

Prejudice Against Asian Immigrants in France

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Abstract

Guided by integrated threat theory, this study investigated the correlation of intergroup contact and the perception of threat from Asian immigrants in France. This study also took the potential effect of age, gender and education on the relationship between threat and contact into consideration. In contrast to hypothesis, results proved contact to be positively correlated with negative stereotypes, but negatively correlated with realist threat and symbolic threat. Education was proved to have no significant effect on the relationship between threat and contact, while age and gender was found to have significant influence on this relationship. Future research and potential limitation of this study are discussed.

Keywords: Intergroup contact, integrated threat theory, age, gender, education, Asian immigrants, France

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Introduction

Discrimination and xenophobia are still universal all around the world, even with the rapid development of globalization and civilization. Prejudice toward immigrants and minority groups are not uncommon almost in every country, which has negative impact on solidarity and stability.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, France received a large amount of immigrants. According to the French national institute of statistics (INESS), immigrants from Spain, Portuguese and Italy have been doubled between from 2009 to 2012. In the year of 2012, more than 200 thousand of people migrated to France, among which, 46% were from Europe, 30% were from Africa, and 14% were from Asia. As an inclusive nation, France has always valued and supported assimilation. The immigrants in France were expected to adjust to and comply with French values and cultural norms. However, not all the immigrants were willing to change or even give up their traditional values and cultural norms in order to Frenchify maximally. A good example is the conflict between French and Muslim regarding Hijabs. Plus the Muslim related terrorist attacks happened in France had strained the relationship between the French and Muslim immigrants. Consequently, more attention was paid to Muslim immigration to France.

Asian immigrant is a relative small group in France. According to INESS 2012, 14% of the total immigration in France is from Asia, among which the biggest group is Chinese, which makes up 3% of all immigrants in France. Researches and studies concerning prejudice towards Asian

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immigrants were limited. As an Asian myself, I was very curious and concerned about the living condition and social status of Asian immigrants in France. Therefore, out of curiosity and willingness to help reduce discrimination, I decided to do research regarding prejudice and discrimination towards Asian immigrants.

To better understand Asian immigration to France and the perception of threat from this immigration, the integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan 1996) and contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) are employed. Stephan & Stephan's (1996) integrated threats theory outlines four types of threat that explains the reasons of prejudice arousal. Allport's contact hypothesis indicates the positive relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice reduction.

This study is aimed to examine the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice toward Asian immigrants in France from the perspective of members from the dominant group, in this case, refers to native-born French.

Literature Review

Integrated Threat Theory

Prejudice is a set of negative attitudes or cognitive beliefs associated with expression of negative affect or hostility toward members of another social group (Allport, 1954; Croucher, Homsey, Bruschi et al., 2013b; Curseu, Stoop & Schalk, 2007). It develops when the majority perceives a threat from the minority and considers it as a potential danger to the dominant cultural

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(Croucher, Aalto, Hirvonen, & Sommier, 2013a). The literature on prejudice abounds with various definitions and models. Although the theories and models studying prejudice have kept changing, the core parts remain the same.

Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) is a theory explains the underlying reasons behind the threat and prejudice arousal. Unlike those early theories and models on prejudice, which only do research from one perspective and focus on one causation factor each time, ITT incorporates several perspectives on prejudice (Curseu et al., 2007). Studying the theory and gaining knowledge of antecedents of threats is considered as an effective way of reducing prejudice and improve relation between groups.

Being a fairly new theory, ITT has not been studied extensively, but research is conducted constantly. When globalization and immigration make different cultures come together, members of different cultural groups would feel threatened, and that is where applying ITT becomes interesting. In this section, the Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) will be reviewed from four parts, including an introduction of the theory, a summary of previous research on ITT and its application in real life, as well as a list of the strengths and weaknesses of ITT.

Introduction. The Integrated Threat Theory was originally introduced by Stephan & Stephan, which is structurally modeled after Thomas F Pettigrew's Intergroup Contact Theory (Wagner, Tropp, Finchilescu & Tredoux, 2008). It is a branch study of intergroup anxiety and focuses on the antecedents and consequences of the anxiety people experience during interaction with members of

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outgroups (Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 1992). According to the original intergroup anxiety model, people usually give negative responses or express negative emotions and evaluations when experiencing high intergroup anxiety. The theory was revised and expanded in 2002, three new threats were added. Thence, ITT includes four types of threats, which make up prejudice: intergroup anxiety, realistic threats, symbolic threats, and negative stereotypes (Stephan & Stephan, 1996, 2000; Stephan, Stephan & Gudykunst, 1999).

Intergroup anxiety. The first type of threat, intergroup anxiety threat, refers to the negative feelings of in-group members when interacting with a person from another group. Individuals are easy to feel threatened in intergroup contact because they are very concerned about the negative outcomes for the self, such as being embarrassed, rejected, etc. (Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 2000). Intergroup anxiety has negative effects on intergroup relationships, it triggers magnified cognitive and behavioral responses in intergroup contexts which will create a hotbed for intergroup conflicts and lead to prejudice and discrimination. A large amount of research has demonstrated and gives prominence to the importance of anxiety in intergroup contexts (Gudykunst, 1993; Stephan et al., 1999).

