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Anticipated and Achieved Individual Mobility Amongst Portuguese Immigrants in Switzerland: Social Identity Adjustment and Inter-Minority Relations

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Supplementary Materials: Code, Data [see Index of Supplementary Materials]



Abstract

Socially mobile minority members (i.e., those who acquire a higher status membership) adjust their social identities, and eventually show negative attitudes towards minorities, as compared to non-mobile members. We examined whether these changes could be understood as the result of individual mobility achievements, or if they already occur at an earlier stage of the mobility process, when individuals are motivated and thus psychologically anticipate achieving mobility. In two studies, we looked at Portuguese immigrants in Switzerland (Ns = 180 and 241) at three mobility stages, that is, (1) Swiss naturalized Portuguese immigrants (socially mobile), (2) non-naturalized Portuguese who strongly wished to be naturalized (high anticipators), and (3) those who wished it less (low anticipators). First, we hypothesized a progressive assimilation to (distancing from) the Swiss (Portuguese) identity and culture (from the low anticipators to the high anticipators to the mobile). As expected, increasing levels of individual mobility were associated with stronger identification with Swiss identity and adoption of the Swiss culture. Conversely, increasing levels of individual mobility were associated with gradual distancing from the Portuguese culture, but against expectations, not with disidentification from the Portuguese identity. Second, we investigated how individual mobility stages were associated with a



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progressive deterioration of inter-minority relations. Results showed that increasing levels of individual mobility were not associated with more negative attitudes toward immigration (Study 1) but with less collective action intentions (Study 2). We discuss the consequences of anticipated and achieved individual mobility on asymmetric intergroup relations and support for social change.

Keywords

individual mobility, naturalization, social identity adjustment, acculturation strategies, inter-minority relations

Highlights

- Individuals who engage in social mobility have been reported to distance themselves from their group of origin.
- We looked at Portuguese immigrants who engage in, or desire, social mobility by acquiring the Swiss host nationality.
- We demonstrate that distancing may happen already in anticipation of a naturalization, that is, for Portuguese immigrants who desire to acquire the host nationality.
- Results show that distancing occurred in the form of lower support for collective action and lower interests in cultural practices of the culture of origin, but not on the dimension of social identification with the culture of origin.

Inherited group memberships are imposed on the individual from birth (e.g., gender, ethnicity) and guide individuals into well-defined and relatively fixed social pathways (Tropman & Nicklett, 2019). Contemporary Western societies promote internal over contextual attributions and explanations of success and failure (Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2017). Therefore, individuals who belong to socially disadvantaged groups are encouraged to climb up the social ladder by means of individual mobility strategies (Ellemers & Van Laar, 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Individual mobility refers to a social ascent through which individuals gain social status by joining a more valued social category than the one(s) they have inherited. Individuals who are dissatisfied with their fate tend to engage in the strategy of individual mobility to improve their personal standing in society, rather than opting for collective strategies aimed to improve the social status of their group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

While some inherited identities are not associated with any visible characteristics (e.g., sexual orientation), other identities are highly visible (e.g., gender or ethnicity) and are hard to evade (Linton, 1936). For mobile individuals the visibility of their minority membership can be a factor reinforcing the experience of an identity conflict arising from the simultaneous memberships in two groups with distinct social statuses. Consistent with the motivation to achieve and maintain a positive identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals who possess conflicting identities may have “a natural tendency to

think of themselves in terms of that status or rank which is highest, and to expect others to do the same” (p. 87, [Lanski, 1966](#)). Indeed, mobile members of inherited minorities tend to perceive themselves as more dissimilar to their initial minority group than to their achieved majority group ([Derks et al., 2016](#)), and to distance themselves from the faith of their initial minority group to prove their loyalty towards the achieved majority group ([Kolbe & Crepaz, 2016](#); [Kulich et al., 2015](#); [Sarrasin et al., 2018](#)).

In the present research, we look at the consequences of such a mobility process by not only distinguishing between individuals who have acquired Swiss citizenship and those who have not, but also by discerning individuals who exhibit psychological motivation (a desire) to naturalize in the future, i.e., anticipate future mobility. We thus introduce an overlooked distinction between non-mobile individuals who want to engage in social mobility, thus anticipating a possible mobility, and those who do not. Although such a three-stage process of upward mobility (i.e., non-anticipators, anticipators, mobiles) has been investigated in various intergroup contexts, including frontier workers (see [Chipeaux et al., 2017](#)), the present research examines it in an immigration context (Portuguese immigrants in Switzerland), and considers the acquisition of the host-country citizenship as the accomplishment of individual mobility. Specifically, we investigate how these mobility stages affect various facets of acculturation processes, encompassing key-dimensions such as group identification, cultural practices and interests ([Schwartz et al., 2010](#)), and inter-minority relations (attitudes toward immigration and support for collective action).

Upward Individual Mobility via Citizenship Acquisition

Controlling for various intervening variables, immigrants who obtain the citizenship of the country in which they reside tend to exhibit superior levels of professional performance, heightened political engagement and greater social integration with the host society ([Steinhardt & Wedemeier, 2012](#)). This heightened incorporation of naturalized immigrants into the host society may arise from a combination of factors, including self-selection of more integrated individuals pursuing citizenship, as well as socialization effects attributed to their longer duration of residence within the host nation ([Martinovic et al., 2009](#)). Nevertheless, research has unveiled that the process of acquiring citizenship itself exerts a catalyst and independent effect on the future integration of immigrants ([Hainmueller et al., 2017](#)). Consequently, this transitional phase bears profound implications for both the dynamics of acculturation and the relations among minority groups within the host society.

