

Social Representation of Islam and Changes in the Stereotype of Muslims

Nadège Soubiale¹

Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne

Nicolas Roussiau²

Université de Rennes II

ABSTRACT - This study deals with discrimination against Muslims in France. Stereotyping phenomena of Muslims has been explored from both the structural approach of social representations and the stereotypes in social cognition. First-year psychology students ($N= 123$) took part in the experiment. In a first step, an association task to stimulus word "Islam" provided the social representations of Islam. In a second step, we tested experimentally if an objective piece of information on Islam change the stereotype of Muslims. It was only reduced for subjects who had some prior knowledge of Islam and whose representation of it was descriptive rather than evaluative. The psychosocial functions of representations and of stereotypes and stereotyping stability are discussed. We also mentioned that a dual-process hypothesis of liking persons or groups (Clement & Krueger, 1998) could enlighten researches on Muslims stereotypes. Finally, we mentioned the role of social practices in social representations and cognitions modifications (Rouquette, 1997; Abric, 1994; Flament, 1994).

Key words: social representations; stereotypes and stereotyping; changes in stereotypes; migrants target outgroups; racism.

If, on the one hand, racial discrimination is obviously a social and political problem in France, on the other hand, this field of research remains rarely explored by french social psychologists when compared with their american counterparts. However, not until recently, much interest in this field in France is winning ground (see Rouquette's book, 1997, and the special issue of the *Psychologie Française* revue, 1999, number 44-2, both dedicated to that subject matter). French social psychologists seem especially more and more interested by what americans social psychologists, as McConahay (1983) and Pettigrew (1989), called modern racism. Lemaine (1999) wrote so that: "The expression of racism has shifted from biology to culture, the latter being often a mask for a respectable self-presentation". One of the main expression of this form of racism is the exaggeration of cultural differences rather than racial and biological ones (this component of Subtle Prejudice has been already well studied by Rokeach, 1960). This form of prejudice is generally normative in our modern society, contrary to the old-fashioned biological expression of racism. Nevertheless, expressions of racism depend on national context and minorities target group of judgement. That has been shown in a cross-nationally study on blatant and subtle prejudice in western Europe led by Pettigrew and Meertens (1995). They compared data obtained during 1988 among 3810 European respondents of four countries: France, Netherlands, Great-Britain and West-Germany. Target outgroups were, respectively, Asians and North Africans for French sample, Surinamers and Turks for Netherlands, West Indians and Asians for Great Britain, and Turkish immigrants for the German sample. One of their main hypotheses was that western European coun-

tries have been developing a norm against blatant prejudice. This affirmation was partially confirmed if one considers that this norm was stronger and more deeply established in Netherlands than in the three other countries. Concerning the French sample, one of the results showed on the contrary a strong overt ethnocentrism, as a generalized hostility to outgroups, especially against North Africans, and an approval of racist movements (especially among older respondents). And, whatever the kind of measures (blatant or subtle scales of racism), French respondents expressed more prejudice against North Africans than Asians. Moreover, North Africans were described in a negative stereotyped way, French respondents using traits like "dishonest" to describe that minority target.

Apart from the anglo-saxon psychosocial studies, the main sources for french social psychologists on that topic remain anthropologists or historians works. For instance, we can mention the book published in 1994 by Todd, in which that historian and anthropologist explains how french universalist and republican ideology can lead to an ambivalent attitude to Muslims migrants. Todd notices that acceptation of Muslims on an individual level (for instance, through intermarriage between North Africans and French) does not exclude a strong collective hostility against them. That contradiction is characteristic of what he called the "egalitarian individualist mental structure", at the same time "closed to cultural groups and open to individuals" (Todd, 1994, p. 374). Todd develops another interesting point of view concerning the role played by the representation of Islam in the perception that French people have of migrants Muslims, especially North Africans. According to him,

the general fixation on religion as essential feature of North African's group comes above all from a lack of familiarity among the main organized forces in society with some basic anthropological concepts (...). Consciously or unconsciously, the term Muslim, as it is used in France, relates much more to

1 Département de Psychologie. Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne. 57, rue Pierre Taittinger, 51.096 Reims. France

2 U.F.R. de Psychologie. Université de Rennes II. 6, Avenue Gaston Berger, 35.200 Rennes. France

a system of customs rather than to a theological content (p. 382).

Todd notices also that, in spite of the true trend of laicization of migrants - especially concerning their children born in France who had generally given up with religious practices - French people carry on perceiving customs and religious practices as characterizing people with North Africans roots.

Accordingly, that topic caught our attention, because it seems that social psychology could provide an original, a rich as well as a rigorous approach in understanding such a phenomenon. Both structural approach of social representation and processes like stereotyping in social cognition could enlighten on general mechanisms which may lead to further devaluation and discrimination of minorities migrants outgroups. Our interest was drawn particularly towards the Muslims, a category of individuals generally attributed negative connotations in French society as discussed above. Often in the spotlight of a media whose attitudes can hardly be called complimentary, Islam (and thus those who represent it in the French society, the Arabs Muslims) seems to be reduced, by definition, to an abstract word: fundamentalism. To explain this stereotyped representation, we shall approach it from two complementary and interrelated perspectives, viewing it from one side as a social representation, and from the other, as the set of stereotyping processes underlying that representation. Is it possible to change a negative stereotype like this - which certainly stems from representations that are strongly anchored socially and, by that taken, probably fulfills a social legitimating function - by providing objective information aimed at invalidating it?

The present investigation is rather exploratory, since there is, on the one hand, a very few systematic data collected by french social psychologists on the topic, and, on the other hand, researches linking social representations with stereotyping are missing.

Social Representations: A Structural Approach

As mentioned by Rouquette (1997), all representations of the outside world indeed presuppose mediations that are necessarily conveyed via the social channel. He wrote:

In short, one must confirm that most of mental activities, now and here, and as they are expressed notably in communication, show the existence of collective representations and social representations which are conditions and contents of thoughts that precede mental activities (Rouquette, p. 128).

