

**ON THE RELEVANCE OF STUDYING PATRIOTISM AND NORMATIVE
CONFLICT IN CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS**

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RESUMEN

El objetivo es investigar el papel que el patriotismo puede tener en la persistencia de la discriminación. El patriotismo es el apego al propio país, y puede llevar a discriminar a los individuos que no pertenecen al propio país. Sin embargo los países democráticos promueven con fuerza la norma de no-discriminación. En este sentido, el patriotismo puede enfrentar a los individuos a un conflicto normativo (es decir, choque entre la norma personal y la norma del grupo) que se ha demostrado que tiene un fuerte peso en el cambio de actitud. Se plantea que las normas promovidas por un país actúan junto con la orientación patriótica de sus ciudadanos, produciendo así modelos diferentes de cambio de actitud. Se analiza el caso del cambio de actitudes negativas hacia los inmigrantes.

ABSTRACT

The aim is to theoretically investigate the role that patriotism may play in the persistence of discrimination. Patriotism refers to attachment to one's own country, and might lead to discrimination against individuals who are not part of the country. However democratic countries strongly promote the non-discrimination norm. Then, patriotism could present individuals with a normative conflict (i.e., conflict between one's own norm and the ingroup norm), which has been shown to have a potential for attitude change. It is argued that the norms promoted by a country interact with the patriotic orientation of their citizens, producing differential patterns of attitude change. The case of changing negative attitudes toward immigrants is discussed.

Key words: patriotism, normative conflict, immigrants

Introduction

Although antiracism is nowadays highly valued (Roux and Perez, 1993), discrimination still holds out, expressing itself through hidden paths (e.g., see the notions of Aversive racism, Dovidio and Gaertner, 1986; 1999; 2000; Modern racism, Kinder and Sears, 1981; Mc Conahay and Hough, 1976; Ambivalence-Amplification Theory, Katz, Wackenhut and Glass, 1986; Subtle prejudice, Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995, Pettigrew et al., 1998). While old racism claimed an inferiority of some ethnic groups

compared to others, the new form of racism stresses the cultural differences between groups (see Taguieff, 1988). In other words, this new form of racism embodies a “socially accepted” way of rejecting minorities, through supposedly non prejudicial justifications.

The aim of the present article is to propose a theoretical investigation on the role that patriotism may play in the persistence of discrimination. Since patriotism refers to an attachment of group members to their own group, as well as to their nation, it provides a basic foundation for a nation’s life (Bar-Tal and Staub, 1997). Thus, it might fulfil basic needs such as self-categorization as a member, love and pride for the group, and achievement. Accordingly, patriotism might lead to discriminate individuals who are not part of the group (Reykowsky, 1997). Then, the study of patriotism could be relevant for uncovering today’s ambivalence toward immigrants, i.e. the ambivalence between the persistence of hostility towards immigrants, and the pervasiveness of the non-discrimination norm. Indeed, in democratic countries, the non-discrimination norm has become part of the very definition of society (Monteith, Deneen and Tooman, 1996), and social values such as sharing, equity or social justice are considered as socially desirable (Doise, Spini, and Clémence, 1999). Thus, the study of patriotism with regard to the discrimination of immigrants highlights a serious dilemma: If it is true that patriotism leads to love and respect toward one’s own country, as well as some derogation towards minorities and immigrants, what happens when a country proposes anti-discriminatory laws or policies, as democratic countries do?

Ingroup Norms and Normative Conflict

Several studies have shown the impact of ingroup norms in the expression of prejudice (e.g., Jetten, Spears, and Manstead, 1996; 1997). Indeed, relationships between social groups depend on social norms. Group norms can express important aspects of an individual’s identity and therefore, group members will be highly motivated to act in accordance with these norms (Turner, 1991). However, as seen above, even though citizens of democratic countries do accept egalitarianism at a blatant level, they have not necessarily internalized it, as discrimination persists in a subtle way (Pettigrew, 1991). This points out that conformity to ingroup norms does not lead necessarily to internalization (e.g. Moscovici, 1985). The notion of *normative conflict* (i.e., conflict between one’s own norm and the ingroup norm; cf. Sanchez-Mazas, Mugny, and Jovanovic, 1996) developed within the framework of Conflict Elaboration Theory directly addresses this ambivalence (Mugny, Butera, Sanchez-Mazas, and Pérez, 1995; Pérez and

