: only consensual separation was found here to be related to the frequency of visits to the community centers. In other words, it was when separation was internalized and personally endorsed (rather than endorsed because of the explicit ethnic group pressure) that this orientation predicted this kind of behavior.

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