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Divided Loyalties: Identity Integration and Cultural Cues Predict Ingroup Favoritism Among Biculturals

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Abstract

How do biculturals, or individuals who identify with more than one culture, manage their loyalties between two cultural ingroups? We argue that this process is moderated by Bicultural Identity Integration (BII), or individual differences in perceived conflict between two cultural identities. Two quasi-experiments examined biculturals' preferences for two competing groups, each representing one of their cultural identities, in response to cultural primes. In Study 1, we found that Flemish-Belgian biculturals with low BII, or those who perceive their cultural identities as conflicting, favored the primed cultural group *less* than the unprimed cultural group. In Study 2, we found the same effect among Asian-American biculturals, but only when the cultural primes were positive. These findings show that low BIIs exhibit psychological reactance to cultural primes that are seen as threatening to the self, which in turn affect their loyalties to competing cultural ingroups.

Keywords

Bicultural Identity Integration (BII), Cultural Prime, Cultural Identity, Ingroup Favoritism, Psychological Reactance, Flemish-Belgian Biculturals, Asian-American Biculturals

Introduction

Global migration is an increasingly common phenomenon with 258 million people living in countries outside their country of birth (United Nations, 2017). Whether as refugees, immigrants, expatriates, students, or sojourners, migrants are seen as having divided loyalties between their countries of origin and the countries to which they have moved. Consider the Chinese-American scientist Wen Ho Lee, who was accused of espionage in the U.S. Although biculturals like Lee "…maintain[s] affectionate ties with friends and family in China, [they] feel[s], like many immigrants, a strong allegiance to this [U.S.] country and its Government […] 'I love China […] but I am a citizen of the United States'" (Chang, 1999). Lee's seemingly divided loyalties between the U.S. and China made him appear threatening to U.S. interests. Similar sentiments were raised after the recent terrorist attacks in Paris. When some of the suspected terrorists were found to be immigrants who have been living in Western Europe for much of their lives, they were accused of betraying their countries of residence while paying allegiance to their countries of origin (Ivison, 2016).

According to social identity theory, we all belong to and identify with multiple social groups, including our gender, race, culture, nationality, religion, profession, and so on (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). These social categories are important aspects of our self-concept and help provide us with a source of self-esteem (e.g., Brewer, 1991; Crocker & Luthanen, 1990; Lemyre & Smith, 1985; Oakes & Turner, 1980; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). As such, people tend to bolster their positive perceptions of the groups to which they belong—or their ingroups—and often also diminish the outgroup—or those groups that rival the ingroup (e.g., Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1999). Ingroup favoritism—i.e., the tendency to advantage ingroup (over outgroup) members—can have dramatic consequences for daily life, leading to positive evaluations and preferential treatment of the ingroup and discrimination against members of the outgroup (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Perry, Priest, Paradies, Barlow, & Sibley, 2018; see Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002).

Ingroup favoritism, however, becomes more complicated when people face divided loyalties between two ingroups. When individuals identify with multiple groups within a social category, such as with two cultural groups, the distinction between the ingroup and the outgroup is ambiguous (Deaux, 1996). Indeed, the divided loyalties exemplified by Lee are considered an inherent characteristic of migrants' psychology (Renshon, 2002). Faced with psychologically managing two competing cultural identities with their respective norms, values, and schemas, migrants may disidentify with their home or host culture or even both (Berry, 1990). But for those who continue identifying with their two cultural groups (i.e., biculturals; Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000), questions about loyalties or which ingroup they favor remain particularly pertinent. Although prior research on biculturals suggests that their preferences are malleable, shifting their frames of reference and behavior in favor of a cued identity (e.g., Chattaraman, Rudd, & Lennon, 2010; LeBoeuf, Shafir, & Bayuk, 2010; Luna, Ringberg, & Perachhio, 2008), these preferences have not yet been examined for ingroup favoritism. Furthermore, we propose that, rather than simply aligning their choices with a salient identity, biculturals' preference for one of their ingroups over the other may depend simultaneously on the cultural cues received from the context and the bicultural individual him- or herself.

In this paper, we contribute generally to the literature on intergroup relations and specifically to the growing literature on biculturals' cultural frame switching by examining a novel and complex consequence of biculturalism—divided loyalties between two cultural ingroups. Drawing from social identity theory and the literature on multiple cultural identities, we propose that biculturals' tendency to favor one cultural group over another—or, display ingroup favoritism—is influenced by the interaction between external cultural cues and individual differences in psychological identity management.

Bicultural Identity Integration

Research has shown clear individual differences in how biculturals psychologically manage their dual cultural identities (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Cheng, Lee, Benet-Martínez, & Nguyen, 2014; Hanek, 2017). Specifically, Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) is an individual difference measure that taps into biculturals' perceived conflict between two cultural identities (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). Although biculturals with low identity integration (low BIIs) strongly identify with both cultural groups to which they belong, they perceive their cultural identities to be disparate and in conflict. They report feeling torn between their two cultural identities and believe they have to choose to be one or the other. In contrast, those with high BII see their cultural identities as compatible and believe that they can be both at the same time.

Extensive evidence shows that high and low BIIs react to external cultural cues in different ways. High BIIs tend to exhibit a "chameleon effect", whereby they activate cultural frames to fit the situation. For instance, Chinese-American biculturals may act more "American" in an American context, and more "Chinese" in a Chinese context (Benet-Martínez, Lee, & Cheng, 2021; Collins, 2000; Hong et al., 2000). However, low BIIs exhibit cultural reactance, behaving in ways that are *opposite* to the cultural demands of the situation. For example, after being exposed to American cultural primes, Chinese-American biculturals with low BII made more prototypically *Eastern* external attributions; when exposed to Chinese cultural primes, they made more prototypically *Western* internal attributions (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Cheng, Lee, & Benet-Martínez, 2006, 2014). Low BIIs' cultural reactance has been observed in a wide range of psychological processes, including decision-making, self-perceptions, self-expressions, and cultural orientations (Mok & Morris, 2010;

Mok, Cheng, & Morris, 2010, 2012; Zou, Morris, & Benet-Martínez, 2008). Across these studies, low BIIs appear to activate the "unprimed" cultural frame of reference, which in turn leads to culturally contrasting attitudes and behaviors (see Cheng et al., 2014 for a review).

Psychological Reactance Theory

Low BIIs' cultural reactance may enable them to reaffirm and preserve the part of the self they perceive to be threatened by contextual cues. According to Psychological Reactance Theory, people seek to preserve their autonomy and react against any perceived threats to their freedom (1989, Brehm, 1966; Chartrand, Dalton, & Fitzsimons, 2007; Weiner & Brehm, 1966; Wheeler, DeMarree, & Petty, 2007). For instance, to assert their autonomy in the face of external pressures, people were slower getting into their cars when someone was waiting for their parking lot spot; this effect was magnified when the person waiting honked to speed them along, making the threat to the self more salient (Ruback & Juieng, 1997).