As such, the groups in our environment - whether ingroups or outgroups - cannot be defined unless they are understood as a social product, one of whose roles is precisely to assign individuals to predefined categories. There is thus no doubt about the fact that any cognitive process aimed at evaluating or judging groups calls upon representations of them that result from consensus among people - that consensus resulting itself from a production of a socio-historical process.

We shall use one of the original approaches to the term social representations which defines the latter as widely shared beliefs. As stated by Doise (1990), they appear as organizational principles of individual stands. That latter definition correspond to a structural approach of social representations. In that field, researchers have been studying properties and general processes of social representations production and regulation. Rouquette (1997) defined once again a social representation as "a cluster of elements linked together" (p. 129). That approach is particularly important to our own investigation, because it does permit to define precisely and rigorously the subject matter of representation as well as it provides an operational concept for studying components of social representation of Islam and how these components are organized in semantic structures. In this perspective:

- The cluster relates to an open structure which means, consequently, that, first, an event or a subject matter could evoke themes of different kinds, rather denotative or conotative, according to the social or historical context; second, that despite its stable elements, new ones could be incorporated in it. The latter consideration is of great importance for the present study. In fact, our aim is to introduce a piece of objective information on Islam and its representative members in order to modify the structural representation of Islam and stereotyping of Muslims among the participants who took part in the experiment.
- Elements of representation can be studied through verbal labels and expressions. The latter appear in unsolicited or solicited discourses of people. Numerous techniques to analyze discourses and verbal data exist. Here, and as explained further in the methodological part of this work, we choose a lexical analysis to study terms associated to the stimulus word "Islam".
- In a structural perspective, relationships between elements are of great importance. The main purpose here is to show how elements are organized in the cluster. Consequently, an element, a word or an adjective takes sense only in reference to other elements (words or adjectives) used at the same time to describe an event or an individual. Once again, the lexical analysis chosen here provides classes of elements which form semantic structures of representation.

The role of knowledges in social representations

Concerning elements, knowledges of the target of representation are considered as an integral part of the cluster by some researchers in the structural approach of representation. For instance, Flament (1989) defines social representations as partly organized systems of knowledges. Nonetheless, these knowledges are not similar to scientific ones. These systems of knowledges could appear as incorrect or partial comparing with expert ones, but the main function of these is to facilitate communication within social groups rather than to achieve exactitude of judgment. That postulate is

particularly relevant to stereotyped outgroups representation in a given society. It is the reason why we have been interested in operationalizing knowledges about Islam and its representative members as an independent variable which may affect degree and change of stereotyping of Muslims.

Concerning our topic, we also mentioned that confusion between some customs and some ethnic membership (to North African group) was a predominant feature of perception of Islam in french society (see above, Todd, 1994). In consequence, we postulate that, at least in the french context, representation of Islam, knowledges system about this religion and stereotyping of its members, are inextricably linked together.

Stereotypes in social cognition

In the field of social cognition, stereotyping is generally considered to result from a normal thought process, categorization, which is only one of the conceptions of human cognitive functioning. Then, in social cognition, stereotypes are the result of a bias, namely, impermeability to information (Moscovici, 1984). Such a bias considerably reduces the likelihood that the stereotype will change, and can be ascribed precisely to the limited information processing capacities of individuals (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Nonetheless, it is difficult to see how intra individual processes could be purely cognitive and bear no trace of the social environment within which they came to be.

We can distinguish a number of different research trends on stereotyping phenomena in the field of social cognition. Certain authors have ignored content and focused on the cognitive dimension. In this case, a stereotype is generally regarded as an abnormal cognitive entity, or an exaggerated belief (Allport, 1954). In other words, the stereotype is seen as the outcome of a distortion effect (Hamilton, 1979) or a deviation from the correct perceptual representation of stimuli in the environment. Tajfel (1969) criticized these approaches and proposed a perspective in which stereotypes are regarded as full-fledged cognitive processes.

However, and once again, focusing on the cognitive dimension of stereotyping does not alleviate the need to contextualize the underlying processes and account for their insertion in social dynamics. Studies on the perception of dominant social groups - or, on the contrary, dominated ones - are a good illustration of this (as shown in some studies on the perception of ethnic group members or on the representation of gender; see Miller, 1982). This approach to stereotyping is also found in studies (e.g. Brigham, 1971) where the authors make the distinction between the potential psychological validity of the processes underlying stereotypes, and their social validity (Oakes & Turner, 1990), i.e., their purely psychological function vs. their psychosociological function.

More precisely, stereotyping is not simply viewed as a normal process inherent to the mechanisms of social cognition, which may or may not stem from a hostile or prejudiced attitude (see Brewer & Kramer, 1985). It is regarded

instead as a way of perceiving individuals as members of a group and not as individuals (Turner & Giles, 1981). This focus on the group is what bridges the gap between social categorization and stereotyping.

Finally, as several authors agree (Gilbert, 1951; Meenes, 1943; and more recently, Snyder & Fromkin, 1980), the most characteristic feature of stereotypes is their stability and salience. The non-variable feature of stereotypes fulfills a well-defined social function according to Leyens (1983) who contends that stereotypes maintain cohesion, sustain images, and justify our beliefs. Kelly (1955) believed that people are inclined to selectively reinterpret information in order to make it conform to their own thought systems. According to Snyder and Gangenstad (1981), subjects attempt to find evidence that confirms their hypotheses.

One of the most striking examples on this matter is the notion of race. The classification of individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of a racial criterion are indeed among the most fixed and the most rigid of all classifications. The fact is that the notion of race is largely responsible for sustaining and maintaining the system of social classes (see Tajfel, 1968). The theoretical orientation underlying this explanation of the phenomenon is clearly normative. This is what Tajfel and Forgas (1982) contended in saying that such normative biases promote the preservation and maintenance, rather than the transformation, of the existing system of social categorization. This issue is important at both the theoretical and social levels. It is important from the theoretical standpoint because it gets right down to the foundations of the cognitive organization of the social environment. Socially, it is important because it is a reflection of the normative structure of a society or a social group, as revealed by the type of information its members seek about others and how they use that information.