In the intergroup anxiety model, it is hypothesized that the anxiety one feels varies according to a variety of factors. It will heighten the level of anxiety if the groups have negative or little prior contact, are ethnocentric, have little knowledge of the other group and perceive the outgroup members to be different, have a history of antagonism, and have unequal status (Baumeister &

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Vohs, 2007; Gudykunst, 1995; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). The negative evaluations of outgroups are often incorrectly but inevitably generalized from interpersonal contact to intergroup contact, consequently, expectations of the upcoming intergroup are lowered, while anxiety and hostility against outgroups are heightened, together with the desire to avoid any potential intergroup contact. All these will reduce the possibility for positive contact between groups, thus create a vicious circle and result in subsequent lack of positive intergroup contact (E.Ashby & Patricia G, 2003).

Realistic threats. The second type of threat is realistic threats, which are real dangers the dominant culture perceives, such as threats to economic and political power of the in-group, and/or threats to the physical or material well-being of the in-group and its members (Stephan & Stephan, 1996).

The realistic threats were originally proposed and developed by LeVine and Campbell (1972) and Sherif (1966) to understand the competition for scarce resources, such as territory, wealth and natural resources, between groups (Stephan& Stephan, 2000). For instance, according to Croucher et al. (2013a), prejudice will develop because of a competition for limited resources between dominant and minority groups. Accepting immigrants is like a two-edged sword with advantages and disadvantages. The inadequate social resources have to be divided, which, to a large extent, cause conflict. Consequently, the dominant group starts to blame immigrants for competing against them, hence prejudice develops.

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Symbolic threats. The third type of threat is symbolic threats, which “primarily involve perceived group difference in moral, values, standards, beliefs, and attitude” (Stephan & Stephan, 2000, p. 25). They are threats to the in-group’s worldview. For instance, research shows that in contemporary Europe, immigrants are regarded differently not only because of their nationalities, but on account of their distinctive religious and cultural values (Mclaren, 2003).

Intergroup biases will occur when the dominant group perceives the different value system from the out-group as potential threats. All these new values, beliefs and symbols of the out-group are believed to be against the rightness of the in-group’s values, beliefs and symbols (Osborne, Davies, & Duran, 2008; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Such perceived threats posed by out-group to any of the in-group central values will cause arising prejudice and discrimination towards the out-group. Extensive research shows these types of perceived threats often cause intergroup hostility and conflict (Stephan et al., 1999).

Symbolic threats arise due to a firm belief in the moral rightness of the in-group’s worldview, which make the group ethnocentric. To be specific, a group of people categorize themselves as the superior, and see themselves as predominately good. The concept of symbolic threats is conceptually related to the symbolic and modern racism (Kinder & Sears, 1982; McConahay & Hough, 1976; McConahay, 1986; Sears, 1988). In other words, even if racism continues to flourish, its form and execution have kept changing, therefore converting its effects on the perpetrators and victims.

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Negative stereotypes. The fourth type of threat is negative stereotypes. It is the dominant group members' general imagination or prediction of the way the minority will behave (Hamilton, Sherman, & Ruvolo, 1990; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Specifically, it not only provides expectations for social interactions and offers explanations for intergroup behavior, but justifies the subordination of minority groups (Hilton & Hippiel, 1996; Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

The essence of the threat is the fear of negative consequences, which, as a matter of fact, creates negative stereotypes (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Negative stereotypes often result in a strong desire to avoid any forms of interaction with out-group members, provide negative trait attributions to explain the behaviors of out-group members and justify prejudice and discrimination against them.

Stereotypes are easily affected by the political and economic situations, especially the bilateral relationship between countries. They are considered to be associated with prejudice (Allport, 1954; Brigham, 1971; Stephan & Stephan, 2000), thus problematic and biased stereotypes will lead to prejudice arousal.

Attitudes towards outgroups. In integrated threat theory, four types of threats are used to predict attitudes toward the out-group, prejudice is defined as negative affect (including emotions and evaluation) related with the out-group (Stephan & Stephan, 1993). Therefore, emotional and evaluative reactions are applied in measure of prejudicial attitudes toward the out-group.

Antecedents of the threats. As antecedents for the above mentioned four types of threats, ITT discusses several factors: prior intergroup conflict, the unequal status of the groups, the strength of the in-group identification, knowledge of the out-group and the nature of the intergroup contact.

A casual model of ITT is presented in Figure 1.

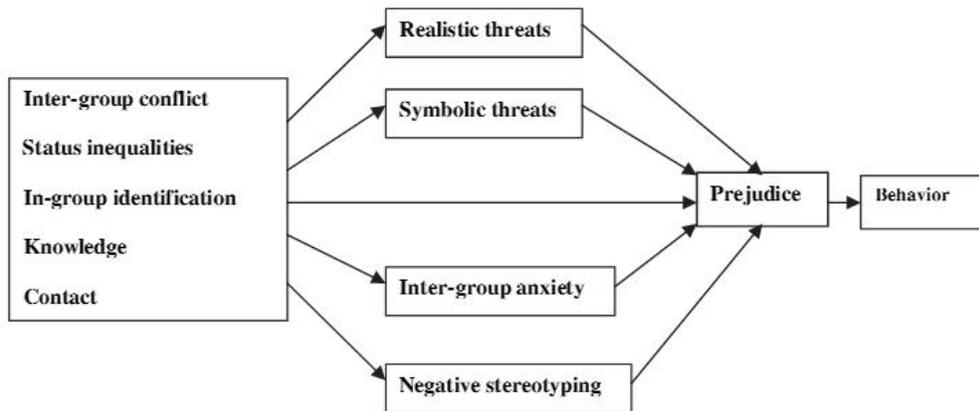


Figure 1 the basic ITT model (Stephan et al., 1999)

Prior intergroup conflict. The perceived intergroup conflicts, involving real confrontations or other types of controversies regarding scarce resources between groups, play an important role in causing feelings of threat and prejudice. It is addressed in many theories, such as realistic group conflict theories, relative deprivation theory, etc. (Burton 1986; Osgood, 1959; Stephan & Stephan, 1996). The type of the above mentioned intergroup conflicts do not refer to the conflicts currently exist between groups, but the conflicts have occurred in the past, which affect the current relations between groups negatively.