In the same way, external cues that make one's cultural identity salient can also lead to cultural reactance. Cultural stereotypes, for instance, can be seen as an external threat to one's autonomy, and they lead to behaviors that counter the stereotype. For example, Asians performed worse in math tests when primed with Asian cultural cues, countering the cultural stereotype that Asians are superior in math (Shih, Ambady, Richeson, Fujita, & Gray, 2002). Similar forms of psychological reactance may be at play for biculturals with low BII (Kibria, 2002). There is evidence that, because low BIIs perceive their multiple cultural identities as incompatible, they are more likely to perceive primes representing one of their cultural identities as threatening to their other cultural identity (Mok & Morris, 2013). Importantly, these perceptions of threat have been shown to mediate the relationship between low BII and cultural reactance, suggesting that low BIIs contrast to cultural cues to protect their threatened cultural identity (Mok & Morris, 2013).

Furthermore, self-threat may also arise for low BIIs in the face of cultural cues because these represent discrepant information vis-à-vis their personal experiences. People in general tend to perceive threats to the self when presented with information that runs counter to their experiences, beliefs, or attitudes (e.g., Sherman & Cohen, 2002). Among biculturals, prior research has shown that low BIIs engage in higher levels of cognitive processing of cultural cues, indicating that these cues warrant closer inspection because they may be perceived as more discrepant for low BIIs (Benet-Martínez, Lee, & Leu, 2006; Cheng et al., 2006). Indeed, prior research has shown that low BIIs' experiences of biculturalism tend to be more negative than those of high BIIs (Cheng et al., 2006). They are less likely to feel secure about their bicultural status, and less likely to believe that their biculturalism is an advantage in their lives (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). Low BIIs also experience more cultural discrimination and acculturation stress (Birman, 1994; Downie, Koestner, Elgeledi, & Cree, 2004; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). As such, positive cultural cues are particularly discrepant from the personal experiences of low BIIs. Therefore, the typically positive cultural primes used in experimental research (e.g., cultural icons) are inherently counter to low BII's personal cultural experiences and thus more threatening. As a result, the frequently observed cultural reactance among low BIIs in response to cultural cues may be an artefact of their reaction to discrepant information and corresponding effort to protect the self. In other words, low BIIs may contrast against positive cultural cues to mitigate the self-threat brought on by discrepant information.

Prior research supports this notion. Specifically, Cheng et al. (2006) elucidated the influence of prime valence (i.e., positive vs. negative) on biculturals' frame switching tendencies. Consistent with a self-threat perspective, high and low BIIs exhibited assimilation and contrast effects, respectively, only when the cultural primes were *positively-valenced*. When the cultural primes were *negatively-valenced*, however, the effects were reversed: high BIIs exhibited a contrast effect whereas low BIIs exhibited an assimilation effect. These patterns suggest that discrepant information between one's bicultural experiences and external cultural cues presents a self-threat and leads to cultural reactance. For low BIIs, positive cultural primes are discrepant with their negative bicultural experiences (Cheng & Lee, 2009; 2013; Lilgendahl et al., 2018) and, perceived as a self-threat, engender a contrast effect. Negative cultural primes, however, correspond to low BII's expectations and are perceived as non-threatening to the self, leading to culturally assimilative responses.

The Present Studies: Low BII's Reactance in Ingroup Favoritism

The current research seeks to advance our understanding of the consequences of biculturalism in a novel context—ingroup favoritism—while also shedding more light on the complex psychological mechanisms—particularly, self-threat—by which these outcomes occur. Drawing on social identity theory, psychological reactance theory, and the research on biculturals outlined above, we examine biculturals' divided loyalties between their two cultural ingroups in response to external cultural cues. In line with psychological reactance, we hypothesize that low BIIs will contrast against cues representing one of their cultural ingroups by favoring the other, unprimed cultural ingroup. In short, we predict an interaction between individual differences in BII and external cultural cues on biculturals' ingroup favoritism. We test this prediction in Study 1.

Furthermore, advancing a self-threat perspective, we argue that the valence of the cultural cues should matter for biculturals' ingroup favoritism. If low BIIs seek to preserve a threatened identity, they should show reactance only in response to positive cultural primes, which, because they represent discrepant information, are particularly threatening to the self. In contrast, for negative cultural cues, because they are in line with low BII's experiences and not threatening, we should observe an assimilation effect. In the context of ingroup favoritism, we expect that low BIIs' preference for one cultural ingroup over the other will depend on not only the direction but also the valence of the external cultural cue. We test this prediction in Study 2.

Study 1

In Study 1, we examine Dutch-speaking Flemish-Belgian biculturals in Belgium. Similar to Asian- or Latin-Americans, Flemish-Belgians are a distinct cultural subgroup within Belgium (Duriez, Reijerse, Luyckx, Vanbeselaere, & Meeus, 2013). They differ from the French-speaking Walloon-Belgians along linguistic, geographic, socioeconomic, political, and cultural dimensions (Billiet, Maddens, & Frognier, 2006).[1] While the southern part of the country, Wallonia, primarily consists of French-speaking Walloons, the northern part, Flanders, consists mostly of Dutch-speaking Flemings (Van der Linden & Roets, 2017).[2] This geographical segregation of Walloons and Flemings has strengthened their cultural differences. For Flemish-Belgian biculturals, their local or regional identity closely aligns with their Flemish cultural identity, while their national identity closely aligns with their Belgian identity (Klein, Licata, Van der Linden, Mercy, & Luminet, 2011).

Consistent with psychological reactance and self-threat, we propose that Flemish-Belgians with low BII, who perceive their Flemish and Belgian cultural identities as incompatible, will be more likely to exhibit a contrast effect in ingroup favoritism, preferring the unprimed (or threatened) cultural identity. That is, when choosing between a Flemish or a Belgian group, Flemish-Belgians with low BII, compared to those with high BII, will more likely favor the Belgian group when primed with Flemish cues, and the Flemish group when primed with Belgian cues.

Pilot Study

For Study 1, we developed a novel priming task involving descrambling sentences that featured either the word "local" or "national". To pre-test this priming task and establish that these terms carry the intended meanings for Flemish-Belgians, we recruited a group of Flemish-Belgian participants to evaluate the extent to which the term "local" and "national" are associated with their "Flemish" and "Belgian" identities, respectively.

Participants

Forty-seven Flemish-Belgian biculturals (61.7% women, mean age = 31.45, SD = 8.32) were recruited primarily through social media such as Reddit and Facebook to complete an online survey. All participants resided in the northern, Dutch-speaking region of Belgium; those living in Brussels or speaking French as a primary language were excluded. The survey was conducted in Dutch and all measures were translated and

back-translated from English to Dutch (Brislin, 1970). Participants were compensated with US$5 for their participation. All studies reported in this paper received IRB approval and written consent from participants.