Citizenship Acquisition and Social Identity Adjustments

Mirroring identity patterns observed among mobile individuals in various intergroup contexts ([Ellemers & Van Laar, 2010](#)), naturalized immigrants often face the pressure to assimilate, which entails moving closer to the majority group while concurrently

distancing themselves from their minority group (Berry, 2003). Notably, few studies have examined this acculturation process from the perspective of naturalized immigrants themselves. For instance, immigrants who acquired host country citizenship tend to exhibit higher identification with the host national group as compared to those who have not undergone naturalization (Kulich et al., 2015). Moreover, this inclination towards national identification becomes particularly pronounced when naturalization procedures are perceived as fair (Dierckx et al., 2022). Nonetheless, the relationship between the naturalization process and the phenomenon of self-distancing from one's inherited minority group has not been firmly established in the existing body of research. This ambiguity in findings underscores the imperative for a more comprehensive multidimensional approach to acculturation that encompasses the assessment of both alterations in cultural practices and shifts in social group identities associated with individual mobility. Cultural practices refer to the tangible manifestation of culture through behavioral inclinations for and interests in objects, artefacts, and news linked to a specific cultural group. Conversely, social identities pertain to the meanings, affects, and cognitions attached to one's membership in that cultural group. Hence, it is important to consider different identity components to capture the complexity of the social identity adjustments associated with individual mobility. In this research we will focus, on the one hand, on identification, and, on the other hand, on cultural practices and interests.

Citizenship Acquisition and Inter-Minority Relations

Citizenship acquisition is directly related to increased political rights and willingness to participate in the political affairs of the host society. By becoming a citizen, naturalized immigrants gain the right to vote, and they have the opportunity to voice against inequalities and transform political arrangements. Of interest, however, naturalized citizens tend to reproduce the same political ideologies of the national majority group, and distance themselves from the political interests of immigrant minority groups (Politi et al., 2020). Therefore, naturalized immigrants may become as zealous as natives when it comes to protecting the interests of the host society (Strijbis & Polavieja, 2018). As compared to the non-naturalized, indeed, naturalized immigrants tend to be more skeptical about immigration (Just & Anderson, 2015), less likely to grant immigrants access to social benefits (Kolbe & Crepaz, 2016), and more prone to showing prejudice against newcomers (Sarrasin et al., 2018). Of importance, attitudinal distancing also applies to naturalized immigrants' own minority: compared to non-naturalized immigrants, they are less concerned about inequalities between the host majority and the minority groups, and more willing to deny the discrimination experienced by immigrants (Kulich et al., 2015). Overall, converging evidence shows that naturalized and non-naturalized immigrants considerably differ in terms of both social identity adjustments (i.e., acculturation process) and inter-minority relations (i.e., attitudes toward immigration and support for collective action).

The Anticipation of Upward Individual Mobility

Following the attitudinal changes reported in the literature on the naturalization of immigrants (e.g., Politi et al., 2020), we ask whether observed changes in acculturation dynamics and inter-minority relations occur subsequent to the attainment of individual mobility or if they anticipate it. The temporal location of the linkage between naturalization and these changes remains ambiguous, and it is plausible that those motivated to pursue naturalization may already exhibit substantial attitudinal and identity shifts in comparison to those who do not. Following Merton (1968), we hypothesize that upward individual mobility is often preceded, and facilitated, by the expression of positive attitudes towards the higher-status group. This *anticipatory socialization* process primarily serves to increase the likelihood of successful mobility. Similarly, according to the social identity development and integration model (i.e., *anticipatory categorization*, Amiot et al., 2007), individuals who wish to join a new group develop a sense of belonging to this group, despite the fact that they are not yet members of it (Otten & Epstude, 2006). When individuals are motivated to join a new group, approach strategies boost identification with that group, regardless of whether these individuals are ultimately rejected or accepted in the group (Matschke & Sassenberg, 2012).

We thus believe that the mere anticipation of individual mobility may be sufficient to give rise to similar acculturation patterns, in terms of identification and cultural practices, and inter-minority relations, to those observed among individuals who have completed the mobility process. Studies found preliminary evidence of this reasoning when studying a socioeconomic trajectory of individual mobility: French citizens living in France but wishing to work in Switzerland (anticipators of individual mobility) identified less with their inherited national group (i.e., the French) and expressed lower support for collective actions aimed at improving the fate of the French, as compared to the non-anticipators (Chipeaux et al., 2017). Applying this pattern to the migration context, we argue that although the assimilation to the mainstream culture and the deterioration of inter-minority attitudes and group identification may be exacerbated by the acquisition of the host-society citizenship, changes in intergroup attitudes and group identification probably start before the actual naturalization process.

The Present Research

We investigated, among Portuguese immigrants in Switzerland, whether assimilation to the mainstream identity and culture, that is, high adoption of the Swiss identity and culture combined with low maintenance of the Portuguese identity and culture, as well as the deterioration of inter-minority relations, are already initiated among individuals who have not yet achieved the mobility process but wish to do so (anticipators of mobility). Swiss immigration and diversity policies are commonly portrayed as assimilationist (Guimond et al., 2014), currently ranking at a poor position (1 out of 8) in terms of multi-

cultural policies (see the last release of the Multiculturalism Policy Index in 2020; Wallace et al., 2021). In 2021, the Portuguese population was the third largest foreign community in Switzerland, accounting for 11.4% of the total foreign population (Swiss Federal Statistics Office, 2022), after Italians (14.6%) and Germans (13.9%). The Portuguese were chosen because they continue to be over-represented in manual activities (Swiss Federal Statistics Office, 2019), and to earn the lowest median salary in comparison to Swiss and European immigrants (Fibbi et al., 2010). The Portuguese community thus remains a disadvantaged group in Switzerland, making Swiss citizenship particularly appealing as a social elevator (for more information, see the SM).

In our research, we distinguished between non-naturalized (i.e., non-mobile) and naturalized Portuguese (i.e., mobile)¹. Amongst non-naturalized individuals, we further distinguished between those who wished to acquire Swiss citizenship (i.e., high anticipators of mobility) and those who did not (i.e., low anticipators of mobility).