Social representations and stereotypes

The above divide into two sections of theories on social representations and on stereotypes derives not from our own perception, but from a real gap between a french trend and an anglo-saxon one. In the former, theories based on a socio-cultural and socio-historical perspective - as social representations ones - are favoured by social psychologists, whereas in the latter, researchers are more interested in socio-cognitive processes such as categorisation or stereotyping. In psychosocial literature - apart from a few cursory parallels sometimes drawn by some authors between social representations and categorization processes (for instance, Jodelet (1986), cited in Corneille & Leyens, 1994) - systematic studies which bind social representations to sociocognitive processes are lacking.

As explained before, links between social categorization and stereotypes of outgroups have been well established and documented in social cognition. We could also hypothesize that stereotyping of some groups - especially minorities target outgroups - is not only and simply the result of general cognitive processes, but is also inherent to systems of be-

lieves widely shared by members of a given society at a given period.

Even if social representations and stereotypes relate respectively to two distinct fields of research, similarities between their respective definitions, processes and functions, are surprising. The general definition of stereotypes given by Leyens, Yzerbyt & Schadron (1996) evokes the definition of representation as widely shared beliefs. They state that stereotypes are "shared beliefs relative to individual characteristics of a group of persons, such as personality traits, but often it may also be behaviours" (p. 24).

Other authors consider in functionalist terms what links social representations to common sense stereotypes, the latter merely being ways of legitimatizing socially anchored representations, and by virtue of this, means of justifying and validating beliefs. As Abric (1994) stated, the function of representation is to perpetuate and justify social differentiation and like stereotypes, it can lead to discrimination or perpetuate a social distance between groups.

But stereotypes are also specifically stereotyping processes of individuals. These processes consist in "applying to individuals a (stereotypic) judgement which makes them interchangeable individuals of their category membership" (Leyens, Yzerbyt & Schadron, 1996, p. 24).

We consider that social representations of Islam in France are organizational principles of individual stands concerning the stereotyped perception of the group Muslims.

We expect that elements of that social representation to be organized in clusters showing an assimilation of Islam to customs or ritual practices (see above, Todd, 1994). More that organizational principle structures the representation, more weaker is the knowledge level and more strong and resistant is the stereotyping of Muslims.

In an exploratory perspective, we simply hypothesize that a social representation of Islam structured on a negative conotative and evaluative dimension is linked to a low level of knowledge associated with a high degree of stereotyping, whereas a social representation structured on a more denotative and descriptive dimension is linked to a higher degree of knowledge associated with a lower degree of stereotyping. Furthermore, we have experimentally explored if a sample of participants characterized by the latter structure (denotative dimension of representation, high degree of knowledge and low degree of stereotyping) was likely to modify stereotyping of Muslims - by integrating new elements of representation - more than another sample characterized by the former structure (negative evaluative dimension of representation, low degree of knowledge and high degree of stereotyping).

Method

Description of independent variables

The first independent variable pertains to the representation of the Islam. It was operationalized by means of a word association task with Islam as the stimulus word. In a

preceding section, we mentioned how verbal data were useful in a structural approach of social representation. Consequently, the word association technique appeared particularly appropriated to our topic.

The second independent variable was the knowledge level. It was obtained by calculating a score based on the subjects' answers to the following question: *What are the Muslim countries and where are they located geographically?* Level 0 represented little or no knowledge (only two countries were mentioned and they were not accurately located). Subjects at level 1 had partial knowledge (the Maghreb countries were mentioned and relatively well located). Subjects at level 2 had a good level of knowledge (the distinction between Arab and non-Arab countries was made and the geographic locations were correct).

Finally, the independent variable manipulated during the experiment proper had to do with the introduction of an objective piece of information aimed at acting upon the representation system used to classify Muslims. This variable was operationalized using a map showing all regions of the world where the Islamic religion predominates. The map made it very plain that Arab countries only represent one part of Islam, and thus, that the Muslim category is composed of multiple ethnic groups living in countries with very different languages and cultures located anywhere between Eastern Europe and the Far East.

Description of the dependent variable

The dependent variable pertained to the stereotype and changes in it (pretest/posttest). Consistent with the definition of stereotype given above (cf. Leyens, Yzerbyt & Schadron, 1996), it was operationalized by means of a list of twelve traits (six with a positive connotation and six with a negative connotation). Subjects had to indicate the extent to which these traits applied to the Muslim category on a 6-point scale ranging from not applicable at all to totally applicable.

The twelve traits had been obtained beforehand from another sample of subjects taken from the student population ($N=102$). These students were asked to state all traits that came to mind to characterize both the negative and positive aspects of the Islamic religion as a whole. Traits mentioned by more than a third of the population were retained. From the 50 or so traits mentioned, the following 12 were selected: brotherhood, solidarity, spirituality, courage, egalitarianism, and tranquility (for the positive traits), and nationalism, dogmatism, violence, sexism, fanaticism, and hypocrisy (for the negative traits).

The subjects' degree of stereotyping was obtained by calculating a stereotyping score for each subject on the basis of how he or she rated Muslims on a series of scales. There were 12 scales ranging from 1 to 6, so the scores could fall anywhere between 12 and 72. As far as the six negative features were considered, we used scales ranging from 6 to 1 and scales ranging from 1 to 6 for the six positive features. As none of the scores we obtained were below 36, three de-

degrees were defined: degree 3 or intermediate (36-48), degree 4 or strong (48-60), and degree 5 or very strong (60-72). (These variables were also used to set up the groups and also to check for links between the representation and the stereotype).

Accordingly, it can be said here and now that Muslims are negatively perceived in the present students sample as well as in the general population. Moreover, we will see further (see the distribution of subjects on the two variables tables 2.1. to 2.3.) that most of the subjects have strong (48 to 60) or very strong (60 to 72) degree of stereotyping.