Measures

Local and National Sentences

Participants were asked to read 50 sentences, presented in random order, 25 of which contained the word "local" and 25 the word "national" (a similar priming measure was developed by Zhang & Khare, 2009). The two sets of sentences were identical, differing only in the use of the word "local" or "national". Sample sentences read "I belong to the local [national] community" and "We use local [national] products". After reading each sentence, participants indicated which of three groups—Belgians, Flemings, or Another Group—they felt was most associated with the word "local [national]" in the sentence they just read.

Cultural Identification

Participants' Belgian and Flemish identities were measured by one item each: "To what extent do you identify yourself as a Belgian [Fleming]?" (1= *not at all*; 7 = *very much*).

Demographics

Participants reported their gender, age, spoken languages, residential area, and nationality.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

All participants were Dutch-speaking Belgian citizens who currently reside in the northern region of Flanders in Belgium. All participants were qualified as Flemish-Belgian biculturals because their identification as both a Belgian and a Fleming were equal to or above the scale mid-point (4) (Mean $_{\text{Belgian ID}}$ = 6.23, SD = 1.09; Mean $_{\text{Flemish ID}}$ = 6.09, SD = 1.10).

Main Analyses

To test if Flemish-Belgian biculturals associated the words "local" and "national" with their Flemish and Belgian identities, respectively, responses to the 50 sentences were coded as Flemings = 1, Belgians = -1, and Another Group = 0. For 18 out of the 25 "local" sentences, the majority (i.e., more than 50%, range = 51.1%-61.7%) of participants associated the word "local" with "Flemings". For the remaining 7 sentences, although the percentage of participants selecting "Flemings" did not exceed 50%, "Flemings" was the most frequently selected option. For all 25 "national" sentences, the majority (i.e., more than 70%, range = 72.3%-97.7%) of participants associated the word "national" with "Belgians".

We also conducted one-sample *t*-tests comparing the average score across participants for each sentence to the baseline score of 0. A score above 0 for a sentence indicated a greater association with "Flemings" and a score below 0 indicated a greater association with "Belgians". For 21 out of 25 "local" sentences, average scores were significantly higher than 0, *t*s(46) > 2.01, *p*s < .05, indicating that participants tended to associate the word "local" in these sentences with "Flemings". For the remaining four "local" sentences, the results showed no significant difference from 0, *t*s (46) fell between .30 and 1.31, *p*s > .19, indicating that participants tended to associate the word "local" in these sentences with neither "Flemings" nor "Belgians". When aggregating the scores across all 25 "local" sentences, the mean score was significantly greater than 0, $t(46) = 4.97$, $p < .001$. These findings suggested that Flemish-Belgian biculturals perceived their Flemish identity as a local identity and associated the word "local" with "Flemings".

Identical analyses for the 25 "national" sentences indicated that average scores were significantly lower than 0, *t*s(46) < -3.38, *p*s >.01, ps < .05 for all 25 sentences. When aggregating the scores across all 25 "national" sentences, the mean score was significantly smaller than 0, $t(46) = -19.90$, $p < .001$. These results supported the notion that Flemish-Belgian biculturals perceived their Belgian identity as a national identity and associated the word "national" with "Belgians".

This pilot study supported the idea that, among Flemish-Belgian biculturals, the words "local" and "national" in these sentences invoked associations with their Flemish and Belgian culture and identity, respectively. Therefore, the 50 sentences were used as cultural primes in Study 1.

Method

Participants

We recruited a novel set of participants, separate from those who participated in the pilot study, for Study 1. We predetermined our sample size with 77 to arrive at a power of 1 - b = .80, assuming a medium effect (f^2 = .15; a = 05; 2-tailed). Participants were 78 Dutch-speaking Flemish-Belgian biculturals (64.5% women; mean age = 34.32, *SD* = 7.54)[3] . All participants resided in the northern, Dutch-speaking region in Belgium. Participants were primarily recruited using social media such as Reddit and Facebook and entered into a raffle to win a $25 iTunes gift card.

Procedures and Measures

Participants completed an online survey in Dutch that was back-translated from English and included the following measures.

Identity Integration

To measure perceptions of compatibility between their Flemish and Belgian identities, participants completed a modified version of the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale tailored to their particular cultural identities (BIIS-1, Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005)[4] . Using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Completely Disagree*, 7 = *Completely Agree*), participants responded to the following eight items: (1) My ideals as a Fleming differ from my ideals as a Belgian (R), (2) I feel conflicted between my identity as a Fleming and my identity as a Belgian (R), (3) I keep everything about being a Fleming separate from being a Belgian (R), (4) I am someone whose behavior switches between Flemish cultural norms and Belgian cultural norms (R), (5) I feel torn between the expectations of being a Fleming and a Belgian (R), (6) My self-concept seamlessly blends my identity as a Fleming and a Belgian, (7) I do not feel any tension between my goals as a Fleming and a Belgian, and (8) Succeeding as a Fleming involves the same sides of myself as succeeding as a Belgian. Scores were aggregated to create a BII composite ($\alpha = .82$) with higher scores indicating higher levels of integration between Flemish and Belgian identities (high BII).

Cultural Primes

Participants were randomly assigned to either a "local" or a "national" priming condition in which they were instructed to unscramble 25 sentences that primed either their Flemish (local) or Belgian (national) culture (see Zhang & Khare, 2009). As described above, the two sets of sentences were pre-tested and shown to successfully prime Flemish-Belgian biculturals to associate the word "local" with Flemish culture and the word "national" with Belgian culture.

Ingroup Favoritism Task

Next, participants read about a company that assigned two teams to design new features for a digital camera. One team was comprised of members representing all of Belgium; the other team was made up of only

Flemish-Belgians. Each team came up with five camera features. The features were generated by 20 technology designers, who listed new camera features and rated each feature's attractiveness. The features (5 for each team) were matched for attractiveness and counterbalanced between the two teams. To measure ingroup favoritism, we asked participants to select the team that provided the best design.

Cultural Identification

To control for identification with each culture, participants answered a modified version of the Local Global Identity Scale to tap into their local/ Flemish and national/ Belgian identities (Zhang & Khare, 2009). Using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Completely Disagree*, 7 = *Completely Agree*), participants rated 18 items. Ten items measured local (Flemish) identification, such as "I am well aware of local events." Eight items measured national (Belgian) identification, such as "I believe I mostly belong to the whole country." Items were averaged to form measures for identification with local (Flemish) and national (Belgian) cultures (α = .62 and .72, respectively).

Demographics

Participants indicated their country of birth, region of residence in Belgium, first language, gender, and age.

Results

Descriptive statistics showed that BII, Flemish identity, and Belgian identity were normally distributed (skewness fell between 0 and -.5). Table 1 displays descriptive statistics for key variables. Four participants were excluded from the analyses because they were non-native Dutch speakers (the language of Flemish-Belgians). We first conducted a logistic regression on participants' ingroup favoritism (choosing the Flemish team = 1 or Belgian team = 0). The independent variables were mean-centered BII, cultural prime (Flemish = 1, Belgian = 0), and the interaction. Covariates included age, gender, identification with Belgian culture, and identification with Flemish culture. The results revealed no main effects. As predicted, we found a significant two-way interaction of BII and cultural prime, *B* = 1.06. *SE* = .053, *Wald* = 4.03, *p* = .045, 95% CI = [.12, .98]. Table 2 lists the statistics and Fig. 1 illustrates this interaction.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics in Study 1.