We tested three hypotheses. In *Hypothesis 1*, we expected a progressive effect of individual mobility stages, such that the more advanced the Portuguese were in the naturalization process (i.e., from the low anticipators, to the high anticipators, to mobile individuals), the more they would assimilate to the acquired majority group (i.e., the Swiss), in terms of both identification, and cultural practices and interests (Studies 1 and 2).

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the more advanced the Portuguese were in the naturalization process, the more they would distance themselves from their inherited minority group (i.e., the Portuguese), in terms of both identification and cultural practices and interests (Studies 1 and 2).

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the more advanced the Portuguese were in the naturalization process, the more negative their attitudes toward immigration (Study 1) and the lower their collective action intentions (Study 2) would be.

Data Transparency

The data and code of this research are openly available on the OSF platform (see Chipeaux et al., 2021). All exclusions of the two reported studies are reported in the manuscript. All measures are mentioned and described either in the manuscript, or the SM. We performed data analysis with the sample sizes provided herein. No additional data were sought for any of the studies after initial data-analysis.

1) To acquire Swiss citizenship through naturalization, immigrants should fulfill formal (e.g., have been resident in Switzerland for at least ten years, 5 years if in a civil partnership with a Swiss citizen longer than 3 years) and material requirements (prove their successful integration; e.g., capacity to communicate in a national language; Swiss Citizenship Act, 2014).

Study 1

Method

Procedure and Participants

The study was conducted through an online survey in French. Participants were recruited through social networks by four Master students of a research methods seminar in social psychology. Sample size was determined by the number of participants that could reasonably be recruited over the timeframe of one month, asking for a minimum of 40 participants per student.

From the original sample ($N = 201$), we excluded two participants younger than 18 years old, and 19 participants who had not given informed consent after the final debriefing. The final sample consisted of 180 Portuguese who had Portuguese nationality and lived in Switzerland (120 women, $M_{\text{age}} = 31.77$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 10.04$, 19 to 62 years old), with an age at arrival in Switzerland ranging from 0 (i.e., born in Switzerland, $n = 80$) to 40 years old ($M = 8.03$, $SD = 10.02$), and an average length of stay in Switzerland of 23.52 years ($SD = 9.03$, ranging from 3 to 55 years). Overall, 35.6% of the participants in the final sample indicated having completed a tertiary level of education (advanced professional or university degrees), and 84.4% to be currently employed.

A sensitivity analysis with a power of 80% (see [Faul et al., 2007](#)) and an α of .05 (two-tailed) using G*Power showed that the sample size of Study 1 was able to detect effect sizes of $\eta_p^2 = 0.042$. Comparisons of this effect size with the one found in [Chipeaux et al.'s \(2017\) Study 2](#) (i.e., $\eta_p^2 = 0.031$, reported estimates of the progressive effect of social mobility on the main dependent variable) suggest that the study is almost sufficiently powered to investigate our hypotheses.

Measures

We present measures in the order of their occurrence in the questionnaire. If not indicated otherwise, 7-point scales from 1 *completely disagree* to 7 *completely agree* were used.

Individual Mobility and its Anticipation — Participants with Swiss citizenship were considered to be mobile ($n = 91$) and those without to be non-mobile ($n = 89$). Our hypotheses predicted a progressive effect comparing three groups. Thus, we created two categories for the non-mobile participants distinguishing those low and those high in their anticipation to obtain Swiss citizenship. Non-mobile participants reported the extent to which they wished to obtain Swiss citizenship (7-point scale, from 1 *not at all* to 7 *totally*, $M = 5.27$, $SD = 2.14$, median = 6). A mean-split² was then performed

2) Our sample was mainly composed of Portuguese strongly wishing to be naturalized. Normality test of the distribution confirmed that the distribution is moderately skewed (Skewness = -0.91, $SE = 0.56$). We thus used a mean-split (rather than a median-split) to create our two non-mobile sub-groups.

to obtain two subgroups of participants: The high anticipators ($n = 59$), who expressed the strongest desire to acquire Swiss citizenship (ranging from 5 to 7, $M = 6.61$, $SD = 0.74$), and the low anticipators ($n = 30$), who reported a weaker desire to be naturalized (ranging from 1 to 4, $M = 2.63$, $SD = 1.38$).

Identity Adjustments Measures — Scales were randomly presented in relation to the minority (Portuguese) and the majority (Swiss) groups. The same items are therefore presented twice, once for each group. We indicate “[target group]” where “Portuguese” or “Swiss” is inserted.

Social Identification — We adapted a four-item identification scale from [Ellemers et al. \(1997\)](#), e.g., “I identify with people of [target group] origins”, “I feel a strong sense of attachment with people of [target group] origins”; Portuguese: $\alpha = .84$; $M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.58$; Swiss: $\alpha = .80$; $M = 5.12$, $SD = 1.50$).

Cultural Practices and Interests — We then measured cultural practices and interests of participants with three items (e.g., [Schwartz et al., 2010](#)) (i.e., “I am interested in [target group] politics”, “I practice holidays/celebrations of the [target group] community”, and “I keep abreast of [target group] news through various means (television, newspapers, etc.)”; Portuguese: $\alpha = .69$; $M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.60$; Swiss: $\alpha = .70$; $M = 5.15$, $SD = 1.41$).