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Prior intergroup conflict can be seen as occupying a continuum from openly acknowledged high level conflict to low level conflict that do not contain direct confrontations and are likely to be ignored. High levels of conflict may involve direct physical confrontations, controversies regarding scarce resources (e.g. territory, jobs, election, etc.), and irreconcilable differences in religious and cultural values. Perceptions of the above mentioned four threats are positively related to prior conflict between groups (Stephan et al., 1999). High prior conflict will increase the probability of perceiving threat.

Status inequality. Different status of in- and out-groups has influence on the perceived threats. Regardless of social status, both high and low status groups may feel threatened by the other group, only in different ways. High status group members often worry about the reverse of power relation between the groups and the “bad” influence from the other group regarding religious and cultural values. They may also go through contact anxiety when interacting with members of the low status group due to the fear of hostility, the feelings of guilt and the effects of negative stereotypes (Stephan et al., 1999).

The differences of worldview and values between in- and out- groups are often used by the dominant group as excuses to explain their hostility and prejudice against the minority group. However, it is not unilateral. Just because the members of minority group may not feel free to express their hostility and prejudice against the dominant group, doesn't mean the negative

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stereotypes about the dominant group and the anxiety of having negative interactions with members of dominant group do not exist among them (Stephan et al., 1999)..

It appears that the status inequality is positively related to the salience of perceived threats. In other words, high status differences between in- and out- group will increase the threats posed by the other group.

In-group identification. Social identification plays an important role in the perception of threats. It appears that self-identifying with in-group and concerning about threat posed by out-group are positively related. People with stronger in-group identification are more likely to feel threatened by the out-group.

Knowledge of the outgroup. Regarding knowledge of the out-group, it appears that the more in-group members know about the out-group's beliefs, values, behavior patterns, etc., the less likely it is that they perceive threatened by the out-group. Due to their limited knowledge, members of in-group may feel unfamiliar with out- group and experience a fear of unknown, which leads to prejudice arousal.

Contact. The amount and type (positive and negative) of prior intergroup contact influences the perception of the threat posed by the out-group. Positive contact and perception of threat are positively related. Specifically, frequent positive contacts (e.g. pleasant teamwork, successful cooperation, etc.) between in- and out-group members may lower the possibility of perceiving threats posed by the out-group member; whereas frequent intergroup negative contact (e.g.

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unpleasant teamwork, confrontation, etc.) may increase the probability that in-group members will feel threatened by the out-group (Stephan et al., 1999).

Previous researches support on integrated threat theory

Integrated threat theory is a fairly new theory. Therefore, the number of studies testing and validating the theory is not as big as some other theories. Yet the interests and concerns the theory gain have been growing rapidly. Numerous researches that provide a better understanding of the underlying cognitive processes behind people's attitude, beliefs and behavior have been done world widely. Some of the research will be introduced in this section.

The research topics the theory can be applied to are various, such as religious intolerance, public attitudes towards immigration, negative stereotypes, etc. For instance, ITT was used to predict attitudes toward immigrants in Spain and Israel (Stephan et al., 1998). All four threats were significant predictors of dominant attitude toward the immigrant group, while two of the variables, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes, seem to be more powerful than the other two threats. Consequently, although realistic and symbolic threats were proved to be influential on prejudice arousal, more research prominence were given to intergroup anxiety and negative stereotype when it comes to discuss the implications of the theory for the causes and reduction of prejudice (Stephan et al., 1998).

Another interesting research topic is prejudice toward Muslim immigrants in different countries, like United States, France, United Kingdom, Netherland, Germany and many other

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countries (Croucher, 2013; Croucher et al., 2013a, 2013b; Gonzales, Verkuyten, Weesie et al., 2008). Prejudice toward Muslim immigrants differs, so does Muslims' integration path. The dominant group's attitude and religious tolerance toward Muslims is largely influenced by realistic threats, such as the domestic economic situation. Research shows with rather lower unemployment, German feel less threatened by Muslims compared to the British and French (Bizman & Yinon, 2001; Gonzalez, Verkuyten, Weesie et al., 2008; Stephan & Stephan, 1993, 1996; Stephan et al., 1999; Verkuyten, 1997). As result, prejudice towards Muslims in Germany is not as strong as in the U.K and France; Germans are more likely to believe Muslim immigrants want to become a functional part of their society. On contrast, in the Netherland, studies show prejudice towards Muslim is mainly caused by symbolic threats and negative stereotype, rather than realistic threats (Gonzalez et al., 2008). In Finland, "religiosity did not have a significant effect on the relationship between intergroup contact and threat" (Croucher et al., 2013a, p.116). Research indicates real and symbolic threats are positively correlated, while the negative stereotypes and threat are negatively related (Croucher et al., 2013a). Also, it is proposed that not only the quantity, but the quality of intergroup contact impacts dominant group's prejudice toward the immigrants.

ITT has also shown its correlation with issues important to students. One study on cultural adaptation process required of students going abroad was done by Fritz and colleagues in 2008. It examined the acculturation process of student living abroad who are dealing with a new language and finial issues. In this case, intergroup anxiety of being an outsider is employed in order to have a better knowledge of formulating a program to help students with cultural adaptation.