Mugny, 1996). Normative conflict stems from a simple idea: One can hold attitudes that are in contrast with the ingroup norms. For instance, one can hold negative attitudes toward immigrants and, at the same time, self-define as a citizen of a country that promotes equality and punishes discrimination. However, as pointed out by Sanchez-Mazas, Pérez, Navarro, Mugny, and Jovanovic (1993), as long as the individual is not confronted to this ambivalence, there is no need to change. One can express conformity at the blatant level, and hold opposite convictions at the private level (cf. Moscovici, 1985). Sanchez-Mazas et al. (1993; 1996) emphasized that, in order to achieve attitude change, individuals must commit themselves to the expression of their attitude (say, a discriminatory one), and then be faced to the opposing view of the ingroup. In this situation, individuals cannot avoid facing ambivalence and a normative conflict takes place. In their experiments, they showed that participants who were led to express their attitude and then were confronted to the opposing attitude of the ingroup majority changed their attitudes at a subtle level, in the direction of the ingroup norm. These results are consistent with the ones showing that a discrepancy between one's own attitude and an ingroup norm can lead to constructive changes (e.g. Stangor, Sechrist, and Jost, 2001).

The remainder of the present article will first address the relationship between patriotism, under its different forms, and discrimination. Then, we will discuss to what extent showing that ambivalence between outgroup discrimination and conformity to ingroup norms, promoted by patriotism, can lead to a normative conflict, and thereby can improve attitudes toward immigrants.

The Two Axes of Patriotism: Attachment and Commitment

Several definitions of patriotism have been proposed in different social sciences. Across the literature on patriotism, the notions of love and devotion towards one's own country seem to represent the consensual aspects of the concept. As such, a core definition of patriotism could be: « ...in its fundamental form patriotism refers to attachment of group members to their group and the country in which they reside...and the basic elements of patriotism is the desire to belong to a group which is positively evaluated » (Bar-Tal, 1993, p. 48). Accordingly, patriotism is supposed to be a fundamental element of individual and group life, and it is believed to fulfil such basic needs as the needs for security, for a positive identity, for effectiveness and control, for a positive connection to other people, and for comprehension of reality (Staub, 1997).

More specifically, several authors described patriotism as comprising two main dimensions: attachment and love on the one hand, commitment and citizen involvement on the other. In other words, patriotism comprises different kinds of *concerns* (Primoratz, 2002).

On one hand, patriotism is constituted by affective concerns. Tamir (1997) pointed out that patriotism not only refers to a loyalty towards the country, but also to a complex form of devotion. In this sense, patriotism expresses that attachment to the nation is a particular value that an individual may rank as a priority. On the other hand, patriotism also refers to involvement. This could be a motivation to defend ideals, values or policies that are viewed as contributing to the country, even when the country does not support them. Indeed, Tamir (1997) proposes that: "Patriotism is thus not to be identified with blind support of one's nation. A patriot may sometimes be very critical of his own group, promote reforms, and, when necessary, resist acts performed by his nation" (p. 35, see also Blank, 2003). In this sense, patriotism refers to a "critical loyalty" of current group practices (see also, below, the notion of "constructive patriotism", Schatz and Staub, 1997; Schatz, Staub and Lavine, 1999; and Fletcher's "enlightened loyalty", 1993). In the same vein, Viroli (1995) has developed the notion of "patriotic motivations". These are motivations that lead the citizens to devote themselves to their community. In this sense, patriotism is also a political concept, as it implies a constructive participation of the individual into society.

This view is consistent with Habermas' definition of "constitutional patriotism" (1996), a form of attachment to a constitutional order, i.e. a particular national interpretation of more general constitutional principles, such as human rights (see also the notion of "enlightened political socialization", Habermas, 1996). This means that culture, and cultural by-products such as patriotism, are not reproduced dogmatically through blind attachment to tradition (Hendley, 1998), but rather through active political relationships (see also Kashti, 1997).

To sum up, one may identify two main types of concerns when dealing with patriotism. The first one, more "selfish" according to Primoratz (2002), consists in the unavoidable feeling of belonging to the homeland. The second refers to the involvement in the promotion of certain values. These two concerns are not exclusive and seem both necessary to account for patriotism. Rather, it is the orientation and the intensity with which an individual expresses these concerns that will determine the nature of attachment to the ingroup, as well as the nature of intergroup relations.