Intergroup Relations Measure — The following intergroup relations measure was used:

Attitudes Toward Immigration — Ten items measured participants’ attitudes toward immigration ($\alpha = .77$; $M = 4.76$, $SD = 1.25$) with a higher score indicating more positive attitudes. Six items were adapted from [Akrami et al. \(2000\)](#) (e.g., “We can understand immigrants’ demands for equal rights” or “The problems faced by immigrants do not attract enough media attention”). Four items were adapted from the [European Social Survey \(2016, 8th round\)](#), e.g., “Would you say that the arrival of people of foreign origin in Switzerland threatens the Swiss culture?” from 1 *The Swiss culture is threatened* to 7 *The Swiss culture is enriched*, “Would you say that, on the whole, bringing in people of foreign origin is something good or bad for the Swiss economy?” from 1 *very bad* to 7 *very good*, and “To what extent do you think Switzerland should limit the arrival of people of foreign origin?” from 1 *not at all* to 7 *totally*).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

We tested whether the three social mobility groups differed on socio-demographical measures. We only report significant differences here. Individual mobility stages were

found to be significantly associated with participant gender, $\chi^2(2, N = 180) = 9.75, p = .008$ (women were 63.3% among low anticipators, 52.5% among high anticipators, and 76.9% among mobile individuals). Length of residence in Switzerland was significantly related to mobility stage, $F(2, 180) = 20.06, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .19$. Pairwise comparisons revealed that length of residence was longer in mobile participants ($M = 27.25; SE = 0.86$) than in either high anticipators ($M = 20.54; SE = 1.07, p < .001, 95\% CI [4.01, 9.41]$) or low anticipators ($M = 18.03; SE = 1.50, p < .001, 95\% CI [5.82, 12.62]$), with the latter two not differing in length ($p = .174, 95\% CI [-1.12, 6.14]$).

We computed Leven's test of equality of variances on all dependent variables and applied a Welch test for homogeneity violations for identification with Portuguese. Results are reported in the Supplementary Materials (see Chipeaux et al., 2021). As the effect of mobility stage remains significant and only ANCOVAs allow a full test of our hypotheses and control of variables, we still report these in the manuscript.

Hypotheses Testing

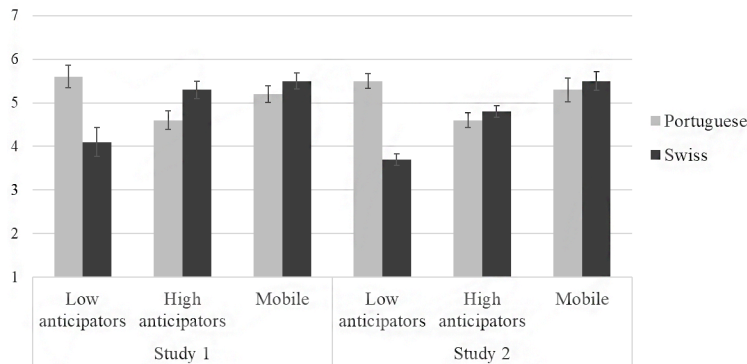
Analysis Strategy — We predicted a progressive pattern, from low anticipators to high anticipators and finally to mobile individuals (Judd et al., 2011). To capture this pattern, we computed two orthogonal contrasts. Contrast 1 (C1) compared low anticipators (coded -1) and mobile individuals (coded 1). High anticipators were coded 0 and were thus located in-between the two former groups. The residual Contrast 2 (C2) verified whether high anticipators are situated in-between, by comparing high anticipators (coded -2) to low anticipators and mobile individuals taken together (both coded 1) (Furr & Rosenthal, 2003). According to H1, H2 and H3, we expected a significant effect of C1 but not C2, thus signaling a progressive pattern that gradually intensifies as individual mobility increases (Judd et al., 2011). Participant gender (women = -1, men = 1) and length of residence in Switzerland (mean centered) were controlled for as main effects and in interactions and are reported in the Supplementary Materials (see Chipeaux et al., 2021).

Social Identification — We conducted a repeated-measures ANCOVA including target group (Portuguese vs. Swiss) as a within-participant factor, C1 and C2 as between-participant factors, as well as interactions between within- and between-factors. Results showed a Target group \times C1 interaction, $F(1, 169) = 5.23, p = .023, \eta_p^2 = .03$, as well as a Target group \times C2 interaction, $F(1, 169) = 10.49, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .06$. Concerning identification with the Swiss, an analysis of simple effects revealed that C1 was significant, $B = 0.42, SE = 0.18, 95\% CI [0.06, 0.78], p < .023, \eta_p^2 = .03$, but C2 was not, $B = -0.16, SE = 0.09, 95\% CI [-0.34, 0.01], p = .068, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Concerning identification with the Portuguese, C1 was not significant, $B = -0.19, SE = 0.20, 95\% CI [-0.58, 0.21], p = .351, \eta_p^2 = .005$, while C2 was, $B = 0.25, 95\% CI [0.06, 0.45], SE = 0.10, p = .010, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Thus, supporting H1, we observed an intensification of identification with the Swiss as individual mobility increases. However, and at odds with H2, a quadratic pattern was

found for identification with the Portuguese. High anticipators displayed lower levels of identification with the Portuguese than both mobile individuals and low anticipators (see Figure 1, left side). None of the other effects was significant ($ps > .419$).

Figure 1

Means of Identification With Both the Inherited Minority (i.e., the Portuguese) and the Acquired Majority Group (i.e., the Swiss) According to Participants' Individual Mobility Stage in Study 1 (Left Side) and Study 2 (Right Side)

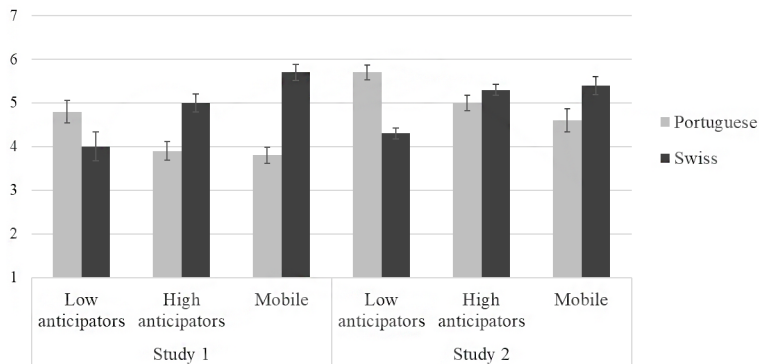


Note. Error bars represent standard errors.