Application of Integrated Threat Theory in Reality

Application of Integrated Threat Theory is available in various fields. The antecedents of threats can be observed between different social classes, cultures, religions, genders, sexuality, age, political affiliations and ethnicity (Samovar, 2009). In this section, the way of using ITT in real life will be discussed, so does the importance of having a better understanding of the theory and conducting it in everyday life.

It is not possible to completely avoid having prejudice; everyone has prejudice under certain circumstance, it is only a matter of level. Within an organization, groups are always existing and in conflict with each other. Gaining knowledge of ITT and understanding the underlying reasons behind the prejudice arousal and group conflicts is considered as the best way of reducing prejudice and improving relations between groups (Samovar, 2009). Consequently, in order to construct a harmonious society with less prejudice and conflict, a large amount of educational programs and institutions are set up for theoretical educating and intercultural training.

Research shows it is common for a multicultural education curriculum presenting values and cultural behaviors from a perspective of the minority group. Nowadays, intercultural training is often used in business “to teach managers and employees to value group differences, increase understanding between groups, and help individuals recognize that their own behavior is affected by their background” so as to encourage intergroup contact and reduce prejudice (Samovar, 2009, p.176). The aforementioned educational program is needed by lots of people, which somehow

indicates increasing number of people have already had intercultural awareness and willing to improve intergroup relation, yet preparation for prejudice reduction has not been done, more theoretic knowledge of ITT need to be propagated.

The strengths and weaknesses of the theory

Every theory has its challenges. In this section, critics towards integrated threat theory are discussed, together with its value of being studied and tested.

The original ITT was modeled after Pettigrew's Intergroup Contact Theory, which mainly focused on intergroup relationships and group conflicts (Wagner, Tropp, Finchilescu & Tredoux, 2008). It was considered incomprehensive and problematic because of lacking social structural causes and personal approaches to prejudice arise (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Researchers proposed the number of antecedents and consequences of the theory was too limited, as well as the way of conceptualizing the types of threat (Wagner et al., 2008). Therefore, to address the aforementioned weaknesses, the theory was revised in 2002 (Stephan & Renfro, 2002).

Apart from the original theory, the revised theory pays more attention to distinct threats to the entire group and threats to a member of the group. Meanwhile, besides the four antecedents of threat in the original theory (strong identification with ingroup, negative individual contact with outgroup, historical conflicts and significant differences in status between group and between groups), new antecedents are added into the new theory, including the relations between group, individual difference variability and cultural dimensions (Stephan & Renfro, 2002). After revising,

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the theory provides a more comprehensive range of applications, while more research is needed in order to testify its concepts.

Regardless of the flaws, ITT lists the antecedents of the threats and the causes of prejudice, which, to a large extent, provides a better understanding of the underlying reasons of prejudice arousal to improve relations between groups (Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

Intergroup Contact

Allport (1954) hypothesized that under appropriate conditions, contact between members of different groups is an efficient way of improving intergroup relations and reducing prejudice.

Intergroup contact is not a unidirectional process. When contact situations include negative contact, and create intergroup anxiety for members of different groups, the effect of contact on easing intergroup conflicts and reducing prejudice will be spoiled. Therefore, in order to obtain beneficial effects, the contact situations should include positive contact, which means the intergroup contact should be sanctioned by institutional supports, members of different groups should have equal status, be involved in personal interaction with out-group members, share common goals and strive for it cooperatively (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1971).

The positive effects of contact between different groups have been demonstrated in both empirical and experimental studies, in various contact situations, between all sorts of social groups. Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis of 516 studies found support for Allport's hypothesis, 95% of the studies reported a negative relationship between contact and prejudice between

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different groups. Specifically, the studies provided strong evidence and claimed that fact-to face intergroup contact could reduce prejudice significantly. However, Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) studies also indicates that although the conditions mentioned in Allport's original contact hypothesis effectively facilitate prejudice reduction, they are not essential.

Hewstone and Brown's (1986) study advanced Allport's contact hypothesis into a developed theory, and showed its application in various new directions (Pettigrew, 1998). Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analytic studies indicated that the contact theory did not only work between different ethnic and racial groups, but equally worked well between groups with different ages, sexual orientations, etc.

Hypothesis and Research Questions

Extensive researches and studies in multiple fields indicate intergroup contact reduce prejudice between different groups. Therefore, in this study, I offer the following hypothesis based on researches regarding relationship between threat and prejudice:

H: There will be a negative correlation between integrated threat and intergroup contact.

In addition, the relationship between threat and prejudice might be influenced by various factors, such as education, gender, etc. Thus an important question to consider is whether levels of education, age and gender of members of the dominant culture influence the relationship between threat and prejudice. Therefore, the following research question is posed:

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RQ1: What is the effect of education, age, and sex on integrated threat?

RQ2: What is the effect of education, age, and sex on intergroup contact?

RQ3: To what extent do gender, age and education influence the relationship between integrated threat and intergroup contact?

Methodology

Participants and procedures

Out of 100 participants, only 77 finished the entire survey, among which a total of 72 native-born French people (18 males, 54 females) participated in this study. All the above mentioned 72 participants ranged in age from 19 to 80 ($M=32.56$, $SD=13.96$). The sample was highly educated, 30.6% ($n=22$) were university graduates and 40.2% ($n=29$) were post-graduates. Meanwhile, the sample was highly bilingual or even multilingual. Only 5 out of 72 participants spoke no other than French. A sizeable part of the participants were able to speak at least on Asian language, including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.

Data were collected through self-administered online questionnaires in 2014 fall and 2015 spring on Qualtrics. I took full advantage of the connections in France, tried to contact individuals through social networks and ask them to spread the survey through their social network. This kind of sampling is a snowball sampling, which is typical in intercultural communication study. The participants in this study did not receive any forms of financial compensation for participation.

