FIRST- AND SECOND-GENERATION ASSIMILATION AND PERCEPTION

by

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Abstract

Reflected appraisal is a phenomenon in which people perceive the way others view their group, and how they take that view into consideration when forming views on themselves. Using the collective self-esteem (CSE) scale as a measure of reflected appraisal, prior research has found that ethnic and immigrant group had differences to the extent to which own-groups' views (private regard) correspond with others' views (public regard). However, not much research has focused on the factors that may influence the relationship between public and private regard. To address this gap in research, the current study explored how first and second-generation Latinx immigrants perceive the opinions of others and how those opinions are related to their own-group views. In addition, the current study examined whether the association between own group views and others' views are dependent upon one's level of assimilation. Using the CSE scale, 39 first- and second-generation Latinx evaluated the way their group was viewed (public regard), how they perceived their group (private regard), and their level of assimilation. Results showed no significant associations between public and private regard among both first- and second-generation immigrants. Moreover, this association was not dependent upon participant's levels of assimilation. Implications for the theory of reflected appraisal are discussed.

First and Second-Generation Assimilation and Perception

When immigrants first come to the United States of America, they often come bearing their own culture and beliefs. They similarly may have differing perceptions and experiences with the host culture. The purpose of the current study was to explore how first and second-generation immigrants perceive the opinions of others and how those opinions are related to own group views. In addition, the current study examined whether the association between own group views and others' views are dependent upon one's level of assimilation. To begin, a brief overview of the existing literature that investigates this link is presented. Then, a description of the specific purpose and hypotheses of the current study are detailed.

The Reflected Appraisal Paradox

Early theories of self-concept suggest that one's view of the self -corresponds with how we believe others see us (Mead, 1934). These theories are roughly described as reflected appraisal. In particular, Mead (1934) argued that the opinions of others are essential to the formation of our self-concept. Similarly, Cooley (1956), developed his concept of the looking glass self, with the assumption that self-evaluative processes reflect what others think towards them. While Mead and Cooley's theories do have some support, others have proposed that these theories may not be generalizable to all groups. Dubois (1903), for example, proposed that African Americans experience double consciousness, such that they separate the opinions of

others from their view of themselves. In line with these ideas, Crocker and Major (1989) explored the concept of self-esteem in low-status groups and found that despite negative evaluations from others, members of marginalized groups did not show decrements in self-esteem compared to the non-stigmatized groups.

Contemporary researchers have empirically investigated the theoretical tenets of reflected appraisal at the group level; in other words, the way that views of one's group are associated with other people's views of the group, using the collective self-esteem (CSE) scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The CSE includes public regard, which is the assessment of one's own group based off the evaluations of others, and private regard, which is a measure of how individuals believe others evaluate their social group.

Using the collective self-esteem scale as a measure of reflected appraisal, previous studies have observed ethnic group and immigrant generational differences in the extent to which private and public regard correspond (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994; Wiley, Perkins, & Deaux, 2008). For example, in one study, Asian, Black, and White college students responded to questions measuring their public and private regard (Crocker et al., 1994). Results showed that there were significant association between public and private regard among White and Asian students such that their views of their groups were associated with how they believed others viewed their group. In contrast, Black students did not associate their private opinions of

their group with the opinions of others. This means that Black students felt that the public had a negative opinion on their group and decided to not associate the public's opinion with their own. The association between the public's opinion and the opinions of one's self was further explored in Latino participants.

Similar results to the Black students in the prior study were seen in a study on Latinos. A study was done by Spencer and Collins (2006) who examined the reflected appraisal process among Latino participants. In particular, they examined whether the negative perceptions of one's group had an influence on an individual's private regard or self-concept. It was found that participants generally had low estimates of public regard, but high estimates of private regard. In addition, there was no association between public and private regard. These results overlap with the findings from of Crocker et al., (1994) which suggests that devalued groups separate public views from private views.

Generation status was brought into the mix in a two-part study that examined the relationship between public and private regard among first and second-generation immigrants (Wiley et al., 2008). They hypothesized that there would be significant differences between first and second-generation participants, such that first-generation immigrants would associate public and private regard, but second-generation would not. The researchers made this prediction due to earlier findings by Crocker (1994) and the assumption that first-generation immigrants do not

know what the public view is on their group yet. Similar to Crocker et al., (1994), West Indian participants completed the public and private regard subscales of the CSE. It was found that there was a significant association between public and private regard among the first-generation. The results for second-generation participants were highly similar to the results of Crocker's (1994) Black sample, such that there was no significant association between public and private regard in the second-generation. This suggests that for people of African descent, being born in the country and having the exposure to discrimination may make them not want to associate with the public regard.