Cultural Practices and Interests — The same analysis was conducted on the second identity component. Results showed a significant effect of target group, $F(1, 169) = 13.74$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, such that, overall, participants reported greater endorsement of Swiss ($M = 4.89$, $SE = 0.13$) than Portuguese ($M = 4.16$, $SE = 0.15$) cultural practices and interests. This result was qualified by the Target group \times C1 interaction, $F(1, 169) = 17.21$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, and by the Target group \times C2 interaction, $F(1, 169) = 4.44$, $p = .037$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. An analysis of simple effects revealed that C1 was significant for both Portuguese, $B = -0.52$, $SE = 0.20$, 95% CI $[-0.92, -0.13]$, $p = .010$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, and Swiss cultural practices and interests, $B = 0.58$, $SE = 0.17$, 95% CI $[0.24, .91]$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, but in the opposite direction. None of the simple effects of C2 was significant (Portuguese: $B = 0.13$, $SE = 0.10$, 95% CI $[-0.06, 0.32]$, $p = .179$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$; Swiss: $B = -0.14$, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI $[-0.30, 0.02]$, $p = .091$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$). In sum, as individual mobility stages increased, we observed a progressive increase of Swiss practices and interests (H1), and a progressive decrease of Portuguese practices and interests (H2; see Figure 2, left side). None of the other effects was significant ($ps > .312$).

Figure 2

Means of Cultural Practices and Interests for Both the Inherited Minority (i.e., the Portuguese) and the Acquired Majority Group (i.e., the Swiss) According to Participants' Individual Mobility Stage in Study 1 (Left Side) and Study 2 (Right Side)



Note. Error bars represent standard errors.

Attitudes Toward Immigration — We conducted a linear regression analysis including C1 and C2 as between-participant factors. At odds with H3, results showed no effects of C1, $B = -0.23$, $SE = 0.14$, 95% CI $[-0.50, 0.04]$, $p = .090$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, or C2, $B = 0.09$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI $[-0.04, 0.22]$, $p = .184$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. However, there was a C1 \times Length of residence \times Participant gender interaction, $B = 0.31$, $SE = 0.15$, 95% CI $[0.02, 0.60]$, $p = .037$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, which is reported in the SM.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to test whether approaching the acquired majority group (i.e., the Swiss), distancing from the inherited minority group (i.e., the Portuguese) and attitudes toward immigration differed as a function of individual mobility stages. Considering first the process of approaching the Swiss majority group, H1 was supported: The more Portuguese advanced in their mobility process, the more they identified with the Swiss, and the more they endorsed cultural practices and interests of the Swiss. This result supports the idea that host culture adoption and identification play an important role at all stages of the naturalization process. Our results provide additional evidence of the gradual process that initiates during the anticipation phase of mobility and continues once the group has been joined, that is, once individual mobility is achieved (Amiot et al., 2007; Merton, 1968).

Considering the distancing from the Portuguese minority group, H2 was partially supported. Concerning the Portuguese identity, the effects of individual mobility stages indeed varied depending on whether we considered identification or cultural practices and interests. Such a discrepancy emphasizes the idea that the process of acculturation

can take many forms (Schwartz et al., 2010). In terms of cultural practices and interests, expectations of H2 were supported. Results showed a gradual distancing process, so that Portuguese cultural practices and interests dropped as individual mobility increased. In terms of identification however, we did not observe the expected progressive pattern through individual mobility stages, thus not supporting H2. The results rather highlighted that high anticipators identified less with the minority group than both low anticipators and mobile Portuguese. In line with past research demonstrating that low identifiers are those who distance themselves the most from the minority group and opt for individual mobility strategies (Chipeaux et al., 2017; Ellemers et al., 1997), our results confirm that the anticipation of individual mobility tends to be associated with a low level of identification with the minority group. Moreover, it further indicates that, once mobility is achieved, a process of reidentification with the minority group may be initiated, allowing mobile minority members to recreate bonds with their inherited community. In this sense, our results reaffirm that naturalization and maintenance of identification with the inherited minority group are not incompatible (Kulich et al., 2015). In some contexts, migrants can indeed merge their inherited low-status identity with their acquired high-status identity into a single, dual identity (Fleischmann & Verkuyten, 2016). Going a step further, our findings highlight that minority members engaged in individual mobility (anticipators and mobile), constantly, and potentially strategically, adjust their social identities as they advance in the mobility process. Study 2 will provide a replication test of these social identity adjustments.

Our H3 was not supported. Attitudes toward immigration in general did not vary as a function of mobility stages. We may speculate that this absence of results happens because of ‘immigrants’ being an excessively large, heterogeneous, and abstract category. Processes of distancing could be more likely to occur when related to the own inherited minority group. In Study 2, we will use a different measure that is specifically focused on the inherited minority group, that is, intentions to participate in collective actions in favor of the Portuguese in Switzerland.

Study 2

The aim of Study 2 was twofold. First, we sought to replicate findings from the preceding study with another sample of Portuguese immigrants in Switzerland. Second, we further investigated the consequences of individual mobility on participants’ deterioration of inter-minority relations, by focusing on collective action intentions in favor of their own Portuguese minority group (H3).

Method

Procedure and Participants

Recruitment followed the same procedures as in Study 1. In this study, however, one of the 3 students contacted the administrator of a social network's group page reserved for Portuguese individuals living in Switzerland. This administrator published the study link with a message in Portuguese leading to the collection of our sample of 286 participants in only 4 days.

We excluded 45 participants who did not provide informed consent after the final debriefing. The final sample consisted of 241 Portuguese living in Switzerland (160 women), aged from 20 to 64 years old ($M_{\text{age}} = 36.57$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 9.10$). Overall, 11.6% of participants reported having been born in Switzerland, 40.2% indicated having completed a tertiary level of education (advanced professional degrees or university degrees), 91.3% to be currently employed and 78% to be in a relationship.