Measures

All surveys included demographic questions and the following measures: a measure of intergroup contact (González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008), a measure of symbolic and realistic threat (González et al., 2008), and a measure of stereotypes (González et al., 2008). Surveys were prepared in French. Two native French speakers first translated the survey after it was written in English, then a bilingual speaker back-translated the survey. All these different versions of translations were compared to ensure the accuracy of the survey.

Intergroup contact. Four items measured the intergroup contact. The items were “How many Asian friends do you have?”, “Do you have contact with Asians at school /work?”, “Do you have contact with Asians in your neighborhood?” and “Do you have contact with Asians somewhere else such as during activities?” (González et al, 2008). The first item was rated from 1, none to 4, only Asian friends. The remaining three items were rate from 1, never to 4, often. In the original González et al. (2008) study, the alpha for this scale was 0.70.

Symbolic threat. Three items measured symbolic threat (González et al, 2008), including: “French identity is being threatened because there are too many Asians”, “French norms and values are being threatened because of the presence of Asians” and “Asians are a threat to French culture.” Responses to these statements ranges from 1, strongly disagree to 5, strongly agree. Higher score indicated stronger perception of threat. The scale has shown a reliability of 0.89 in the study of González et al. (2008).

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Realistic threat. Three items measured realistic threat. The items were “Because of the presence of Asians, people have more difficulties finding a job”, “Because of the presence of Asians, people have more difficulties finding a house” and “Because of the presence of Asians, unemployment in France will increase.” Responses ranged from 1, strongly disagree to 5, strongly agree. Higher score indicated stronger perception of threat. The scale has shown a reliability of 0.80 in the study of González et al. (2008).

Stereotypes. The participants were asked to what extent the following characteristic adjectives described Asians: violent, dishonest, unintelligent, friendly (reverse-scored), arrogant, kind (reverse-scored), avaricious, and inferior. The items were rated from 1, no absolutely not to 5, yes certainly. The alpha for this scale was 0.83 in the study of González et al. (2008).

To evaluate Asian immigrants’ acculturation motivation into French society from the perspective of native French, the participants were asked how likely they assessed Asian immigrants’ desire for becoming a part of French culture: “I think Asian immigrants to France want to become French”, “I think Asian immigrants to France want to become French”, “I think Asian immigrants to France think it’s important to be French”, “I think Asian immigrants to France take appropriate steps to become French”. Responses ranged from 1, false, to 7 true.

Analysis and Results

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In this study, Pearson product moment correlation was conducted to test the hypothesis. One-way ANOVA, Pearson product-moment correlations and multiple regression models were conducted to answer the research questions.

Hypothesis

Pearson product moment correlation was conducted to test the hypothesis in this study. The hypothesis (H) proposed a negative correlation between threat and intergroup contact. The means, standard deviations, correlations and alphas were presented in Table 1. As it could be seen, the hypothesis was partially supported by the data. Intergroup contact was negatively correlated with symbolic threat ($r = -.16, p > .05$), and with realistic threat ($r = -.04, p > .05$). While in contrast to the hypothesis, contact was positively related to negative stereotypes ($r = .19, p > .05$).

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations and Alphas

Variables	M	SD	Alpha	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) Intergroup Contact	10.22	3.89	0.91							
(2) Symbolic Threat	5.10	3.89	0.95	-.16						
(3) Realistic Threat	4.65	3.89	0.98	-.04	.87**					
(4) Negative Stereotypes	16.46	4.33	0.65	.19	.02	.002				
(5) Gender										
(6) Education	5	1.13		.12	-.14	-.15	-.14			
(7) Age	32.56	13.96		-.28*	.05	-.007	-.09		.23	

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Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

All of the above mentioned correlations were not significant. The sample was reliable: the scale of contact ($\alpha = .91$), the scale of symbolic threat ($\alpha = .95$), and the scale of realistic threat ($\alpha = .98$) have shown high reliability, except the scale of negative stereotypes ($\alpha = .65$).

Research questions

ANOVA and Pearson product-moment correlations were conducted to address the research question 1 and 2.

The statistics of age and its correlation with threat and contact is presented in Table 1. According to Table 1, age was positively correlated with symbolic threat ($r = .05$, $p = .67$), but negatively correlated with realistic threat ($r = -.007$, $p = .96$), negative stereotypes ($r = -.09$, $p = .47$) and contact ($r = -.28$, $p = .02$). Accordingly, correlation between age and all three aspects of threat were proved non-significant, while the correlation between age and contact was proved significant.

The statistics of gender and its effect on threat and contact is presented as below in Table 2. Accordingly, male got higher scores in symbolic threat than female ($M_1 = 5.39$, $M_2 = 5.00$). This proved male was tended to have stronger feeling of be threatened by Asian immigrants symbolically than female. In contrast, female scored higher in realistic threat ($M_1 = 4.56$, $M_2 = 4.69$, $p = .87$) and negative stereotypes ($M_1 = 15.78$, $M_2 = 16.69$, $p = .45$). It came to a conclusion that female were tended to have stronger feeling of be threatened by Asian immigrants than male

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on realistic matters, meanwhile female were proved to have deeper negative stereotypes of Asian immigrants than male. However, the differences between male and female in all three aspects of threat were proved non-significant. Unlikely, gender was proved to have significant influence on contact in this study ($p = .03$). Male scored higher than female on this issue ($M1 = 8.50$, $M2 = 10.80$). In other words, female tended to have more intergroup contact with Asian immigrants than male.