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Age	34.48	7.45						
2	Gender	1.64	0.48	−0.03					
3	Flemish Identity	4.09	1.41	0.14	−0.15				
4	Belgian Identity	4.52	1.63	−0.12	0.19	−0.39***			
5	BII	5.06	1.05	−0.18	0.19	−0.25*	−0.38**		
6	Team Choice	0.53	0.5	−0.1	−0.08	−0.03	0.2	0.11	

Note. N = 73. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Team choice was coded as 1 = National team and 0 = Local team.

Table 2. Multivariate Logistic Regression on Team Choice in Study 1.

Variables	B	SE	Wald χ^2	df	*p*	Exp (B)
Intercept	−0.55	1.80	0.094	1	0.76	0.58
Age	0.37	0.36	1.07	1	0.30	1.45
Gender	0.48	0.55	0.76	1	0.39	1.61
Flemish Identity	−0.009	0.20	0.002	1	0.96	0.99
Belgian Identity	−0.20	0.19	1.12	1	0.29	0.82
Culture	−0.089	0.52	0.029	1	0.86	0.92
BII	−0.78	0.42	3.43	1	0.064	0.46
Culture x BII	1.06	0.53	4.03	1	0.045	2.88

Note. N = 74. Choosing the Flemish team was coded as 1 and choosing the Belgian team was coded as 0. *$p < .05$.

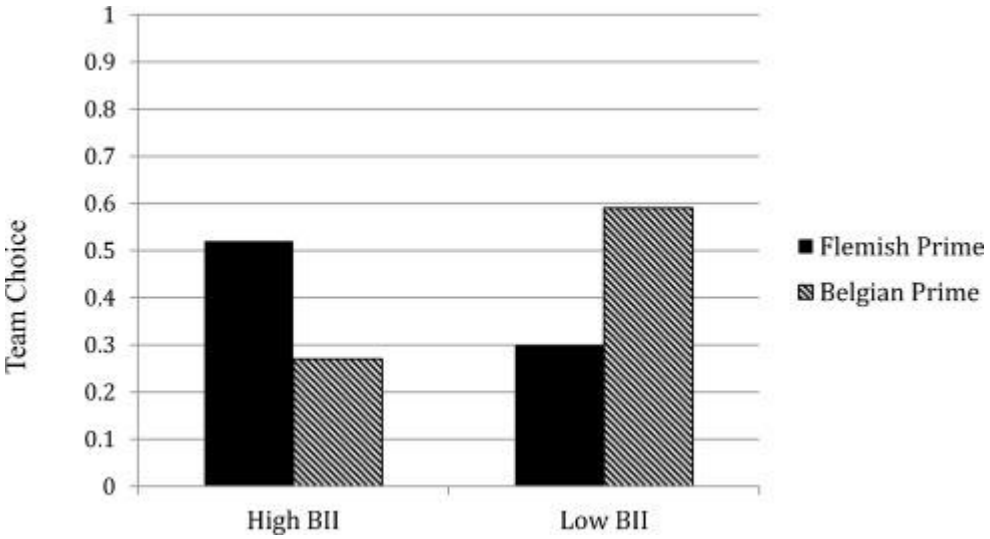

Fig. 1. Two-way Interaction of Culture Prime and BII on Team Choice (Study 1).

Note. Choosing the Flemish team was coded as 1 and choosing the Belgian team was coded as 0.

As shown in Fig. 1, low BIIs exhibited a cultural reactance effect: they were more likely to favor the national Belgian team when primed with local Flemish cues, and more likely to favor the local Flemish team when primed with national Belgian cues. A planned-contrast analysis with low BIIs (-1 SD) found a significant main effect of cultural prime, B = -1.25, SE = .74, $Wald$ = 2.83, p (one-tailed) = .045, 95% CI = [1.03, 11.78]. The same analysis for high BIIs (+1 SD) found no effect of cultural prime.

Discussion

Study 1 provided initial evidence that group loyalties can fluctuate as a function of external cues and individual differences in bicultural identity integration. In line with psychological reactance, low BIIs showed a contrast effect in response to cultural cues, favoring the unprimed cultural ingroup. Despite supporting our first hypothesis—that low BIIs will exhibit cultural reactance in ingroup favoritism—Study 1 also had some limitations, which we address in Study 2.

First, Study 1 focused on one particular set of cultural identities with their unique norms and schemas, which may not apply to other cultural identities. To generalize beyond a single sample, Study 2 sought to replicate the contrast effect in ingroup favoritism among a different bicultural population—Asian-Americans. Asian-Americans' dual cultural identities reflect not only potential clashes between ethnic minority (Asian) and majority (American) cultures, but also, similar to Flemish-Belgians, sub-cultural and national identities. Although, unlike Flemish-Belgians, divisions between Asian Americans' ethnic and national identities do not have strong political roots, these relationships are not entirely without fraught as it is not uncommon for Asian-Americans to suffer from national identity denial or to be seen as less American (Cheryan & Monin, 2005). Because prior research has shown that, despite different antecedents to the potential conflicts between dual cultural identities, meaningful comparisons can be made across diverse bicultural groups (Cheng et al., 2014), we include another bicultural sample not to address antecedents of BII but instead bolster the findings of Study 1. Particularly, observing cultural reactance among a different bicultural population, such as Asian-Americans, would suggest that the effect found in Study 1 is more likely a consequence of general psychological processes among low BIIs and less likely a function of the unique antecedents, knowledge sets, or socio-political settings associated with a particular set of cultural identities.

Second, Study 1 examined participants' divided loyalties between two groups with overlapping boundaries—a Flemish/local group and a mainstream Belgian/national group. To the extent that a local group can be subsumed under a national group, the boundaries between these groups can be inherently ambiguous and ingroup favoritism perhaps less deliberate. Testing our predictions in a population with more clearly-defined group boundaries should enable us to not only observe stronger effects of cultural cues on ingroup favoritism (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Moscovici, 1984) but also tap into underlying mechanisms for these preferences. Therefore, in Study 2, we examine Asian-Americans' divided loyalties between two distinct ingroups with clear boundaries—a group from the U.S. and a group from Asia—which represent only one cultural identity each.

Third, Study 1 only included a single measure of ingroup favoritism—participants' choice of either the Flemish or Belgian team. But ingroup favoritism may also be more subtle and include more general preferences and attitudes that place the ingroup above others (e.g., Hewstone et al., 2002). To capture both behavioral and attitudinal forms of ingroup favoritism, Study 2 examined our predictions with an additional measure—positive attributes ascribed to the ingroup.