Sensitivity analysis with a power of 80% (see [Faul et al., 2007](#)) and an α of .05 (two-tailed) using G*Power indicated that the sample size of Study 2 was able to detect an effect size of $\eta_p^2 = 0.032$. Comparisons of this effect size with the one found in [Chipeaux et al.'s \(2017\)](#) second study (i.e., $\eta_p^2 = 0.031$, estimated from the reported estimates of the effect of C1 on the main dependent variable) suggest that our study was well-powered to investigate our hypotheses.

Measures

Measures are presented in the order of their occurrence in the questionnaire. Only modifications compared to Study 1 are detailed below.

Individual Mobility and Anticipation – Participants with Swiss citizenship were considered to be mobile individuals ($n = 39$) and those without to be non-mobile individuals ($n = 202$). Non-mobile participants were further asked to report the extent to which they would like to acquire the Swiss citizenship ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 2.41$, median = 4.00). A median-split³ on the responses to this question provided two subgroups of participants: the *high anticipators* ($n = 100$; ranging from 5 to 7 on the scale, $M = 6.36$, $SD = 0.85$) and the *low anticipators* ($n = 102$; ranging from 1 to 4 on the scale, $M = 2.06$, $SD = 1.28$).

Identity Adjustments Measures – The following identity adjustments measures were used:

3) Normality test of the distribution revealed that the distribution is approximately symmetric (Skewness = -0.44, SE = 0.31). We thus opted for a median-split to create our two sub-groups.

Social Identification – We presented participants with the same four-item identification scales as in Study 1 (Portuguese: $\alpha = .88$; $M = 5.11$, $SD = 1.73$; Swiss: $\alpha = .83$; $M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.47$).

Cultural Practices and Interests – We used the same three-item scales as in Study 1, with the addition of one item concerning the country history (i.e., “I know Portuguese/Swiss history”, [Kelman, 1997](#); Portuguese: $\alpha = .78$; $M = 5.22$, $SD = 1.40$; Swiss: $\alpha = .76$; $M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.24$).

Collective Action Intentions – Four items assessed participant support for collective actions meant to improve the fate of their minority group (“The Portuguese should unite to claim more equality with the Swiss”, “I would be willing to sign a petition to demand more rights for the Portuguese in Switzerland”, “The Portuguese should show solidarity with each other in order to make public the discrimination they face”, “If a demonstration were held to denounce the inequalities faced by the Portuguese in Switzerland, I would go there.”; $\alpha = .90$; $M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.79$, adapted from [Chipeaux et al., 2017](#)).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

The only significant association between the individual mobility stages and sociodemographic indicators concerned whether immigrants were born in Switzerland or not, $\chi^2(2, N = 241) = 32.71$, $p < .001$, with 5.9% of non-anticipators, 7.0% of anticipators, and 38.5% of mobile participants being born in Switzerland.

We computed Levene’s test of equality of variances on all our dependent variables and applied a Welch test for homogeneity violations for identification with Portuguese and Portuguese cultural practices and interests (i.e., where homogeneity was violated). Results are reported in the Supplementary Materials (see [Chipeaux et al., 2021](#)). We still report the results of ANCOVAs in the paper, because they allow us to use the contrast codings that test for our hypotheses and to control for other variables. Moreover, all Welch tests show a significant effect of the mobility stages and are thus consistent with the results of the ANCOVAs.

Hypotheses Testing

As in Study 1, we computed the same two orthogonal contrasts as in Study 1 to capture the predicted progressive effect of individual mobility stages. We expected to observe a significant effect of C1 but not of C2 ([Judd et al., 2011](#)).

Social Identification – We conducted a repeated-measures ANCOVA including target group (Portuguese vs. Swiss) as a within-participant factor, and C1 and C2 as between-participant factors controlling for birthplace ($-1 = \text{not}$, $1 = \text{in Switzerland}$) and its interac-

tions with the contrasts. Results first showed a main effect of target group, $F(1, 235) = 9.88, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .04$, indicating that, overall, the identification with the Portuguese was higher ($M = 5.45, SE = 0.18$) than the identification with the Swiss ($M = 4.75, SE = 0.15$). Results then showed a Target group \times C1 interaction, $F(1, 235) = 18.43, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$, as well as a Target group \times C2 interaction, $F(1, 235) = 3.89, p = .0498, \eta_p^2 = .02$. For identification with the Swiss, an analysis of simple effects revealed that C1 was significant, $B = 0.87, SE = 0.18, 95\% CI [0.53, 1.22], p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .10$, as well as C2, $B = -0.21, SE = 0.10, 95\% CI [0.53, 1.22], p = .040, \eta_p^2 = .02$. For identification with the Portuguese, no effect was significant, C1: $B = -0.29, SE = 0.22, 95\% CI [-0.72, 0.15], p = .192, \eta_p^2 = .007$; C2: $B = 0.10, SE = 0.13, 95\% CI [-0.15, 0.36], p = .428, \eta_p^2 = .003$. Only partially in line with H1, we observed a stronger identification with the Swiss majority group for mobile than for low anticipators, but the significant residual effect (C2) indicated that high anticipators were not located between these two other groups, but rather closer to those who were mobile (see Figure 1, right side). At odds with H2 and Study 1, we observed no effect on identification with the Portuguese minority group.