Table 2

Gender and its effect on threat and contact

	1 Male		2 Female		F	Sig.
	M1	SD1	M2	SD2		
Symbolic threat	5.39	2.23	5.00	3.05	.25	.62
Realistic threat	4.56	1.98	4.69	3.01	.03	.87
Negative stereotypes	15.78	4.44	16.69	4.31	.60	.45
Intergroup contact	8.50	4.25	10.80	3.63	4.96	.03

The statistics of education and its effect on threat and contact is presented as below in Table 3. Accordingly, education had significant impact on symbolic threat ($M = 5.10$, $p = .001$), and on realistic threat ($M = 4.65$, $p = .001$). In other words, symbolic and realistic threats differs between education groups. In contrast, effect of education on negative stereotypes ($M = 16.46$, $p = .226$) and contact ($M = 10.22$, $p = .11$) was proved non-significant. This proved negative stereotypes and intergroup contact did not have significant differences between education groups.

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Table 3

Effect of education on threat and contact

		2 Junior high	3 High school	4 Training	5 Bachelor	6 Master	7 Doctor	Total	Sig.
Symbolic threat	M	9.00	3.50	7.15	4.36	4.48	9.00	5.10	.001
	SD	0.00	.84	2.54	2.03	2.70	8.48	2.86	
Realistic threat	M	7.50	3.67	6.69	3.91	3.96	9.00	4.65	.001
	SD	2.12	1.03	2.43	1.66	2.75	8.48	2.77	
Negative stereotypes	M	18.00	17.83	17.15	15.55	16.93	10.00	16.46	.23
	SD	8.49	5.74	2.11	4.47	4.30	2.83	4.33	
Contact	M	8.00	11.83	7.62	11.14	10.48	11.00	10.22	.11
	SD	1.41	4.75	3.31	3.67	3.83	5.66	3.89	

The correlations of education and threat, education and contact are presented in Table 1 above. According to Table 1, education was positively correlated with contact ($r=0.12$, $p>0.05$), but negatively correlated with symbolic threat ($r= -.14$, $p>.05$), with realistic threat ($r= -.15$, $p>.05$), and with negative stereotypes ($r= -.14$, $p>.05$). However, the above mentioned correlations were proved non-significant in this study.

A multiple regression model was conducted to test Research Question 3, using intergroup contact as the criterion variable and the following predictor variables: symbolic threat, realistic

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threat, negative stereotypes, age, gender and educational level. Cross – product terms were created to test for interaction effects. The overall regression results are presented in Table 2 below.

The three aspects of threat (symbolic, realist, stereotypes) were entered as predictors in model 1 ($R^2 = .10$). Age was entered as a predictor in Model 2 ($R^2 = .15$, $\Delta F = .53$). This proved to be a significant improvement over model 1. Gender was entered as predictors in Model 3 ($R^2 = .14$, $\Delta F = .26$). This proved to be a significant improvement over model 1. In model 4, education was entered as a predictor ($R^2 = .12$, $\Delta F = -.23$). This proved to be a non-significant improvement over model 1. Cross-product terms presenting the interaction of education and all three aspects of threat were entered as predictors in Model 5 ($R^2 = .17$, $\Delta F = -.40$). This proved to not be significant as a chunk of predictors.

In conclusion, in this study, age and gender were proved to have significant influence on the relationship between intergroup contact and threat, however, education and cross-products of education and threat were proved to have no significant influence on the relationship between contact and threat.

Table 4

Regression Model for Research Questions

Regressor	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Intercept	8.19	10.58	8.90	5.27	5.32
Symbolic threat	-.69	-.61	-.59	-.68	1.56

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Realistic threat	.56	.48	.47	.58	- 2.52
Negative stereotypes	.18	.16	.16	.20	.41
Age		-.07			
Gender			-1.86		
Education				.50	.50
Education*symbolic					-.43
Education*realistic					.58
Education*stereotypes					-.38
F	2.47	3.02*	2.74*	2.26	1.86
ΔF		.53	.26	-.23	-.40
R ²	.10	.15	.14	.12	.17

Note: * $p < .05$.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation of intergroup contact and threat, and to reveal the effect of gender, age and education on intergroup contact and threat. Simultaneously, this study was trying to reveal if gender, age and education had significant effect on the relationship between contact and threat.

The following conclusions can be drawn from this study.

First, the hypothesis was partly supported by the data, among three aspect of threat, negative stereotypes was positively correlated with contact, without significance. The type of intergroup contact should be emphasized and analyzed in more details. More intergroup contact between the

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participants and immigrants could effectively decrease the feelings of threat if the contact is deep enough (McLaren, 2003). In other words, superficial and shallow relationship with schoolmates or colleges may not be able to change the participants' perceptions of immigrants as efficiently as profound and deep relationship with friends or spouse. The type and depth of contact between the participants and Asian immigrants may explain why intergroup contact was positively correlated with negative stereotypes in this study. Stereotypes were not neither entirely accurate, nor groundless. People tend to see what they want to see, and sometimes, they see only what they want to see. Thus the superficial relationship between the respondents and immigrants allowed the respondents sat out the actual interaction and check the box of their deep-rooted negative stereotypes that fit the Asian immigrants without second thought or asking questions. As result, respondents' anxiety to communicate with Asian immigrants may increase gradually. High levels of anxiety prior to actual interaction can increase feelings of threat and turn this interaction into an unpleasant experience deepen the negative stereotypes, thus lead to anxiety increase and creation of a vicious circle. Besides, the differences between Asian's communication style and participants' communication style should be valued, since communication style, to a large extent, is affected by culture. Although Asian cultures share similarities with French culture, the differences are significant. Therefore, analysis on communication style based on cultural differences should be valued.