For the posttest held two weeks later, the students were told that the evaluations had been incomplete (too many missing answers), and they were asked to rate the Muslims again on the same scales.

Population

It was essential to create different groups contrasting on the knowledge level to operationalize that independent variable. We thought that it was more easy to obtain a group with a high knowledge level on the issue among a students population than among ordinary population. Moreover, as dependent variables were quantitative, a numerous captive population was needed.

Accordingly, the subjects were first-year psychology students. Unfortunately, the total sample was not so numerous as expected ($N = 124$). One subject had to be discarded from the analysis due to incomplete ratings ($N = 123$).

An experimental ($n = 48$) and a control groups ($n = 31$) have been created (see table 4.3. in this text for explanations) to test the effect of information variable on changes in the stereotype (pre and posttest). The experimental and the control groups are respectively composed of about the same number of subjects characterized by their kind of representation (evaluative vs descriptive) as to their stereotyping degree and their knowledge level.

Data Analysis

The representation of Islam

For the population as a whole, the associated words (from the first phase aimed at describing the representation) were input into a cluster analysis, combined with a factor analysis. Reinert's statistical method called Alceste (Reinert, 1978, 1983) was used (see further notes on Alceste). The basic idea behind this analysis tool is that it gradually divides a set of words into lexical classes in such a way that between-class differences are maximized and within-class differences are minimized. The classes are semantically homogeneous, especially the terminal classes, each of which has its own specific lexical content which gives it its unique meaning. As such, words that occur very frequently are not necessarily discarded: some turn out to be tightly linked to a given class on the basis of the value of chi-square. This tool can thus be used to point out the structural components of a social representation, which is why it is an appropriate method

for our present purposes. Then, this first step of the analysis was designed simply to verify the structure of the representation of Islam in our population.

The stereotype of Muslims: Measures and changes

Two analyses of variance were computed on the subjects' overall stereotyping scores (which ranged from 36 to 72 in our population) for the Muslim category.

The first analysis was a factor analysis on the stereotyping scores of the pretest designed to detect differences between the three groups of subjects coming respectively from classes 5, 6 and 7 of representation of Islam.

The second, a repeated measures analysis (pretest/posttest) was aimed at determining whether the informational independent variable had effect on stereotyping degree. Separate analyses of variance of that kind were conducted for the control group and the experimental group. A significant effect of the repeated measure was expected in the experimental group but not in the control one.

We expected also that the effect in the experimental group was due to a stronger weakening of stereotyping in the class 7 of subjects than in the classes 5 and 6. Accordingly, another analysis of variance has been conducted on the experimental group to test that latter expectation. It consisted in a one factor analysis on means differences of scores (pretest/posttest).

Results

Representation of the Islam religion in the population as a whole (IV = 123)

Three classes were detected in the cluster analysis: a mother class (class 5), and two terminal classes (classes 6 and 7) which had initially belonged to the same mother class. These two categories of classes, 5 vs. 6 and 7, were opposed along the evaluative vs. descriptive dimension. The first class included 33 subjects and was predominantly based on very negative, evaluative traits. In this class, subjects made Islam

Table 1.1. Description of lexical terms of class 5. Evaluative and negative content associated to stimulus word "Islam"

Class 5 <i>n</i> = 33			
Associated word	Number of subjects*	Percentage**	Chi-square***
fanaticism	12/21	57%	X2 = 11,85
violence	8/10	80%	X2 = 15,68
intolerance	11/11	100%	X2 = 20,24
poverty	9/9	100%	X2 = 26,48
problems	4/4	100%	X2 = 11,28
sun	5/6	83%	X2 = 10,26
Maghreb	6/9	66%	X2 = 7,85
misery	4/5	80%	X2 = 7,51
family	3/4	75%	X2 = 4,89
sexism	3/4	75%	X2 = 4,89

See notes on Alceste * , ** , ***

Table 1.2. Description of lexical terms of class 6. Descriptive content (cultural considerations) associated to stimulus word "Islam"

Class 6 n = 38			
Associated word	Number of subjects*	Percentage**	Chi-square***
Arab	21/26	80%	X2 = 38,41
Muslim	26/54	48%	X2 = 13,42
chador	21/42	50%	X2 = 10,90
war	19/42	45%	X2 = 6,15
fundamentalist	9/9	100%	X2 = 21,72
couscous	8/9	88%	X2 = 15,30
desert	5/7	71%	X2 = 5,71
woman	5/9	55%	X2 = 2,77
camel	4/4	100%	X2 = 9,25
jellaba	3/4	75%	X2 = 3,77

See notes on Alceste: * , ** , ***

Table 1.3. Description of lexical terms of class 7. Descriptive content (religious practices and geographical location) associated to stimulus word "Islam"

Class 7 n = 52			
Associated word	Number of subjects*	Percentage**	Chi-square***
mecca	27/30	90%	X2 = 37,03
Koran	28/40	68%	X2 = 17,06
fundamentalism	21/35	60%	X2 = 6,30
veil	16/20	80%	X2 = 13,93
Orient	14/18	78%	X2 = 10,89
Mohammed	13/15	87%	X2 = 13,79
Rushdie	7/7	100%	X2 = 10,13
Iran	7/7	100%	X2 = 10,13
mosque	23/43	53%	X2 = 3,41
Ramadan	20/34	59%	X2 = 5,27
North Africa	5/5	100%	X2 = 7,12
forbidden	4/5	80%	X2 = 3,04

See notes on Alceste: * , ** , ***

Notes on Alceste

* Number of subjects in the class over the total number of subjects for the associated word. Example: for class 5 and "fanaticism", 12/21 means that 12 subjects in the population associated the word "fanaticism" with the stimulus word, and that 12 of those 21 belonged to class 5.

** Percentage of subjects in the class who responded in that manner. Using the same sample as above for "fanaticism" in class 5, the 57% is simply the result of the division of 12 by 21. In other words, 57% of the subjects in the population who responded "fanaticism" belonged to class 5.