Cultural Practices and Interests — The same analysis was then conducted on the second identity component. Results showed a Target group \times C1 interaction, $F(1, 235) = 20.15, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$, but not the Target group \times C2 interaction, $F(1, 235) = 1.70, p = .194, \eta_p^2 = .007$. C1 was significant for both Portuguese, $B = -0.40, SE = 0.18, 95\% CI [-0.76, -0.05], p = .026, \eta_p^2 = .02$, and Swiss cultural practices and interests, $B = 0.51, SE = 0.15, 95\% CI [0.21, 0.81], p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$. Conversely, C2 was significant for the Swiss, $B = -0.23, SE = 0.09, 95\% CI [-0.41, -0.05], p = .011, \eta_p^2 = .03$, but not for the Portuguese cultural practices and interests, $B = -0.07, SE = 0.11, 95\% CI [-0.28, 0.14], p = .490, \eta_p^2 = .002$. In sum, as predicted by H2, the more individuals were advanced in terms of mobility stages, the less they reported Portuguese cultural practices and interests. Concerning H1, we did not observe the predicted reverse progressive effect of individual mobility stages for the Swiss cultural practices and interests: While low anticipators scored lower than mobile individuals, high anticipators were not located between these two other groups, but rather closer to those who were mobile (see Figure 2, right side). The main effect of Target group was not significant, $F(1, 235) = 0.08, p = .784, \eta_p^2 < .001$.

Collective Action Intentions — We conducted an ANCOVA including C1 and C2 as between-subjects factors, controlling for birthplace. Results showed an effect of C1, $F(1, 235) = 7.01, p = .009, \eta_p^2 = .029$, such that mobile individuals ($M = 3.88, SE = 0.29$) reported weaker support for collective action than low anticipators ($M = 5.12, SE = 0.37$), with high anticipators located in-between ($M = 4.33, SE = 0.34$); C2 was non-significant, $F(1, 235) = 0.16, p = .687, \eta_p^2 = .001$. In sum, and consistent with H3, individuals' collective

action intentions decreased as individual mobility increased. All other effects were not significant ($ps > .580$).

Discussion

Using an additional sample of Portuguese immigrants in Switzerland, we first showed, for both Swiss identification and cultural practices and interests, that mobile participants identified more with the Swiss and showed more cultural practices and interests than low anticipators, but high anticipators were closer to the mobile (and not located in between as predicted by H1). This pattern supports *Merton's (1968)* perspective regarding the facilitating function of the anticipatory socialization process taking place specifically upstream of mobility, that is, during the anticipation phase and not as much when mobility is achieved.

Indeed, to acquire Swiss citizenship, individuals must fulfil two conditions (in addition to administrative criteria such as the number of years spent in the country, etc.). First, candidates must prove that they are integrated in Swiss society, in terms of Swiss habits, customs, and practices. Second, they have to prove that they do not pose a risk to Swiss internal and external security (*Revised Swiss Constitution, 2014*). In sum, they must testify to their assimilation to the host-society, by converging at the maximum to its norms (*Guimond et al., 2014*). This may explain why individuals anticipating the naturalization can be as oriented toward the host society as individuals who have already been naturalized.

Concerning the distancing from the Portuguese minority group, results differed depending on whether we considered identification or cultural practices and interests. For cultural practices and interests, we observed, as in Study 1 and consistent with H2, a progressive pattern. The more participants were advanced in their mobility, the less they reported Portuguese practices and interests. In terms of identification, no differences occurred for identification with the Portuguese, which is inconsistent with Study 1 where high anticipators were less identified than the other two groups. An explanation may be that participants were more identified because they were made aware of the study by the Portuguese website manager, in contrast to Study 1 where outgroup members (Swiss students) posted messages in different social networks.

Looking at the deterioration of inter-minority relations, and supporting H3, we observed that naturalized Portuguese supported collective actions improving the fate of Portuguese in Switzerland to a lesser extent than those Portuguese who did not wish to be naturalized, and anticipators were situated in between these groups. These results first demonstrate that the attitudinal distancing from minorities associated with the naturalization procedure applies to immigrants' own minority group. Second, they reveal that the deterioration of inter-minority relations is a progressive process, which must be understood as an antecedent as much as a consequence of citizenship acquisition.

General Discussion

The present research makes three novel contributions to the literature regarding the identity and attitudinal correlates of an upward individual mobility as regards the assimilation to the majority group (i.e., approaching the majority group by simultaneously distancing from the minority group). First, we simultaneously analyzed different components of social psychological adjustments in terms of social identity (i.e., identification and cultural practices) and inter-minority relations. Second, we distinguished those who *anticipate* mobility from those who have actually achieved it, thus providing a finer analysis of the individual mobility process. In this sense, our work illustrates that assimilation to the majority should not (exclusively) be apprehended as a consequence of an achieved mobility, but may indeed be one of its antecedents as it is already observed at an anticipated stage of mobility.

Finally, we focused on a migration context, where the inherited identity (Portuguese) cannot be completely left behind through social mobility because the Portuguese identity will even “shine through” in naturalized Portuguese through visible ethnic markers such as language and cultural practices.

Distancing From the Inherited Minority

In the present studies, while individuals involved in the naturalization process appeared to be gradually less motivated to display cultural practices and interests for their inherited minority group, participants in Study 1 re-accommodated their identification with this group by a dis-identification in the anticipation phase and a re-identification after becoming a citizen of the host society. According to the rejection-identification model (see Branscombe et al., 1999), one way for mobile individuals to cope with the stigmatization they may face (i.e., not being recognized as full members of the majority group), is to intensify their identification with the minority group. In support of this argument, research has demonstrated that such ingroup identification provides individuals with a sense of belonging. This, in turn, acts as a buffer to protect the individuals' self-esteem from discrimination (Mossakowski, 2003; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007). However, we must remain cautious with such interpretations, as such re-identification with the inherited minority group among mobile individuals was not observed in Study 2 (where identification with the Portuguese did not vary across the mobility categories), as well as in previous research focusing on individual mobility stages in the context of the socioeconomic mobility of French workers living in the border regions of Switzerland (Chipeaux et al., 2017). In this latter work, the mobile identified least with the inherited minority group, followed by the anticipators, and non-anticipators showing most ingroup identification.