Fourth, we argued that low BIIs exhibit cultural reactance because cultural cues present threats to the self. Although the contrast effects found in Study 1 may suggest that low BIIs perceive a cultural cue that primes one ingroup to be threatening to the unprimed part of the self, and therefore favor the underemphasized ingroup to preserve it (Mok & Morris, 2013), we did not directly tap into a self-threat mechanism. Study 2 therefore directly tests this mechanism by examining the moderating effect of cue valence on the interaction between BII and cultural cues. Given that self-threats are heightened when people are presented with discrepant information and that low BIIs tend to have had more negative bicultural experiences (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Cheng & Lee, 2009; Cheng et al., 2006; 2013; Sherman & Cohen, 2002), the positivity or negativity of the cultural cues should respectively accentuate or diminish the psychological threat experienced by low BIIs. That is, because positive cultural cues are particularly discrepant from the personal experiences of low BIIs, these primes should lead to higher levels of self-threat among low BIIs, which in turn should produce a stronger tendency to exhibit cultural reactance (Cheng et al., 2006; Hong, 1992; Jonason & Knowles, 2006; Mok & Morris, 2010; Sherman & Cohen, 2002). In short, in Study 2 we seek to pinpoint a self-threat mechanism underlying biculturals' ingroup favoritism by testing the prediction that low BIIs' tendency to favor the unprimed cultural group will be stronger for positive, compared to negative, cultural cues.

Study 2

In Study 2, we hypothesized a cultural prime x prime valence x BII interaction effect such that, among low BIIs, we would observe a contrast effect only to positive cultural primes. That is, compared to Asian-Americans with high BII, we expected those with low BII to be more likely to favor an Asian group over an American group when primed with positive American cues, and more likely to favor an American group over an Asian group when primed with positive Asian cues (i.e., reactance to cues). We expected the opposite to be true when low BIIs are primed with negative cultural cues (i.e., assimilation to cues).

Method

Participants

We predetermined our sample size with 295 to arrive at a power of 1 - b = .80, assuming a small effect (f^2 = .05, a = .05; 2-tailed). Two hundred and seventy-three Asian-American biculturals (50.6% women, mean age = 19.59, *SD* = 1.48) participated.[5] All participants were U.S. citizens recruited from a summer camp for Asian-American college students in Taipei, Taiwan.[6] Fifty-five of the participants were born in East or Southeast Asian countries (Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, or Singapore) and moved to the U.S. before the age of eight. The remaining participants were born in the U.S. and have parents who were born in East or Southeast Asian countries. Participants received a souvenir pen as a token of appreciation for their participation.

Procedures and Measures

Participants filled out a paper-and-pencil survey in English, which contained the scales below.

Identity Integration

Participants completed the 8-item Bicultural Identity Integration Scale (BIIS-1, Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). The items were similar to Study 1, except "Belgian" was replaced by "American", and "Flemish" was replaced by "Asian". The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .68$. Higher scores indicated higher levels of BII.

Valenced Cultural Priming

The priming procedure was adopted from Cheng et al. (2006). Participants were randomly assigned to one of four word mazes (positive Asian, positive American, negative Asian, or negative American), and told to find a list of five words as quickly as possible. Listed in Table 3, the target words in each word maze were drawn from previous research describing positive and negative cultural stereotypes, and have been pre-tested in prior research to differ significantly on valence (positivity vs. negativity) and culture (Asian vs. American; Cheng et al., 2006).

Table 3. Valenced Cultural Primes in Study 2.

Word valence	Asian words	American words
Positive words	Parents	Sporty
	Disciplined	Independent
	Polite	Equality
	Patient	Enjoy life
	Family	Confident
Negative words	Superstition	Lazy
	Sheltered	Boastful
	Uptight	Arrogant
	Reserved	Ostentatious
	Nervous	Stubborn

To further assure the effectiveness of the cultural representativeness of the primes, we recruited another sample of 63 U.S. citizens who were Asian-Americans (25.4% women, mean age = 29.38, SD = 4.58), whose mother and father were of Asian heritage (Mainland China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Vietnam and Laos) and who were either born in the U.S. (46.0%) or lived in the U.S. for over ten years (54.0%), for a separate pilot study. Participants were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk and were compensated with $0.5 U.S. dollar for their participation. Participants were asked to assign each of the priming words to one of three categories: Asian representative words (coded as 1), American representative words (coded as -1), or neither (coded as 0). Analyses of one-sample *t*-tests comparing to 0 showed that Asian words were rated as more representative of Asian culture (ratings were significantly higher than 0, $ts(62) > 4.00$, $ps < .001$) and American words were rated as more representative of American culture (ratings were significantly lower than 0, $ts(62) < -5.78$, $ps > .001$).

Ingroup Favoritism

The same team task was used as in Study 1, except that one of the two teams was from Asia, and the other from the U.S. Participants first rated the competence of each team. Using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Completely Disagree* to 7 = *Completely Agree*), participants rated each team on 12 attributes—motivated, ambitious, boring (R), creative, stupid (R), friendly, considerate, intelligent, incompetent (R), positive, innovative, and professional (Ambady, Koo, Lee, & Rosenthal, 1996). The responses were aggregated such that higher ratings reflected higher competence ($\alpha = .85$ for the Asian and .84 for the American team). Then, participants chose one team as the best.

Control Variables

Participants were asked to rate their identification with American and Asian cultures along a 6-point scale (1 = *very weak*, 6 = *very strong*). Participants also provided demographic information.

Results

Twenty-six participants were excluded due to incomplete responses. Scores of BII, Asian Identity, and American Identity were normally distributed (skewness fell between -1 and 0). There was no difference between the U.S.-born and non-U.S.-born participants on their Asian identity, American identity or level of BII (*t*s (246) < 1, *p*s > .70). Table 4 contains the descriptive statistics for key variables. First, a binary logistic regression model was conducted on participants' recommendation for the best team (Asian team = 1 vs. American team = 0). The regression included three independent variables (cultural prime, prime valence, and mean-centered BII), the two-way interactions, and a three-way interaction. Covariates included age, gender, identification with Asian culture, and identification with American culture. The results revealed two significant main effects: cultural prime, $B = .84$, $SE = .43$, $Wald = 3.88$, $p = .049$, 95% CI = [1.00, 5.36] and prime valence, $B = 1.31$, $SE = .53$, $Wald = 6.16$, $p = .013$, 95% CI = [1.32, 10.41]. There were no significant two-way interactions. As predicted, there was a significant three-way interaction, $B = 1.48$, $SE = .71$, $Wald = 4.34$, $p = .037$, 95% CI = [1.09, 17.75]. Table 5 displays these results.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics in Study 2.

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Age	19.64	1.48							
2	Gender	1.50	0.50	−0.16**						
3	Asian Identity	4.88	0.84	0.00	0.17**					
4	American Identity	4.70	0.87	0.03	0.00	0.10				
5	BII	3.80	0.63	0.04	0.05	0.27***	0.09			
6	Recommendation Decision	0.50	0.50	−0.14*	−0.06	0.03	0.00	−0.06		
7	Ratings of Asian Team	4.87	0.77	0.04	0.01	0.21**	0.01	0.08	0.37***	
8	Ratings of American Team	4.72	0.71	0.01	0.01	0.22***	0.03	0.00	−0.27***	0.24***

Note. N = 247. Gender was coded as male = 1, female = 2. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 5. Multivariate Logistic Regression on Team Choice in Study 2.