Patriotism and Ingroup Relations

Attachment.

According to Feshbach and Sakano (1997), patriotism is mainly expressed in terms of attachment and identification to the reference group. Attachment is expressed through factors such as love, loyalty, pride and attention (see Bar-Tal, 1998). Moreover, according to Kelman (1997), attachment to the group exposed by individuals can be both sentimental and instrumental. Sentimental, because the group represents their identity; instrumental, because the group may fulfil basic needs and personal interests. As such, patriotism may represent a source of legitimacy, as well as a social support. In this perspective, patriotism may be defined as a whole set of attitudes and beliefs, centred on attachment and loyalty towards the members of a nation (Kelman, 1997). With this respect, an individual may experience feelings of pride concerning achievements and goals his/her nation focuses on. However, this does not mean that the same individual would not experience feelings of guilt or shame, because of certain actions that his/her nation may display (Primoratz, 2002). Thus, patriotism is not only a question of individual representations of the ingroup, but it is also an indicator of the nature of the relationships inside the group. In other words, it characterizes the membership of a group and may be an important part of social identity.

Social Identity.

Patriotism fulfils the functions of unity, cohesiveness and mobilization that are essential to a group or a nation (Bar-Tal, 1997). Indeed, the social aspect of patriotism lies also in the fact it represents some shared social values. In other words, patriotism results from the development of a collective system of meaning, like symbols (Reykowski, 1997), or of norms, like for instance favoring collectivism or individualism. In this sense, patriotism may be an important factor in people's social identity. Since patriotism might be defined in terms of identification to a system of values, it can represent the context through which an individual may maintain his/her self-esteem. This can be considered a reason why patriotism may be linked to the attitudes, positive or negative, expressed towards outgroup members. For example, if natives perceive the relations with immigrants as potentially threatening for their identity — say, because they perceive that the immigrants violate some national basic values — patriotism could lead to outgroup derogation. Indeed, a social categorization such as immigrants versus natives could generate, in such a context, an accentuation of the

differences between the groups, and a minimization of them inside the group (Tajfel, 1972; Tajfel and Turner, 1986).

Patriotism and Intergroup Relations

One may predict that an individual expressing an unquestioning affective attachment towards his/her nation might display more negative attitudes towards the outgroup members, like immigrants, compared to an individual having a flexible attachment – e.g., being able to criticize his/her own group. However, work on the role of identification on outgroup derogation did not show consistent results. For example, Brewer (1999) proposed that ingroup favoritism and prejudice towards outgroups are independent and, as such, identification and attachment to the group should be independent from intergroup conflicts. They might be associated, but not always. Other lines of research have investigated more specifically the link between national pride, national identity and their correlates – e.g., attitudes towards democracy and foreigners – (Blank, Schmidt, and Westle, 2001), as well as the conditions under which, patriotism and / or nationalism could lead to the derogation of the outgroup (Blank, 2003; Blank and Schmidt, 2003; Mummendey, Klink and Brown, 2001). Blank and Schmidt (2003) looked at the link between the attitudes expressed towards minorities and the concepts of patriotism and nationalism. While patriotism seemed to be positively correlated with tolerance towards minorities, this was not the case for nationalism. However, and without going into details in the debate on the difference between patriotism and nationalism, these authors have assessed patriotism only with items defining the dimension of involvement and political engagement, while the items referring to nationalism concerned measures of national superiority, as well as some questions on History and symbols. This means that national superiority and affective attachment on one hand, and political activism and commitment on the other do not lead to the same intergroup relations.

An interesting empirical approach of patriotism that deals with these two dimensions of attachment and commitment is the one initially proposed by Schatz (1995, Schatz and Staub, 1997), that differentiates “constructive” from “blind” patriotism. The main difference between these two forms lies in the nature of attachment. Whereas blind patriotism refers to a rigid and inflexible attachment to the country, characterised by a loyalty without any criticism—and this regardless of the nature of the group’s behaviour—, constructive patriotism is more flexible, and refers to a “critical loyalty”. Whereas blind patriotism has no consideration for the values that do not

belong to the group, constructive patriotism considers humanitarian value as of fundamental worth.