*** The chi-square value is an indicator of the strength of the association between the associated word and the class. To explain how it is calculated, we must first briefly explain how the Alceste system works. The subjects and the variables are cross-tabulated by putting the subjects in the rows (I) and the variables in the columns (J). The intersection of each row and column is coded as present or absent. The first axis factorial analysis of the I*J table defines an initial division of the data:

I1 I2 J1 J2

look like a third-world religion : poverty, problems, misery standing side by side with fanaticism, violence and intolerance. The other two classes were predominantly based on descriptive traits, although evaluative characteristics were not totally lacking. In class 6 (n = 38), primarily descriptive and based mostly on cultural considerations, the terms Arabs and Muslims were neighbours. The semantic environment contained a negative evaluative component based on a certain image of violence (war). Class 1 in- 52), also descriptive in content, had a few remaining evaluative components (fundamentalism and forbidden). Its descriptive items pertained to geographical characteristics (location) and religious practices.

In short, the subjects' representation of Islam appears to be made up of various combinations of descriptive traits and evaluative traits with negative connotations. These traits are organized around a common referent: membership in the Arab category. In addition, both geographically and culturally, the representation seems to be socially anchored (at least in France) with specificity granted to members of the Arab community, perceived in France as synonymous to North Africans. The stereotypical component of this representation is very apparent, especially in class 5.

Among the present students sample - as well as shown in others french population samples - the predominant feature of representation of Islam in terms of some customs and some ethnic membership (to North African group) remains (see above, Todd, 1994). The lexical contents of the three classes - even those of the two descriptive ones - indicate that predominant feature seems to be an organizational principle of the representation of Islam.

Then, a swapping algorithm is applied to determine whether a division as a function of the individuals is an improvement over the initial division. The optimal division is found when the value of chi-square is the highest, which indicates the best differentiation between the profiles of classes I2 and J2. This gives us the series of J1 variables which are more strongly associated with I1, and a series of J2 variables which are more strongly associated with I2:

I*J
I1*J1 I2*J2

Table I1*J1 is reanalyzed, then table I2*J2, and so on. The process ends when the size of one class reaches a predefined minimum relative to the size of the whole population. This divides the table into N classes. Now, we can explain how the J variables are classified. Let "C" be a class of subjects and "J" a variable. The chi-square value is calculated from the following cross-tabulation:

	J	
	1	0
Belonging to Class C	a	b
No belonging to Class C	c	d

where "a" is the number of subjects belonging to class C who responded positively to variable J. If the value of chi-square is above 2.71, the variable is assigned to class C. The calculations are made for all J variables, and together they define a profile of class C. Thus, the chi-square value can be taken as an indicator of how representative the variable of the class in question.

Link between representation, degree of stereotyping, and knowledge level

For each class of subjects (5, 6, and 7), a contingency table cross-tabulating the stereotyping degrees and the knowledge levels was drawn up.

Table 2.1. Number of subjects in class 5, by stereotyping degree and knowledge level

	3(j)	4(j)	5(j)
0(i)	0	6	24
1(i)	2	0	0
2(i)	1	0	0

Class 5 (n = 33)

- (i) Rows (0,1 and 2): knowledge level
- (j) Columns (3, 4 and 5): stereotyping degree

Table 2.2. Number of subjects in class 6, by stereotyping degree and knowledge level

	3(j)	4(j)	5(j)
0(i)	0	27	5
Ki	2	2	0
2(i)	2	0	0

Class 6 (n= 38)

- (i) Rows (0,1 and 2): knowledge level
- (j) Columns (3, 4 and 5): stereotyping degree

Table 2.3. Number of subjects in class 7, by stereotyping degree and knowledge level

	3(j)	4(j)	5(j)
0(i)	0	4	5
1(i)	3	34	0
2(i)	2	4	0

Class 7 (n = 52)

- (i) Rows (0, 1 and 2): knowledge level
- (j) Columns (3, 4 and 5): stereotyping degree

The mere distribution of the subjects clearly points out, as we postulated in the exploratory hypothesis, the link among the content of the representation, the stereotyping degree, and the knowledge level. In class 5, whose lexical content indicates a very negative representation, 24 subjects out of 33 had a very high degree of stereotyping (5) associated with a no knowledge (0) (see above table 2.1.). In class 6, whose subjects associated Islam with the Arab culture, 27 subjects out of 38 also had no knowledge, but these subjects had a lower stereotyping degree (4) (see above table 2.2.). Finally, in class 7, whose lexical content was by far the most descriptive of the three classes, the stereotyping degree was the same as in class 6 (4), but the knowledge level was higher (1) (see above table 2.3.).

In the light of these results, it was postulated that in the next phase of the experiment, it would be easier to change the stereotype of class 7 of subjects - where knowledge level

was the highest of the three classes - than that of class 5 and of class 6 of subjects .

Nonetheless, we observed the fact that there was no very high level of knowledge (level 2) in the present sample students. Once again, we can refer to observations made by Todd's (1994) on "the lack of familiarity among the main organized forces in society with some basic anthropological concepts". (p. 383)

We also observed that in spite of a higher degree of knowledge among subjects of class 7, the degree of stereotyping of the latter remains relatively high (level 4, the same level than in class 6).

Experimental and control groups

We used the previous contingency table, cross-tabulating the stereotyping degrees and the knowledge levels, to form the experimental and control groups (see below table 2.4.). The control group consisted of 37 subjects: 9 (out of 24) from class 5 (the evaluative class) whose stereotyping degree was very strong (5) and was associated with no knowledge; 13 (out of 27) from class 6 (descriptive) whose degree of stereotyping was strong (4) and associated, as in class 5, with no knowledge; and 15 (out of 34) from class 7 whose stereotyping degree was strong but was associated with a higher knowledge level (1) than in the other two classes. The experimental group included 48 subjects, the remaining 15 out of 24, 14 out of 27, and 19 out of 34, from classes 5, 6, and 7, respectively.