Variables	B	SE	Wald χ^2	df	*p*	Exp (B)
Intercept	2.58	2.19	1.39	1	0.24	13.19
Age	−0.19	0.092	4.22	1	0.040	0.83
Gender	−0.47	0.28	2.85	1	0.092	0.63
Asian Identity	0.18	0.17	1.20	1	0.27	1.2
American Identity	0.028	0.16	0.033	1	0.86	1.03
Culture	0.84	0.43	3.88	1	0.049	2.32
Valence	1.31	0.53	6.16	1	0.013	3.7
BII	0.45	0.45	0.98	1	0.32	1.57
Culutre x Valence	−1.02	0.64	2.33	1	0.13	0.38
Culture x BII	−0.79	0.5	2.46	1	0.12	0.45
Valence x BII	−0.97	0.64	2.33	1	0.13	0.38
Culutre x Valence x BII	1.48	0.71	4.34	1	0.037	4.40

Note. N = 247. Choosing the Asian team was coded as 1 and choosing the American team was coded as 0. *$p<.05$.

We analyzed the data separately for high and low BIIs (+/- 1 SD from the mean). Among low BIIs, the two-way cultural prime x prime valence interaction was significant, $B = -2.50$, $SE = 1.00$, $Wald = 6.24$, $p = .012$, 95% CI = [.01, .58]. As Fig. 2 shows, in line with our prediction, low BIIs exhibited cultural reactance when primed with positive cultural cues; they were more likely to choose the American team when primed with Asian cues, and more likely to choose the Asian team when primed with American cues. The opposite was true for negative cultural cues. The same culture x valence interaction effect was not significant for high BIIs, $B = .46$, $SE = .89$, $Wald = .27$, $p = .60$, 95% CI = [.28, 9.15].

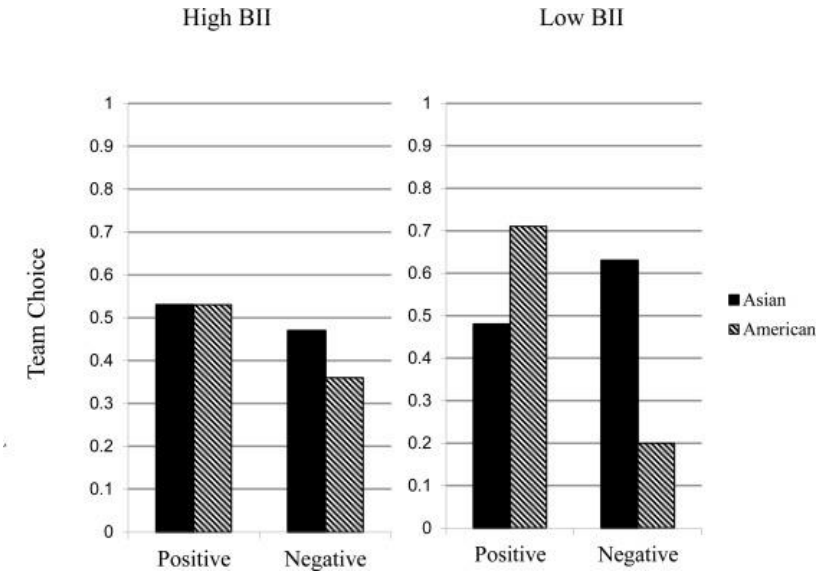

Fig. 2. Interaction for Culture x Valence x BII on Team Choice (Study 2).

Note. Choosing the Asian team was coded as 1 and choosing the American team was coded as 0.

Next, we conducted regression analyses on competence ratings of the Asian team and the American team, using the same independent variables and covariates as the previous analysis. Table 6 lists the results. For the competence ratings of the Asian team, the results revealed a significant main effect of BII, B = .32, SE = .15, t(236) = 2.05, p = .042, 95% CI = [.01, .62]. The two-way interaction of prime valence x BII interaction was significant, B = -.70, SE = .22, t(236) = -3.20, p = .002, 95% CI = [-1.13, -.27]. These effects were qualified by a predicted three-way interaction of cultural prime x prime valence x BII, B = .68, SE = .25, t(236) = 2.78, p = .006, 95% CI = [.20, 1.17].

Table 6. Multivariate Regressions on Competence Ratings in Study 2.

	Competence Ratings of Asian Team					Competence Ratings of American Team				
Variables	B	SE	Beta	*t*	*p*	B	SE	Beta	*t*	*p*
Constant	3.78	0.79		5.85	0.00	3.52	0.75		5.18	0.00
Age	−0.008	0.033	−0.016	−0.25	0.80	0.009	0.031	0.018	0.27	0.78
Gender	−0.17	0.099	−0.011	−0.17	0.86	−0.016	0.093	−0.011	−0.17	0.86
Asian Identity	0.21	0.06	0.23	3.56	0.00	0.21	0.056	0.25	3.69	0.00
American Identity	0.015	0.056	0.017	0.27	0.79	0.014	0.053	0.017	0.26	0.80
Culture	0.25	0.15	0.15	1.71	0.088	−0.002	0.14	−0.001	−0.017	0.99
Valence	0.82	0.18	0.052	0.45	0.65	−0.18	0.17	−0.12	−1.05	0.29
BII	0.32	0.15	0.40	2.05	0.042	0.032	0.14	0.044	0.23	0.82
Culutre x Valence	−0.28	0.22	−0.15	−1.25	0.21	0.11	0.21	0.068	0.55	0.58
Culture x BII	−0.30	0.17	−0.33	−1.72	0.087	−0.079	0.16	−0.095	−0.50	0.62
Valence x BII	−0.70	0.22	−0.58	−3.20	0.002	−0.74	.21	−0.066	−0.36	0.72
Culutre x Valence x BII	0.68	0.25	0.50	2.78	0.006	0.012	0.23	0.010	0.052	0.96
R2	0.10					0.066				
Adjusted R2	0.057					0.022				
	$F(11, 236) = 2.36, p = .009$					$F(11, 236) = 1.50, p = .13$				

Note. N = 247.

We examined the cultural prime x prime valence interaction effect separately for high and low BIIs. For low BIIs, the two-way interaction of cultural prime x prime valence was significant, B = -.96, SE = .34, t(236) = -2.86, p = .005, 95% CI = [-1.62, -.30]. As Fig. 3 shows, low BIIs primed with positive American cues rated the Asian team higher on competence than those primed with positive Asian cues. A planned-contrast testing this trend was significant, B = -.41, SE = .24, t(236) = 1.72, p (one-tailed) = .04, 95% CI = [-.75,-.07]. The trend was opposite when low BIIs were exposed to negative cultural cues, B = .55, SE = .25, t(236) = 2.23, p (one-tailed) = .01, 95% CI = [.26, .84]. The same two-way interaction of cultural prime x prime valence was not significant for high BIIs, B = .41, SE = .32, t(236) = 1.26, p = .21, 95% CI = [-.23, 1.05]. Supporting our

prediction, low BIIs exhibited reactance to positive, but not negative, cultural cues. We conducted the same analysis on competence ratings of the American team, but no significant main effects or interaction effects emerged.