Second, age was proved to have a positive correlation with symbolic threat, but a negative correlation with realistic threat and negative stereotype. All the above mentioned correlations were

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non-significant. Age groups were not created in this study; therefore, the differences of threat and contact between age groups were not examined. While the correlation of age and contact was revealed to be significant. Generally speaking, the elder tended to have less contact with Asian immigrants based on the results, which could easily be understood in this study. The measures of intergroup contact payed more attention to contact frequency, while quiet amount of respondents in this study were young students interested in Asian culture. Regardless of the type of contact, these respondents were more likely to interact with Asian immigrants in daily life, and as result scored higher in intergroup contact.

Third, education did not have significant effect on the relationship between intergroup contact and threat. Although statistically French people's education level was below the EU average for people from 25 to 64, and existing significant differences between individuals, the sample was highly educated and similar in education level. 51 participants out of 72 had bachelor degree or above, among which 22 were bachelor and 27 were master. This could explain why education did not have effect on the above mentioned relationship in this study.

Forth, the data and results of threat, especially of negative stereotypes in this study, demonstrated that tension between host group and immigrants, as well as prejudice, would not be easily reduced by creating superficial relationship between those two groups, or by increasing contact frequency.

Future Research and Limitation

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The findings from this study aid researchers to better understand how intergroup contact influences threat, and thus reduce prejudice against Asian immigrant in France. Overall, these findings offer perspective and inspiration for future research presented as follows.

First, as an important nation of immigration, it is essential for researchers to examine how this influences the host culture's attitude towards immigrants. Some nations that now face increasing number of immigrants tend to impose more pressure on immigrants to force them to acculturate and integrate into the dominant group as soon as possible, including France. In order to achieve this goal, France introduces stricter immigration policies and restrictions on religious and ethnical freedoms. For instance, for security reasons, Burka (a traditional Muslim headgear) was banned in public from 2011. The pressure France impose and the attitude change caused by increasing number of immigrants, have significant impact on host culture receptivity, levels of anxiety, and on the amount of threat members of dominant group perceive from the immigrants. As anti-immigrant ideological trend arises in France and its nearby nations, such as Germany, it is important for government to do research on the effect of such trend on integration, discrimination and intergroup contact.

Second, prejudice is a universal phenomenon, which does not only exist between groups, but also within groups. In detail, between immigrant groups, Asian immigrants might have prejudice against Muslims, while within Asian immigrant groups; the Chinese may have negative attitudes towards the Korean, for various reasons, such as cultural differences, economic competition, or

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simply personal preference. Thus future research could be done on the correlation of threat and contact among immigrant groups to reduce prejudice against each other among immigrant groups.

Third, racial differences should be added into the future research. France had a long history of immigration, thus the immigrants in France were numerous and various. The situations of different immigrant groups and their degree of integration were diverse. Researches on how prejudice against immigrants differs based on racial differences would be essential and significant.

Restricted to diverse factors, this study has potential limitations as follows.

First, as an exchange student in France without a huge social network during this study, I was not able to spread out the survey widely; most of the surveys were spread through my schoolmates, course instructors, and host family. As a result, although the data was proved reliable ($\alpha = .91$), the amount of this survey sample is way too small; besides, the participants were lack of diversification, for a large part of the data were collected from university students interested in Asian culture and spoke one or more Asian language. Most of the results were without statistical significance. Therefore, the results in this study may not be able to represent the larger general public in France.

Second, the data was collected back in 2014 and 2015, before the refugee crisis and terrorist attacks hit Europe. Although the issue was mainly around Muslim and people from Muslim world, it is not determined if French people's attitudes towards all immigrant groups, including Asian immigrants, had shifted ever since. Simultaneously, levels of anxiety to communicate with

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outsiders had upgraded after series of terrorist attacks in France and its neighbor countries, respondents' anxiety to communicate with immigrants may have contributed to an increase in their feelings of threat, and thus turn an interaction into a negative experience. Negative interaction can increase feelings of threat, thus discrimination against or prejudice towards immigrants arouse. However, due to the significant appearance differences between the recent refugees and Asian immigrants, the influence of instability in Europe on levels of anxiety to interact with Asian immigrants is uncertain.

Third, while studying and collecting data in France, I realized that my friends and I have different definitions of Asian immigrant. And even among the French, their opinions are not the same. For someone, Asian only refers to people with a symbolic Asian face, who comes from North, East or Southeast Asia, including Mongolian, Chinese, Japanese, Thai, etc. For them, Indians are just Indians, not generally considered as Asian. However, for someone, Asian refers to people from the continent of Asia, including Chinese, Indians, Iranians, etc. Besides, there was a certain amount of descendants of Asian immigrants had no mixed-race family history, but were born and grown up in France, I wonder if they were still considered Asian based on their blood and skin color. In the survey, I did not ask participants to clarify their definition of Asian immigrant in the demographic part. Therefore, Asian immigrant is a rather ambiguous concept in this study. Further researches could be done on the definition of Asian immigrants from the perspective of the host group, and combine the results with this study to reveal the correlation of threat and contact, and how high quality contact reduces prejudice against Asian immigrants.

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Last but not least, the type of intergroup contact should be analyzed, and the quality of contact should be valued. The measure of intergroup contact (Gonzalez et al, 2008) in this study has inevitable drawbacks. Although the alpha of this measure is high and the translation was reliable, it is likely that the quantity and frequency of contact were overemphasized. The depth and quality of contact has significant influences on reducing threat and enhancing intergroup attitudes (Pettigrew 1997), while the measure of intergroup contact (Gonzalez et al, 2008) mainly focused on quantity.