Measure of stereotyping: Differences between classes on stereotyping degree at the pretest

The analysis of variance on the raw stereotyping scores from the first phase (pretest) yielded significant differences between the subject classes in both the control and experimental groups, i.e. for the sample as a whole.

Concerning the control group, differences between the three classes of subjects are significant for $F(2,34) = 94,767$, at $p = 0,0001$, as shown in table 3.1.1. below.

Table 2.4. Description of the experimental group and of the control group

	Control group	Experimental group
Class 5 n = 24*	9	15
Knowledge level = 0 Stereotyping degree = 5		
Class 6 n = 27*	13	14
Knowledge level = 0 Stereotyping degree = 4		
Class 7 n = 34*	15	19
Knowledge level = 1 Stereotyping degree = 4		
Total number of subjects	37	48

* See above tables 2.1., 2.2., and 2.3. for the number of subjects in classes 5, 6 and 7, by stereotyping degree and knowledge level.

Table 3.1.1. Pretest - Difference between classes in control group

One Factor ANOVA X₁: class Y₁: scoretot
Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF	Sum squares	Mean squares	F-test
Between groups	2	636,795	318,397	94,767
Within groups	34	114,232	3,36	p = 0,0001
Total	36	751,027		

Model II estimate of between component variance = 157,519
Here below we show the means table of overall scores for the pre test in the control group. The means of the overall scores (Y₁: scoretot) were obtained by adding the scores on the 12 scales (range: 12 to 72).

One Factor ANOVA X₁:class Y₁: scoretot

Group	Count	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error
Group 1	9	61,556	1,509	0,503
Group 2	13	50,615	1,446	0,401
Group 3	15	55,267	2,251	0,581

Group 1 = class 5; Group 2 = class 6; Group 3 = class 7

Concerning the experimental group, differences between the three classes of subjects are also significant for F(2,45) = 86,169, at p = 0,0001, as shown in table 3.2.1. below.

Table 3.1.2. Pretest - Difference between classes in control group Contrast effects between classes

One Factor ANOVA X₁: class Y₁: scoretot

Comparison	Mean Diff.	Fisher PLSD	Scheffe F-test	Dunnett t
Group 1 vs. 2	10,94	1,615*	94,726*	13,764
Group 1 vs. 3	6,289	1,571*	33,108*	8,137
Group 2 vs. 3	-4,651	1,412*	22,422*	6,697

Group 1 = class 5; Group 2 = class 6; Group 3 = class 7
Table above shows that all contrast effects are significant at p < 0,05
* Group 1 (class 5) vs. 2 (class 6): Mean difference of 10,94 is the result of 61,556-50,615
* Group 1 (class 5) vs. 3 (class 7): Mean difference of 6,289 is the result of 61,556-55,267
* Group 2 (class 6) vs. 3 (class 7): Mean difference of -4,651 is the result of 50,615-55,267

Looking at the tables of raw mean scores, we can see that in class 6, stereotyping was not as strong (50,615 and 51,714 for the control group and experimental group subjects, respectively) as in class 5 (61,556 and 61,533 for the control and experimental groups, respectively). In class 7, stereotyping was weaker than in class 5 but stronger than in class 6 (55,267 and 54,158 for the control and experimental groups, respectively), although this class had the highest level of knowledge.

Contrast effects between classes have also been calculated in both the control and experimental groups. The tables of results below show systematic contrast effects between all classes.

These first results provide evidence of the link between representation content, level knowledge and stereotyping. As shown in the tables above, significant differences in the latter process appeared between subjects depending on the class of representation they belonged to.

Table 3.2.1. Pretest - Difference between classes in experimental group

One Factor ANOVA X₁: class Y₁: scoretot
Analysis of Variance Table

Source:	DF	Sum squares:	Mean squares:	F-test:
Between groups	2	777,883	388,942	86,169
Within groups	45	203,117	4,514	p = 0,0001
Total	47	981		

Model II estimate of between component variance = 192,214
Here below we show the means table of overall scores for the pre test in the experimental group. The means of the overall scores (Y₁: scoretot) were obtained by adding the scores on the 12 scales (range: 12 to 72).

One Factor ANOVA X₁: class Y₁: scoretot

Group	Count	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error
Group 1	15	61,533	1,598	0,413
Group 2	14	51,714	1,939	0,518
Group 3	19	54,158	2,566	0,589

Group 1 = class 5; Group 2 = class 6; Group 3 = class 7

Table 3.2.2. Pretest - Difference between classes in experiment contrast effects between classes

One Factor ANOVA X₁: class Y₁:scoretot

Comparison	Mean Diff.	Fisher PLSD	Scheffe F-test	Dunnett t
Group 1vs. 2	9,819	1,59*	77,339*	12,437
Group 1vs. 3	7,375	1,478*	50,51*	10,051
Group 2vs. 3	-2,444	1,507*	5,332*	3,265

Group 1 = class 5; Group 2 = class 6; Group 3 = class 7
Table above shows that all contrast effects are significant at p < 0,05
* Group 1 (class 5) vs. 2 (class 6): Mean difference of 9,819 is the result of 61,533-51,714
* Group 1 (class 5) vs. 3 (class 7): Mean difference of 7,375 is the result of 61,533-54,158
* Group 2 (class 6) vs. 3 (class 7): Mean difference of -2,444 is the result of 51,714-54,158

Changes in the stereotype

The analyses of variance with repeated measures (pre and posttest) indicated an effect of the information variable, whereas the difference was not significant for the control group (see below no significant effect of repeated measure in table 4.1.), it was highly significant for the experimental group (for F(1,45) = 69,891 at p = 0,0001, see below repeated measure in table 4.2.). As expected, this difference can be explained essentially by the greatest weakening in the stereotype for class 7, where the stereotyping score decreased from 54,158 on the pretest to 48,158 on the posttest (see below the AB incidence table corresponding to table 4.2.). Nevertheless, and in spite of that significant difference, score at the posttest remained in the high level stereotyping degree (level 4 = 48 to 60). We can interpret that result in terms of the particular stability and resistance to change of stereotype. This point will be discussed in the conclusion from a socio-cognitive as well as from the social representations perspective.