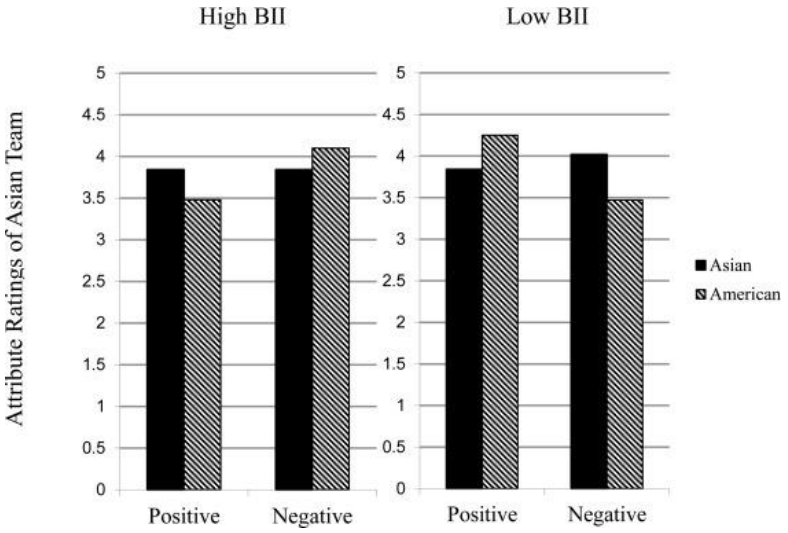

Fig. 3. Interaction for Cultural Prime x Prime Valence x BII on Attribute Ratings of Asian Team (Study 2).

Discussion

Study 2 replicated Study 1 with Asian-American biculturals, and with competence ratings as an additional measure of ingroup favoritism. We found general support for our prediction that individual differences in the psychological management of bicultural identities (or BII) moderate the relationship between external cultural cues and ingroup favoritism, both in biculturals' behaviors and attitudes. Importantly, we also found evidence for an underlying self-threat mechanism. Specifically, the moderating effect of cue valence supports our argument that psychological reactance against threats to the self explains low BIIs' tendency to act in the opposite direction of cultural cues. Because positive cultural cues run counter to low BIIs' personal experiences, they appear particularly threatening, prompting contrastive responses (e.g., Mok & Morris, 2013).

We should note that no effects emerged when ingroup favoritism was measured using ratings of the American team's competence. Perhaps, for first- and second-generation Asian-Americans, who have spent the majority of their lives in the U.S., being American represents a multitude of other identities (e.g., residency, social class) and, therefore, considering Americans as an ingroup, especially in more subtle outcomes like attitudinal preferences, may be less susceptible to change.

General Discussion

Biculturalism, especially for those who develop high BII, has been shown to be an adaptive strategy, particularly for dealing with daily challenges and maintaining high levels of psychological well-being (Ferrari, Rosnati, Manzi, & Benet-Martínez, 2015; Schwartz et al., 2019). However, the recent decades have also seen a flurry of research on the variegated outcomes of biculturalism, including biculturals' malleable preferences and their ability to switch between two different cultural schemas depending on contextual cues (e.g., Hong et al., 2000). Contributing to this research stream, we examined a novel outcome of interest in an increasingly globalized world and among increasingly multicultural individuals—ingroup favoritism. Seeking to better understand what shapes the divided loyalties between two cultural ingroups for biculturals, we drew on psychological reactance theory to propose that these preferences, too, are malleable and depend on the interaction between cultural cues and individual differences in the psychological management of dual cultural identities. Specifically, across two studies using different bicultural groups, we found consistent evidence that ingroup favoritism is susceptible to psychological reactance (e.g., Cheng et al., 2006; Mok & Morris, 2009),

whereby the *un*primed cultural ingroup is favored over the primed cultural ingroup, but only among those biculturals who perceive their cultural identities to be in conflict (i.e., low BIIs).

Furthermore, we found evidence that a self-threat mechanism may explain this effect. Specifically, Study 2 showed that the relationship between cultural primes and ingroup favoritism was moderated by BII and valence of the cultural cues such that low BIIs exhibited cultural reactance only for *positively-valenced* but not *negatively-valenced* cultural cues. Because low BIIs have had more negative bicultural experiences (e.g., Cheng & Lee, 2009; 2013) and discrepant information is more threatening to the self (e.g., Sherman & Cohen, 2002), only positive cultural cues, which are inconsistent with low BIIs' personal experiences, lead to efforts to protect the self by contrasting against the primed identity. These findings help highlight the importance of initial cultural experiences for biculturals in shaping their responses to future cultural encounters. Given that cultural cues in the environment are generally positive (e.g., landmarks, holidays), our findings suggest that it may be critical for biculturals to have had positive experiences with that culture in the past in order to display favoritism towards it. In other words, to foster positive intergroup relations among biculturals and their salient ingroup, positive experiences may be a crucial starting point.

These patterns of findings are important, because they suggest that biculturals' preferences, attitudes, and behaviors are not simply engrained aspects of their psychology, but rather are malleable and susceptible to multiple influences, both external and internal (e.g., Hong et al., 2000). Our findings also support prior work that has suggested that biculturals not only switch between their dual cultural frames of reference in response to external cultural cues by assimilating to the cued identity (e.g., LeBoeuf et al., 2010; Luna et al., 2008) but may in fact contrast against it (e.g., Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; Mok & Morris, 2009). Moreover, this somewhat counterintuitive response can serve self-protective psychological functions, preserving an aspect of the self that is threatened in a particular context (Mok & Morris, 2013). By extending these processes to the outcome of ingroup favoritism, we reveal a potentially troubling reality for biculturals in today's globalized world—external cues emphasizing one of their cultural ingroups (e.g., those encountered in daily life while living in one culture) may perversely lead to *less* favorable attitudes about and behaviors towards this group. Although ingroup favoritism is not the same as outgroup hate (Brewer, 1999), it is not impossible that some of the violent behaviors displayed in rare cases among immigrants, especially those who may have had negative bicultural experiences, may be at least in part a form of cultural reactance.

In addition to the hypothesized results, we found that high BIIs showed no changes to their ingroup favoritism in response to cultural cues. This stands in contrast to previous studies showing that high BIIs engage in cultural frame switching by assimilating to external cultural cues (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Mok et al., 2010). It might be the case that high BIIs do not have clear boundaries between their two cultural groups (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Ambiguous group boundaries make it difficult to categorize others into ingroup versus outgroup and can attenuate ingroup favoritism (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2014; Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). Our findings in the context of ingroup favoritism, unlike other research on bicultural frame switching, may thus support the notion that some biculturals, especially those who perceive harmony between their cultural identities, may in fact see these as part of a blended cultural identity (e.g., Hurtado, Gurin, & Peng, 1994; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997).