Their second study incorporated Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino, and White first- and second-generation immigrants see if the association between public and private regard changes as an artifact of generation and ethnicity (Wiley et al., 1994). It was found that Asian/Pacific Islander and White participants has more positive estimates of public regard than Latinos and Blacks. Similarly, among Asian participants, public and private regard were linked across both generations. In contrast, among Black and Latino participants, there was an association between public and private regard in the first-generation and no association in the second. Surprisingly, the same pattern was found among White participants. Wiley et al. (2008) interpreted these results to mean that since second-generation immigrants of color had been socialized within a U.S. racial hierarchy, they experience less positive regard from the than White participants.

This same concept was explored in a specific group of people, and has investigated the contextual factors associated with public and private regard (Kim & Lee, 2011). Asian American college students completed the public and private regard subscales similar to previous studies. Participants also responded to questions related to their home and college life, including community ethnic composition, the number of same ethnicity peers, and their perceived campus racial climate social context. Like previous studies, there was a significant association between public and private regard. In addition, public regard was significantly associated with community ethnic composition. No other contextual variables were associated with public regard. This study suggests that positive public opinions may only matter depending on one's perception of their community ethnic composition.

These developments provide new opportunities to investigate other factors that may shape the reflected appraisal process. The goal of the current study is to examine the ways in which assimilation into U.S. culture may shape the evaluations of others and the association between the views of one's group and others. Past research provides some clues regarding the role of assimilation. For example, previous studies have investigated the ways in which majority groups' attitudes toward immigrants have an impact on the acculturation strategies of immigrants. An influential theoretical model is Berry's acculturation model (1997). According to Berry's model, when immigrants enter a new cultural environment, they are faced with two

questions: 1) whether they wish to maintain their affiliation with the culture of their country of origin and 2) whether they wish to forge relations with the dominant culture of the society they are entering. Immigrants employ one of four acculturation strategies dependent on how they respond to the issues: assimilation refers to completely adopting the dominant culture and disassociating oneself from one's heritage culture; separation refers to maintaining one's heritage culture without adopting elements from the dominant culture; marginalization refers to separating oneself from both one's heritage culture and the dominant culture of the society they are migrating to, and; integration, which is for Berry the most efficient strategy in terms of adaptation outcomes, refers to forging or maintaining relations with both one's country of origin and with the dominant culture. According to recent research findings among Moroccan and Romanian immigrants living in France, identification with the host country was associated with assimilation and identification with the country origin was associated with an integration acculturation strategy (Badea, Jetten, Iyer, & Er-Rafiy, 2011).

Other research suggests that immigrants who feel welcome and respected by their host society have been shown to perceive themselves as part of that new society. The concept of subgroup respect, for example, refers to immigrants' sense of whether the majority population recognizes, accepts, and values each subgroup that comprises the whole (Huo & Molina, 2006). Research on subgroup respect has shown that for ethnic minorities, higher perceived respect

predicted more positive out-group attitudes, more positive feelings toward the host nation, and higher levels of trust in its institutions (Huo & Molina, 2006; Huo, Molina, Binning, & Funge, 2010). Other more recent research has shown that immigrant's feelings of inclusion in Israeli society was largely related to the ways in which they perceived they were defined by the host society (Raijman & Geffen, 2017). These findings overlap with prior research in that first-generation immigrants take the public regard into consideration when forming opinions on themselves. Together, this research suggests that experiences and perceptions that the majority group has about one's group may also exert a strong influence on the way in which immigrants feel and belong in the host culture.

Taken together, past research suggests that individuals from groups that perceive themselves to be positively valued in U.S. society (i.e., Whites, Asians) maintain a link between public and private regard while individuals from groups that are negatively valued in U.S. society (e.g., Blacks) separate the views that others may have of their group from their own private regard (Crocker, et al., 1994). Likewise, public and private regard were found to be linked in among first-generation immigrants of color and unrelated in the second generation (Wiley et al., 2008). However, not much research has focused on other factors that may influence public and private regard.

Based on past research, the current study examined the reflected appraisal process among first and second-generation Latinx immigrants and whether the association between public and private regard is dependent upon participants' level of assimilation. Like previous research, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant association between public and private regard among first-generation but not among second-generation. This may be because second-generation immigrants grew up in The United States of America and understand the culture more than first-generation immigrants do. In addition, the current study examined whether the association between public and private regard is dependent upon participants level of assimilation. It was also hypothesized that there would be a significant positive association between public and private regard among those who are more/perceive themselves to be assimilated, but not among those who are less/perceive themselves to not be assimilated.

Methods

In a study done by questionnaire, first- and second-generation Latinos answered questions regarding reflected appraisal, and other key theoretical variables.