For the classes 5 and 6, means scores between pre and posttest remained relatively unchanged (61,533 to 60,8 for class 5 and 51,158 to 48,158 for class 6).

Table 4.1. Change of stereotype of Muslims - Analysis of variance for a 2-factor repeated measures on the control group (difference between pre and posttest)

ANOVA table for a 2-factor repeated measures ANOVA.

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-test	P value
class (A)	2	1095,696	547,848	73,207	0,0001
subjects w. groups	34	254,439	7,484		
Repeated Measure (B)	1	0,216	0,216	0,639	0,4294
AB	2	7,288	3,644	10,778	0,0002
B x subjects w. groups	34	11,496	0,338		

There were no missing cells found.

Effect of class (A): This value pertains to the class difference noted above. Effect of repeated measure (B): The result of interest to us here is the repeated measures (difference between pre and post test). We can see that it is not significant ($p = 0,4294$).

Here below we show the means table of overall scores for the pre test and the post test. The means of the overall scores were obtained by adding the scores on the 12 scales (range: 12 to 72).

The AB incidence table

Repeated mea...	Scoretot	Scoretot2	Totals	
Class	level 1	9	9	18
		61,556	60,667	61,111
	level 2	13	13	26
	50,615	51,308	50,962	
level 3	15	15	30	
	55,267	54,933	55,1	
Total	37	37	74	
	55,162	55,054	55,108	

Level 1 = class 5; level 2 = class 6; level 3 = class 7

Scoretot = score of pretest

Scoretot2 = score of posttest

Table 4.2. Change of stereotype of Muslims - Analysis of variance for a 2-factor repeated measures on the experimental group (difference between pre and posttest)

ANOVA table for a 2-factor repeated measures ANOVA.

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-test	P value
class (A)	2	2087,816	1043,908	75,745	0,0001
Subjects w. groups	45	620,184	13,782		
Repeated measure (B)	1	216	216	69,891	0,0001
AB	2	142,926	71,463	23,123	0,0001
B x subjects w. groups	45	139,074	3,091		

There were no missing cells found.

Effect of class (A): This value pertains to the class difference noted above. Effect of repeated measure (B): The result of interest to us here is the repeated measures (difference between pre and post test). We can see that it is very significant at $p = 0,0001$.

There is also an effect of interaction between A (Class) and B (repeated measure) at $p = 0,0001$.

Here below we show the means table of overall scores for the pre test and the post test. The means of the overall scores were obtained by adding the scores on the 12 scales (range: 12 to 72).

The AB incidence table

Repeated mea...	Score1	Score2	Totals	
Class	level 1	15	15	30
		61,533	60,8	61,167
	level 2	14	14	28
	51,714	50,357	51,036	
level 3	19	19	38	
	54,158	48,158	51,158	
Total	48	48	96	
	55,75	52,75	54,25	

Level 1 = class 5; level 2 = class 6; level 3 = class 7

Score1 = score of pretest

Score2 = score of posttest

Here, we can not proceed in contrast effects between classes because of repeated measures. Consequently, to test significant differences between the classes on modification of stereotyping, a third analysis of variance has been proceeded. It applied to means calculated on differences of scores between pre and posttest for each subject. Tables 4.3.1. and 4.3.2. below show the results of that analysis.

There are significant differences for $F(2,47) = 23,123$ at $p = 0,0001$. As expected, the greatest difference between pre and posttest occurred in class 7. Contrast effects (see table 4.3.2. below) show significant differences between class 7 and the two other classes 5 and 6, but no difference between the latter ones.

Table 4.3.1. Experimental group - Change of stereotype of Muslims - One factor analysis of variance on means difference scores between post and pretest

One Factor ANOVA X_i :class Y_i :scoretot
Analysis of Variance Table

Source	DF	Sum squares	Mean squares	F-test
Between groups	2	285,852	142,926	23,123
Within groups	45	278,148	6,181	$p = 0,0001$
Total	47	564		

Model II estimate of between component variance = 68,373

Here below we show the means table of overall differences of between the pre test and the post test. The means difference were obtained by simply subtract scores of pre test from scores of post test (score2 - score 1).

One Factor ANOVA X : class Y : scoretot

Group	Count	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error
Group 1	15	-0,733	2,89	0,746
Group 2	14	-1,357	1,865	0,498
Group 3	19	-6	2,539	0,582

Group 1 = class 5; Group 2 = class 6; Group 3 = class 7

Group 1 or class 5: Mean difference of -0,733 is the result of 60,8 - 61,533
Group 2 or class 6: Mean difference of -1,357 is the result of 50,357 - 51,714

* Group 3 or class 7: Mean difference of -6 is the result of 48,158 - 54,158

* As expected, the greatest difference between pre and post test occurred among class 7 of subjects.

Table 4.3.2. Experimental group - Change of stereotype of Muslims - Contrast effects between classes concerning means difference scores between post and pretest

One Factor ANOVA X_1 : classe Y_1 : scoretot

Comparison	Mean Diff.	Fisher PLSD	Scheffe F-test	Dunnett t
Group 1 vs. 2	0,624	1,861	0,228	0,675
Group 1 vs. 3	5,267	1,73*	18,808*	6,133
Group 2 vs. 3	4,643	1,764*	14,055*	5,302

* Significant at 95%

Group 1 = class 5; Group 2 = class 6; Group 3 = class 7

Group 1 (class 5) vs. 2 (class 6): Mean difference of 0,624 is the result of -0,733 - (-1,357)

* Group 1 (class 5) vs. 3 (class 7): Mean difference of 5,267 is the result of -0,733 - (-6)

* Group 2 (class 6) vs. 3 (class 7): Mean difference of 4,643 is the result of -1,357 - (-6)

Table above shows that 2 contrast effects on 3 are significant at $p < 0,05$. As expected, contrasts between class 7 and class 5, and between class 7 and class 6 are stronger than contrast between classes 5 and 6.