Schatz (1995, in Schatz and Staub, 1997) assessed blind patriotism with items that referred to an unconditional attachment to the country (e.g., “I would support my country right or wrong”), and constructive patriotism with items referring to critical commitment (e.g., “If you love America you should notice its problems and work to correct them”). Results revealed that whereas constructive patriotism was positively correlated with empathy and pro-social values, the reverse was observed for blind patriotism. Also, blind patriots obtained a higher score on the symbolic obedience dimension than did constructive patriots. Constructive patriots expressed a higher score on the implication and political activism dimensions. Moreover, Schatz et al. (1999) showed that blind patriotism was positively associated with measures of militaristic nationalism, as well as of cultural purity. Constructive patriotism was independent from the first measure, and negatively correlated with the second one. Furthermore, blind patriotism was positively correlated with the dimension of national vulnerability, i.e. the feeling that national security could be threatened by the foreigners. This last was independent from the constructive profile. Finally, blind patriotism was positively correlated with authoritarianism, but not constructive patriotism. In sum, although blind and constructive patriotism both refer to a positive identification and an affective attachment towards the nation, they represent two qualitatively distinct profiles, and these both at the ingroup and the intergroup level.

Patriotism, conceptualised through these two dimensions –i.e., identification/attachment and engagement/ability to criticize– are not exclusive. Indeed, they are both necessary for reflecting the complexity of the social psychological reality of individuals in their relationships with the group(s) and the nation(s). Then, depending on how individuals will score on these two dimensions, it is possible to predict different patterns of attitudes that citizens will express towards the reference group – i.e., loyalty –, as well as towards the outgroup members. In other words, blind and constructive patriotism might refer to distinct aspects of internalization of the norms and values of one’s own country.

With this respect, Schatz et al. (1999) suggested that the relationship between patriotism and intergroup discrimination is mediated by the way individuals identify and evaluate the ingroup, implying that blind patriotism might be more related to discrimination than constructive patriotism. This idea received some support from a study done by Depuiset and Butera (in preparation) showing that blind patriotism was strongly and negatively

correlated to favourable attitudes towards immigrants, whereas constructive patriotism was positively correlated to favourable attitudes. Moreover, Mummendey, Klink and Brown (2001) proposed that a relational orientation—comparison to some socio-political prototype of an “ideal society”—leads to intergroup behaviour that corresponds to blind patriotism, and a non-relational or autonomous orientation corresponds to constructive patriotism. Indeed, they showed that the link between national identification and the derogation of foreigners depends upon the prior comparative perspective. More precisely, they found that a positive national identification was associated with outgroup derogation when individuals were thinking of ingroup evaluation through intergroup comparisons (i.e. where a relational orientation was induced). Then, even if they did not use direct measures of blind and constructive patriotism, their results may be in line with the above point, that patriotism may be a factor accounting for the emergence of discrimination.

Patriotism and Normative Conflict

The way in which national interest is construed, and therefore, what patriotism should be aimed at, depends in part on the norms that prevail in a nation. In fact, Turner (1975; see also Oakes, Haslam, and Turner 1994) underlined that an essential variable accounting for social categorization is social identification by individuals, in order to self-define; identification with a social group will then bring forth a tendency to conform to ingroup norms (see also Van Knippenberg and Wilke, 1992). In terms of attachment to a country, social categorization of others as ingroup provides a proper context for sharing expectations and agreement. This is highly relevant to the matter of discrimination. Recent studies by Stangor, Sechrist and Jost (2001) have shown that changing the apparent consensus about an outgroup was enough to change the expression of prejudice. More precisely, they have observed that when individuals thought they had a more positive stereotypic view of Afro-Americans than the majority, they expressed less positive attitudes towards those immigrants afterwards (the reverse appeared when they thought they had a less positive view than the majority). Moreover, one's perception of the ingroup norms that regulate stereotyping directly affects the way people endorse stereotypes. Sechrist and Stangor (2001, study 1) have shown that low-prejudiced people gave more positive than negative attributes to Afro-Americans in the condition of high consensus, and that the reverse was true for high-prejudiced people. Then, it appears that it is not only the content of norms that have an impact on prejudice, but also the way in which prejudice is socially accepted as an

ingroup norm (see also the notion of “normative appropriateness”, Crandall, Eshleman, and O’Brien, 2002, study 1).