Participants

For this study, 39 Latinx participants were recruited: nine first-generation and 30 second-generation from both the Psychology Participant Pool and from the researcher's family. Participants were all of Latinx descent and above the age of 18. Participants' ages ranged from 18 years to 56 years (M= 23.2, SD= 8.2). Most participants were 21 years old. The four

participants who were from the researcher's family were located in Queens, NY. All other participants were located on the SUNY Purchase campus or in the Westchester area.

Measures

Collective Self-Esteem Scale. A modified version of the A modified version of the Collective Self- Esteem scale (CSE; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) was used. The two subscales that were included were: 1) public regard -"Overall, my race is considered good by others," and 2) private regard - "I feel good about the racial group I belong to." Each subscale included three items similar to the aforementioned, and participants were required to rate their agreement to each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree to 2= strongly agree). Negative items for these scales were reverse scored and then added up. People who answered "strongly agreed" more often on the public regard subscale were considered to be associating public and private regard. People who answered "strongly agreed" on the private regard subscale questions were considered to not be making the association between public and private regard. The Collective Self-Esteem scale had two other subscales that were not used: membership esteem and importance to identity; which we did not measure for.

Assimilation Measure. To measure assimilation, Unger's (2002) and Davis' (2011) acculturation scales were used. Unger's acculturation scale measures assimilation into the U.S. in three different ways: (1) separation which is whether a participant still identifies with their country of origin while rejecting the host country, (2) integration which is whether the participant mixes aspects of the two cultures, and (3) marginalization which is when a participant does not relate to either of the two cultures. An item from this scale is: "I am most comfortable with people from…".The four possible responses would be: (a) The United States, (b) The

country my family is from, (c) both, and (d) neither. Davis' acculturation scale is broader, only measuring whether participants only associate with their country of origin or with the host country. An item from this scale is: "In general, what language(s) do you read and speak?" Five possible responses for this would be: (1) Only Spanish, (2) Spanish better than English, (3) both equally, (4) English better than Spanish, and (5) only English. People who were considered to be more assimilated into the United State were people who answered "The United States" more often and the people who were not considered assimilated were people who answered "The Country my family is from" more often.

Procedure

Participants were asked for written consent before they began the study. The consent form informed participants what they will be asked to do and the amount of time it will take. They were then given the demographic survey over Qualtrics. They were then given questions from the public and private regard subscales, and Unger's and Davis' assimilation scales. After the questionnaire was completed, participants were debriefed and compensated 5 USD.

Results

The first hypothesis explored reflected appraisal process in first- and second-generation Latinx. It was hypothesized that there would be a significant association between public and private regard among first-generation but not among second-generation. To examine this hypothesis, a bivariate correlation was conducted between public and private regard subscales among first and second-generation immigrants separately. In contrast to what was hypothesized, among first-generation immigrants, there was a non-significant negative association between public and private regard among first-generation $r(9) = -.21$, $p = .68$. In line with what was

hypothesized, there was a non-significant association between public and private among the second-generation $r(30) = -.00$, $p = .99$.

It was also hypothesized that there will be a significant positive association between public and private regard among those who are less assimilated, but not among those who are more assimilated. To examine this, a bivariate correlation was conducted between public and private regard among those who are more assimilated and less assimilated. In contrast to what was hypothesized, there was a non-significant negative association between public and private regard among those who were more assimilated $r(12) = -.23$, $p = .47$. In line with what was hypothesized, a non-significant association was found between public and private regard among those and not among who are less assimilated people $r(12) = .08$, $p = .80$.

Discussion

The current study sought to examine the reflected appraisal process among first and second-generation Latinx immigrants. The current study also examined the extent to which the reflected appraisal process depended on people's level of assimilation. It was hypothesized that there will be a significant association between public and private regard among first-generation. It was found that neither first nor second-generation Latinx immigrants associated own group views with others' views. The non-significant association found in both generations differs from previous studies. Previous studies found that first-generation immigrants did have an association between public and private regard where second-generation immigrants did not. It may mean that 2019 Latinx immigrants perceive that the public has a negative evaluation of their group, making prior research irrelevant.

It was also hypothesized that there will be a significant positive association between public and private regard among those who are more assimilated, but not among those who are less assimilated. Again, it was found that less assimilated people nor more assimilated people associated public and private regard.

The non-significant association in both generations may mean that no matter their immigration status or level of assimilation, both are aware of how the public views them and has already made the decision to not associate with the public's opinion. This fits in with the body of research due to the rise in technology and people's modern day knowledge of the world.

The study is limited in several ways. First, the sample size consisted of only 39 participants. Perhaps a larger sample size might have yielded different results. In addition, most of the participants were recruited from SUNY Purchase, which is just a small part of the U.S. population. In addition, the age ranged from 18 years to 56, but mainly consisted of 21 year old's who are still forming their identity. Being that participants were mainly around the age of 21, their public opinion may be formed by how long they lived in the U.S.

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