Moreover, these patterns of findings remained consistent across adult and college student participants in Study 1 and Study 2, respectively. This is congruent with prior BII research. For example, Benet-Martínez et al.'s (2002) founding work with college student samples showed the same assimilation and contrast effects among high and low BIIs as those found in Mok and her colleagues' research using adult samples (Mok & Morris, 2010; Mok et al., 2010). Similarly, the current work also demonstrates a robust effect of BII in response to cultural cues regardless of age differences.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite limitations, the present results also suggest important lines of future research. First, support for our hypotheses held across Flemish-Belgians and Asian-Americans, bicultural subgroups that, although similar in some ways, also have very different social, cultural, political, and economic relationships with the mainstream

cultural group. As such, our findings suggest that the effects observed here are independent of the content of the cultural identities and would generalize to other populations. Despite the fact that the construct of BII has been extensively studied in various bicultural populations in prior research (e.g., Cheng et al., 2014) and that the distributions of BII scores observed here appeared to sufficiently capture psychological differences between high and low BIIs, limitations to generalizability exist for any non-random samples and should therefore be accounted for in future research with additional samples. Additionally, it is interesting to note that both the U.S. and Belgium represent relatively low power-distance cultures where egalitarianism is valued (Hofstede, 2009). In these cultures, ingroup favoritism may be attenuated compared to high power-distance cultures, where unequal distribution of resources within the social hierarchy is seen as legitimate. Future research may thus begin by examining biculturals in high-power distance cultures, where the effects observed in the present paper may in fact be even stronger.

Second, the controlled experimental conditions used in the present studies may lack external validity and responses obtained here may not reflect responses elicited from naturally-occurring cultural cues. For one, real-world settings may be imbued with a host of other meanings and variables (e.g., power distance) that could affect the likelihood of displaying ingroup favoritism. Additionally, real-world cultural cues, because they may not resemble those used here, could also produce differing responses. Although all primes used in the present studies were pre-tested with independent samples, unscrambling sentences (Study 1) and identifying words in a maze (Study 2) seem to bear little resemblance to typical cultural activities and make no explicit reference to culture. Even though the primes were introduced above the level of conscious awareness, given their obscure relationship to culture, it is unlikely that participants knew that their cultural identities were being primed. In contrast, naturally occurring cultural cues in our everyday lives—such as food, language, media—can reference culture much more explicitly. Explicit primes may not only have greater face validity but research also shows that more explicit primes tend to elicit a stronger reactance effect (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003; Dijksterhuis et al., 1998). Future research should explore this notion that biculturals' psychological reactance to cultural cues may be even stronger in realistic cultural contexts.

Third, despite the fact that BII has been shown to moderate cultural frame switching in many studies, we still know very little about why biculturals vary along this continuum (Cheng et al., 2014; Haritatos & Benet-Martínez, 2002). Our findings suggest that one possible antecedent of BII may be past cultural experiences. The finding that low BIIs only exhibit reactance to positively-valenced cultural cues suggests that positive cues are seen as particularly discrepant. This makes sense, as low BIIs tend to perceive their bicultural experiences as more stressful and undesirable, and associate more negative experiences with biculturalism (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Cheng & Lee, 2013). Future research is needed to examine the role of cultural experiences in shaping BII and, to help alleviate some of these negative experiences, its malleability over time (see Cheng & Lee, 2013).

Finally, we sought to tap into multiple facets of ingroup favoritism by including choices and attitudes about the ingroups. Although this is more comprehensive than a single measure, it by no means captures all aspects of ingroup favoritism. In addition to incorporating additional measures, future research would also benefit from addressing not only preference for one group, but also specific hatred or harming of the other (Brewer, 1999). Indeed, to address a clear limitation in the present studies, comparing BII's responses to cultural primes would benefit from a control condition in future research to establish a baseline of favoritism and distinguish ingroup love from outgroup hate. In other words, in the context of biculturalism, where loyalties are divided between two *in*groups, is "outgroup hate" even possible?

Implications

This paper contributes to understanding how ingroup favoritism plays out in today's multicultural world, where the boundaries between ingroups and outgroups are often dynamic and ambiguous. When individuals have divided loyalties between multiple ingroups, enhancing one group versus another can serve to protect an aspect of the self that is threatened. This idea presents interesting implications for intergroup dynamics between mainstream and ethnic subgroups—ranging from "homegrown" terrorism to secessionism (inflaming issues in countries such as Canada, Italy, Spain, and Ukraine). In contexts where cultural divides are deep-

seated, pervasive, and seemingly intractable, individuals are less likely to see their multiple cultural identities as compatible. In this context, making salient the positive aspects of one culture can ironically diminish tendencies to favor that cultural group. For biculturals like Wen-Ho Lee, or the suspected terrorists in the Paris attacks, extolling the virtues of the mainstream culture may actually lower their loyalty to their countries of residence.

Increasing intergroup frictions in times of crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, can also spur ingroup favoritism and, by extension, may lead to rises in nationalism. For biculturals, these additional pressures may be especially stressful. Our research suggests that rather than seeking to provide positive messages about one of their cultures (which can be psychologically threatening for some biculturals), a way to alleviate stress might be to instead focus on harmony between the two cultures. This suggests that international cooperation and messages of cross-national support may be especially important in these times for those with divided loyalties.

Although ingroup favoritism inherently favors one group over another, for biculturals living in one of their cultures, showing preference for that culture may not necessarily be negative. Having positive attitudes about the cultural group one is currently surrounded by may be more conducive to better adjustment and more positive social interactions (Mok, Morris, Benet-Martínez, & Karakitapoglu-Aygun, 2007). Given that naturally-occurring cultural cues are generally positive, one way to reduce reactive responses to these contexts might be to focus on perceptions of intergroup harmony. Interestingly, positive bicultural experiences may create a positive cycle whereby they lead to perceptions of harmony between one's cultural ingroups and, in the context of positive cultural cues, beget more positive interactions. Introducing positive interactions or messages of intergroup harmony may thus be a way to reduce perceptions of self-threat and reactance and start a positive cycle. Ultimately, these positive experiences may eliminate ingroup favoritism altogether (as our findings suggested among high BIIs). The tendency to not favor one group over another may thus be both a consequence of perceiving one's identities to be in harmony as well as a necessary way to maintain those internal perceptions.

Conclusion

The current studies examine a novel outcome of biculturalism—ingroup favoritism—and its malleability as a function of external cultural cues and individual differences in the psychological management of dual cultural identities. By showing that those who perceive their identities to be in conflict react against the demands of the cultural cue as a way to protect a threatened part of the self, we begin to shed light on the psychological complexities of divided loyalties among biculturals. A better understanding of the drivers of cultural reactance in ingroup favoritism may help alleviate divided loyalties and begin to foster more harmonious intergroup relations.

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