The present work also highlights an adaptive function of social identity adjustments associated with the mobility trajectories of inherited minority groups' members. Past re-

search has indeed shown that members of low-status groups tend to be more supportive of individual mobility trajectories when mobile individuals maintain a strong affective attachment with their low-status membership. Conversely, members of high-status groups show support for mobile individuals only if they do not behave in a prototypical manner of their low-status group, and this, regardless of their level of affective attachment with this group (Van Laar et al., 2014). In the present work, the accentuation of identity distancing in terms of cultural interests and practices (a likely proxy of behavioral prototypicality), but not in terms of identification (a proxy of affective attachment), could be an illustration of this adaptive strategy, allowing Portuguese immigrants involved in the naturalization procedure to benefit from the support of the Swiss majority, without risking losing the support of members of their inherited minority group (the Portuguese).

Approaching the Acquired Majority

In parallel, the findings from the present research show a clear association between the naturalization process (whether it is simply envisaged or already completed), and the identity process of approaching the majority group. Going a step further, these findings demonstrate that changes in identity can already be observed among individuals who have not yet achieved mobility. The anticipators are more identified than the non-anticipators and to a similar degree as the actually mobile. Regardless of the identity components investigated, from the moment immigrants anticipate engaging in the naturalization procedure, they show a strong orientation toward the host society. The present work thus provides additional support of the association between the assimilationist mode of acculturation and immigrants' intentions to naturalize (Dierckx et al., 2022; Politi et al., 2022). It suggests that migrants perceive that distancing from the minority and approaching the majority are considered strong markers of integration and that they are both needed to undertake the Swiss naturalization procedure. Such expectations are more likely to hold in countries with strong rather than weak assimilation policies. These speculations should be investigated in future research.

Attitudes Toward Minorities

The social identities adjustments highlighted so far can be considered adaptive from the mobile and the anticipators' point of view, by helping these groups to integrate within the group they wish to belong to (Ellemers & Jetten, 2013; Merton, 1968) and simultaneously preventing them from losing the support of the minority members (Van Laar et al., 2014). However, the findings on attitudes provide a more nuanced picture. Indeed, the more individuals were engaged in the naturalization process, the more they expressed negative attitudes towards immigration in general (specifically for male residents with shorter length of residence), and the less they indicated to engage in collective action for their own minority group. Hence, these attitudes gradually deteriorated as individuals

engaged in the process of mobility, and not just once the mobility had been achieved. These attitudes would thus not only be a way for mobile individuals to justify the system in which they succeeded (Day & Fiske, 2017), but also a strategy through which individuals signal their loyalty toward the majority and thus increase their chances of successful mobility (Merton, 1968).

While in terms of identity, minority members engaged in an individual mobility trajectory have a certain latitude to manage their relationships with their different memberships, they seem aware that in terms of attitudes, loyalty to the majority is mandatory. In this sense, naturalization appears to be a powerful instrument of assimilationist countries, to maintain a clear distinction between social groups while reducing the risk of social uprising from minorities.

Limitations and Future Directions

An open question in our work is whether our effects display a cohort effect or the development of a genuine process across mobility stages. Due to the correlational nature of our design, causality between identification and attitudinal measures and mobility cannot be assumed. This concern is somewhat attenuated as we have controlled for the effect of variables that are correlated with the mobility stages, that is, the effect of length of residence (in Study 1) and whether or not they were born in the host country (in Study 2). Future longitudinal designs would have the advantage to track the mobility process and provide observations of the temporality of identity and attitudinal adjustments associated with the naturalization process.

Another open question concerns the impact that the type of acculturation policies that a society promotes has on the studied identity processes. According to the literature, multiculturalist contexts tend to favor the maintenance of the minority identity (Guimond et al., 2014), without inhibiting the identity process of approaching the host society (Wright & Bloemraad, 2012). Politi et al. (2022) found that immigrants who wished to maintain their minority identity while concurrently approaching the host society intended to naturalize more when local policies were more inclusive and multicultural.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the samples used in these studies were obtained through convenience sampling, which may limit the generalizability of our findings to the broader population of Portuguese immigrants in Switzerland. Convenience sampling was employed due to practical constraints and the availability of participants, potentially introducing selection bias. As a result, our sample may not be fully representative of the population under study, and caution should be exercised when extrapolating our results to larger or more diverse populations. Future research may benefit from employing randomized sampling techniques to enhance the external validity of the findings.

Finally, despite our work providing consistent evidence of the attitudinal and identity changes occurring while minority members engaged in a mobility trajectory, it does

not investigate the mechanisms responsible for them. Considering that the level of minority-majority contact plays a role in the expression of the political solidarity with other minorities (Glasford & Calcagno, 2012), future research should explore the extent to which changes in inter-minority contact across mobility stages may account for the identity patterns found.

Conclusions

Converging evidence has documented the negative attitudes that mobile individuals, and in particular naturalized immigrants, express towards other minorities (e.g., Just & Anderson, 2015; Kulich et al., 2015; Sarrasin et al., 2018). Our results partially corroborated these previous findings, suggesting that individual mobility strategies may impair criticism to arise within a group and social change to happen (Jetten & Hornsey, 2014). This deterioration of inter-minority relations is not only a consequence of citizenship acquisition (see Dierckx et al., 2022), but may also be one of its antecedents, as it already occurred during the anticipation phase of mobility. In this sense, our results suggest an adaptive function of attitude change in the individual mobility process.

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Data Availability: For this article, the data and codebook for Studies 1 and 2 are available (see Chipeaux et al., 2021).

Supplementary Materials

For this article, the following Supplementary Materials are available: The data, codebook, and syntax for Studies 1 and 2, a description of the Swiss context, additional measures and analyses (see Chipeaux et al., 2021).

Index of Supplementary Materials

Chipeaux, M., Kulich, C., Iacoviello, V., Politi, E., & Lorenzi-Cioldi, F. (2021). *Anticipated and achieved individual mobility amongst Portuguese immigrants in Switzerland: Social identity adjustments and inter-minority relations* [Data, codebook, syntax, analyses]. OSF.
<https://osf.io/ua93p/>

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