Conclusion

Discrimination and xenophobia still exist all around the world, regardless of the rapid development of globalization and civilization. With the continuously increasing number of immigrants, prejudice against immigrants and minority groups has become a significant social issue, which was proved to have negative influence on solidarity and stability. In order to examine and better understand the relationship between threat and intergroup contact, and reduce prejudice against Asian immigrants in France, this study was emerged.

In this study, the literature review has a brief look into Integrated Threat Theory and Intergroup contact. The integrated threat theory was first introduced by Stephan & Stephan. Four types of threats, including intergroup anxiety, realistic threats, symbolic threats and negative stereotypes are reviewed, followed by the introduction of previous research supporting on the theory. Application of ITT in various fields, including intercultural study, multicultural educational programs and prejudice reduction is discussed. Meanwhile, the strengths and weaknesses of theory

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are summarized. ITT is mainly applied in business and workplace, where prejudice and conflict reduction would significantly improve work efficiency and economic benefits.

In order to have a better understanding of the relationship between threat and contact, and to reveal the effect of age, gender and education on threat and contact, one hypothesis and three research questions were proposed. Data were collected through self-administered online questionnaires on Qualtrics. All surveys included demographic questions and the following measures: a measure of intergroup contact (González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008), a measure of symbolic and realistic threat (González et al., 2008), and a measure of stereotypes (González et al., 2008).

In this study, Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to test the hypothesis. One-way ANOVA, Pearson product-moment correlations and multiple regression models were conducted to answer the research questions. Based on the results, the hypothesis proved to be partly supported: contact was negatively correlated with symbolic threat and realistic threat, but positively correlated with negative stereotypes. For the research questions, gender and age were proved to have non-significant effects on all three aspects of threat, while education was proved to have a significant effect on symbolic threat and realistic threat, but a non-significant effect on negative stereotypes. Besides, gender and age had a significant effect on intergroup contact, and on the relationship between contact and threat, however, the effect of education on contact and relationship between threat and contact, was proved non-significant.

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The findings from this study aid researchers to better understand how intergroup contact influences threat, and thus reduce prejudice against Asian immigrant in France. However, this study has limitations. The type of intergroup contact should be analyzed, and the quality of contact should be valued. The measure of intergroup contact (Gonzalez et al, 2008) in this study has inevitable drawbacks; it focuses heavily on contact frequency, rather than contact quality. Besides, the term Asian immigrant was rather ambiguous in this study, for lack of clarification.

All in all, this study extended integrated threat and intergroup contact research to the study of Asian immigrants in France. Future research should be expanded to explore the current situation of other immigrant groups in France, and to better understand the relationship between immigration, prejudice and intergroup contact.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Please answer the following question based on this 4-point scale: (1 = none to 4 = only Asian friends)

1. How many Asian friends do you have?

Answer the following questions based on this 4-point scale: (1= never to 4 = often)

1. Do you have contact with Asians at school /work?
2. Do you have contact with Asians in your neighborhood?
3. Do you have contact with Asians somewhere else such as during activities?

Pleas answer the following questions based on this 5-point scale: (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree)

1. French identity/culture is threatened because there are too many Asians today.
2. French norms and values are threatened because of the presence of Asians today.
3. Asians are a threat to French culture.
4. Because of the presence of Asians, French have more difficulty finding a job.
5. Because of the presence of Asians, French have more difficulty finding a house.

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6. Because of the presence of Asians, unemployment in France is increasing.

Please answer the following questions based on this 5-point scale: (1 = no, absolutely not to 5 = yes, certainly)

1. Does the following stereotype describe Asians: violent?
2. Does the following stereotype describe Asians: dishonest?
3. Does the following stereotype describe Asians: unintelligent?
4. Does the following stereotype describe Asians: friendly?
5. Does the following stereotype describe Asians: arrogant?
6. Does the following stereotype describe Asians: kind?
7. Does the following stereotype describe Asians: greedy?
8. Does the following stereotype describe Asians: inferior?

Please answer the following questions based on this 7-point scale: (1 = false to 7 = true)

1. I think Asian immigrants to France want to become French.
2. I think Asian immigrants to France try to act French.
3. I think Asian immigrants to France think it's important to be French.
4. I think Asian immigrants to France take appropriate steps to become French.

Appendix B

Demographic questions

1. Age
2. Nationality
3. Gender
 - 1)Male
 - 2)Female
4. Parents' nationality
 - 1)Both French
 - 2)One French, the other not
 - 3)Both non-French
5. Parents' country of birth
 - 1)Both parents born in France
 - 2)One born in France, the other not
 - 3)Both foreign-born

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6. Employment status

- 1) Employed for wages
- 2) Student
- 3) Self-employed
- 4) Housewife/husband
- 5) Out of work for more than 1 year
- 6) Retired
- 7) Out of work for less than 1 year
- 8) Others (please specify)

7. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?

- 1) No schooling completed
- 2) Junior high school graduate
- 3) High school graduate
- 4) Trade/technical/vocational training
- 5) Bachelor's degree

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- 6) Master's degree
 - 7) Doctorate degree
 - 8) other
8. What is your religious preference?
- 1) Roman Catholic
 - 2) Protestant
 - 3) Christian
 - 4) Jewish
 - 5) Muslim
 - 6) No religion
 - 7) Other (Please specify)
9. How many foreign languages do you speak?
- 1) 1
 - 2) 2
 - 3) 3 and more

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10. Do you speak any Asian language?

- 1) No
- 2) Yes (please specify)