One may suppose that an ingroup norm has more influence when it corresponds to the normative principle an individual expects, and/or when it corresponds to the representation he/she has of the relations between groups. In other words, one may establish a correspondence between the initial position of an individual and the dynamics of influence. This correspondence hypothesis (e.g., Buchs, Falomir, Mugny, and Quiamzade, 2002) proposes that distinct initial positions require specific social contexts – relations – in order to lead to some attitude change. By initial positions one may include all kinds of element associated to the “psychological states” of an individual who is subject to influence, as for instance one specific patriotic profile. The main idea is that each initial position will take a specific significance depending on the stakes associated with the situation (for an empirical illustration, see Falomir, Mugny and Invernizzi, 2002). In the case of attachment and positive identification to the nation –i.e., patriotism –, one may suppose that a reference norm will be more or less perceived as salient, legitimate or threatening as long as it corresponds to the preferred national values. Thus, citizens’ evaluation of the norms promoted by their own country will depend on the perceived adequacy (or the perceived discrepancy) with the national values. This is the reason why patriotism may be an important factor in the impact that national norms have on citizens.

Let us take the example (Depuiset, 2003; Depuiset and Butera, 2003) of a Parliament that proposes a law granting immigrants special financial help. In this case, citizens with a blind patriotic profile should hesitate between their desire to follow the national authority, and their reluctance to favor immigrants. Thus, a normative conflict could emerge between the norm proposed by the reference group and the desire to express one’s own attitudes, and eventually result in attitude change. It is then proposed that patriotic profiles might have an impact on the way citizens evaluate norms proposed or defended by their own country; when these norms are at odd with the citizens’ patriotic tendency, a normative conflict arises, which may lead to attitude change.

These hypotheses have recently received some empirical support (Depuiset, 2003). Several experimental studies investigated the constitutive role of blind patriotism in inducing a normative conflict. More precisely the aim of the studies was to determine which normative situations would be the most likely to conflict with a blind patriotic profile, and therefore to induce more favourable attitudes towards immigrants. One study (Depuiset,

2003, study 3) manipulated the nature of a bogus law, supposedly voted by the French Parliament (some financial help, to be given in priority to the ingroup only *vs.* to the outgroup only *vs.* to both). Before this experimental manipulation, during a pre-test, French citizens completed blind and constructive patriotism scales (see Schatz and Staub, 1997), as well as a scale of attitudes towards immigrants with a Maghrebian origin. In order to assess attitude change towards immigrants, participants completed again, during a post-test, the intergroup attitudes scale. Results showed an interaction between the type of norm and the patriotic orientation on attitude change. A law supporting egalitarianism (financial help to both the ingroup and the outgroup) appeared to be particularly conflictual for highly blind patriots, since egalitarianism on the one hand corresponds to one of the founding principles of their own country, and on the other hand it boils down to favouring immigrants. This normative conflict produced more positive attitudes towards immigrants at the post-test.

Conclusions

The modern racism perspective has demonstrated that, in order to observe a real disappearance of discrimination, making people aware of the prevalence of egalitarianism is not enough; blatant acceptance of this norm does not produce latent change (Dovidio and Gaertner, 1986, 1999, 2000; Pettigrew, 1991; Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995, Pettigrew et al., 1998). The Normative Conflict perspective (Sanchez-Mazas et al., 1996) answers to this necessity of fighting modern discrimination, by suggesting that citizens should be confronted to their own contradictions. This social influence approach lays in the induction of a conflict between the ingroup norm and the personal positions that individuals wish to express. In this article we have focused on a specific type of personal positions, that is patriotism. We have considered two different dimensions in patriotism: attachment and involvement. Patriotism consists, on the one hand, of an attachment and a positive identification towards the reference group and, on the other hand, it refers to a political involvement. By political involvement, one may understand a civic implication, an ability to criticize the reference group, the nation. We have also underlined its main functions, roles, in terms of membership within the reference group, as well as in intergroup relationships. By looking at these functions and roles, we have seen to what extent patriotism could lead to discriminate individuals who are not part of the group (Reykowsky, 1997). Furthermore, the aim of the article was to propose a theoretical consideration on the constitutive role of patriotism in inducing a normative conflict. Indeed, patriotism appears to be a very rele-

vant variable when one deals with social policies, as for instance immigration. Patriotism has been shown to interact with the types of norm proposed by a national source of influence in inducing attitude change, as illustrated by the results of Depuiset (2003). In sum, the study of patriotism could allow designing social situations of communication about norms that are sufficiently conflictual to shake up citizens who hide their discriminatory attitudes behind blatant manifestations of egalitarianism.

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