Conclusion

Our manipulation did indeed change the stereotype (reducing it but not eliminating it) in one class, the one whose representational content was the most descriptive and whose knowledge level was the highest. Thus, the provision of information alone was insufficient to change the stereotype of Muslims. Apparently, subjects must already have some knowledge in order to integrate new information. This result is consistent with Fiske and Taylor's (1984) postulate that perception biases such as stereotyping are not based on an excess of information from the surrounding environment, but rather on a lack of information. Nevertheless, one can assume that if a stereotype is stable and salient, its stability and salience are not only rooted in a cognitive source but also functional, for the stereotype serves to justify certain beliefs, particularly ones pertaining to social groups. Thus the category system guarantees the continuation of a given social order and maintains a certain kind of intergroup relations.

Moreover, as stated by Rouquette (1997), "a new attitude or a new representation are possible, that means, in the strict sense of the word, conceivable and admissible, only if they are in accordance with already established attitudes or representations" (p. 163). Yet, preceding surveys on the topic (see above, Pettigrews & Meertens, 1995; Todd, 1994) have shown the particular resistance and strong hostility of French against cultural and religious collectivities different from theirs. Consequently, one can think that the stereotyping stability of the students sample is strongly anchored in these established attitudes or representations which they share with anyone else of their fellow countrymen and countrywomen. That could also explain why a variable like an objective piece of information is not sufficient to eliminate totally stereotyping of Muslims, even among students who have a few knowledges and who share a social representation of Islam which is not saturated with negative connotations.

This brings us back to the social representation of categories like minorities target outgroups, which is conveyed and transmitted within and between the groups of a given society at a given moment. The results of the cluster analysis showed that this representation is structured essentially around both evaluative and descriptive elements. From a theoretical standpoint, the evaluative component constitutes the attitudinal dimension, which determines whether the subject has a positive or negative outlook on the represented object. The descriptive component pertains more to the field of representation or the body of structured knowledge about the object. In French society, the representation of Islam seems to be primarily structured around a highly salient ethnic group, Arabs, and more specifically, North Africans. This representation, while not being totally erroneous, can be regarded in any case as partial and essentially based on stereotyped characteristics, which themselves are certainly dependent upon the social context in France (as defined perhaps by the mass media), and determined by the kind of intergroup relations that take place in that context (the Islamic religion and Arab Muslims no doubt evoked the events occurring in Algeria at the time of the experiment, which in turn may have brought to mind the events in Iran such as the condemnation of Salman Rushdie, a topic which showed up in the results of the classification).

It is also highly likely that the perception of this category as the outgroup - which showed through in both the representation of Islam and the trait-based evaluation of Muslims - was founded on a socially shared value system which acts as means of excluding social categories that do not embody the same values as those of the ingroup, or are even symbolic of an opposing value system (as illustrated in our Western context by everything related to what is/is not democracy, via issues like freedom, woman's rights, etc.).

Let us conclude with two other points which have to be discussed here.

The first one relates to a very important issue on the topic. It concerns the acceptance of Muslims on an individual level associated with a strong collective hostility against them (see Todd, 1994). Some theories in social psychology can provide a valid explanation of that fact observed by the latter historian. We also mentioned earlier, in a previous section, that stereotyping is regarded as a way of perceiving individuals as members of a group and not as individuals (Turner & Giles, 1981). More recently, Clement & Krueger (1998) had led a study aiming to test the validity of a dual-process hypothesis of judgements of liking depending on the target of perception was persons or groups. They first suggested that "people base their liking of the target person primarily on the desirability of the person's characteristics, whereas they base their liking of a group primarily on the degree of similarity between the group and themselves" (p. 457). On the basis of their findings, they stated in the discussion:

Extending our introductory concerns about person-positivity research, we are now sceptical that the biases found in earlier studies arose because participants perceived persons more than groups as being similar to themselves. What appears to be more

probable now is that people valued the desirable characteristics of the presented individuals but rejected the groups because they themselves did not belong to them.(p. 464)

And they carry on saying: "Many Americans, for example, appreciate their Cape Verdian nanny, their Dominican gardener, or their German mother-in-law, but they feel threatened by immigration in the aggregate", (p. 464)

Our own investigation is limited by the fact we have not included, as Clement and Krueger did, measures of that kind. In fact, our students sample had to judge a category as a whole (Muslims). But we can now argue that the dual-process hypothesis of judgements concerning individuals and groups could provide successful evidence of the main processes underlying racism - especially in France where such a phenomenon of ambivalent perception has been observed by some historians or anthropologists (cf. Todd, 1994).

The second point concerns the role of social practices. In fact, according to Rouquette (see also Flament, 1994; Abric, 1994), only social practices can change a social representation, its structure and its cognitive processes. In that field, social representations are some kinds of rationalization's systems of real intergroup behaviours. So, acting upon social practices is more efficient in order to change a content of representation or a mental attitude (like stereotyping) than attacking systems of beliefs.

Does it mean, concerning some crucial social problems like racism or discrimination, that campaigns of information or educative programs at school are totally ineffective? Once again, systematic statistical data on the topic are missing in France and our aim was not so ambitious. Nonetheless, that could be a question of importance for social psychologists.

If we refer to our own findings in the present exploratory study, it seems, on the one hand, that most of the students sample are indifferent to the gathering of new information. But, on the other hand, those whom representation is more descriptive than evaluative have been more sensitive to the manipulation. Maybe these students, just because they seem to believe in academic knowledge, are more susceptible than others to submit themselves to an ideologically legitimated authority (cf. Milgram, 1974) like a researcher who give an objective piece of information on a social problem. Such an *ad hoc* explanation could be in accordance with the above statements of Rouquette. It could be interesting, for further researches on the same topic, to manipulate the two kinds of informational and behavioral variables in order to determine their respective effects on social stereotypes.

We can conclude by stating that understanding of racism or discrimination could be improved by an interdisciplinary as well as a multitheoretical approach in social psychology.

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