

## STEREOTYPES, IMMIGRATION AND WORK

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*For psychology professionals immigration is of undoubted interest, from both a social psychological point of view (prevention and intervention in relation to racism and xenophobia, educational and social conflicts, interculturality, violence, etc.) and a more clinical perspective (anxiety disorders, self-control, emotional control, etc.). In the first part of this article we review the employment situation of immigrants in Spain. In the second part we describe the basic psychosocial processes involved in stereotyping and prejudice processes affecting immigrants, discussing the results of research on the perception of immigrants and immigration in Spain. Finally, we examine some questions related to acculturation processes involving the immigrant population and analyze some data on immigrants' perceptions of Spanish society.*

**Key words:** stereotypes, immigration, labour market, attitudes towards immigrants.

*Para los profesionales de la Psicología el fenómeno migratorio resulta de innegable interés, tanto en la vertiente psicosocial (prevención e intervención contra el racismo y la xenofobia, conflictos educativos y sociales, interculturalidad, violencia, etc.) como en la perspectiva más clínica (trastornos de ansiedad, autocontrol, control de emociones, etc.). En la primera parte de este trabajo se hace una revisión y descripción sobre la situación laboral de las personas inmigrantes en España. En la segunda, se muestran los procesos psicosociales básicos que están implicados en los procesos de estereotipia y prejuicio hacia los inmigrantes, comentando los resultados de investigaciones sobre la percepción que se tiene de los inmigrantes y de la inmigración en España. Por último, se examinan algunas cuestiones relacionadas con el proceso de aculturación que sufre la población inmigrante y se analizan algunos datos relacionados con la percepción que tienen los inmigrantes sobre la sociedad española.*

**Palabras clave:** estereotipos, inmigración, mercado laboral, actitudes hacia los inmigrantes.

Spain, which until the 1970s was a significant source of emigrants, is becoming a destination for large-scale immigration. In November 2007 (Mapa de extranjería, 2007) there were a total of 3,740,956 foreign citizens resident in Spain. By Region (Comunidad Autónoma), Cataluña was that which had absorbed most immigrants (21.52% lived there), followed by Madrid (17.42%), Comunidad Valenciana (13.22%) and Andalucía (12.99%), to cite only those Regions that accounted for more than 10% of the immigrants. Spain is in fact currently one of the world's top three countries for numbers of immigrants received (Pajares, 2007).

As regards the most significant sociodemographic data on immigration, the majority are from Latin America (38.75%), followed by those from Europe (36.2%) and from Africa (19.13%) (Source: Extranjeros en España, 2007).

At the same time, various studies and surveys reflect that Spaniards increasingly perceive immigration as problematic. For example, a survey carried out in October 2007 by Spain's Centre for Sociological Research (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, CIS) revealed that immigration had begun to be seen as a "public problem" of considerable proportions

(32.5%), comparable only to unemployment (37.4%) and housing (34.8%).

Initially, the profile of the immigrant who came to Spain was male, unaccompanied, young, in a precarious financial and employment situation, who after a time in the country was joined here by his family (wife and children). Currently, there are increasing numbers of women immigrants with their own projects, coming principally from South America, and who on establishing themselves are joined by their families. There are also rising numbers of people arriving from other countries, such as those of Eastern Europe. According to data from the Secretary of State for Immigration and Emigration at the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs (2007), there are more male (54.33%) immigrants than females (45.67%), the majority of men being in the 30 to 34 age range, and that of women in the 24 to 34 range.

### IMMIGRATION AND WORK

In the world of employment immigrants can be said to have established themselves, given that they now account for 10% of the total working population (Pajares, 2007). However, before going on we should make it clear that when we speak of immigrants we are referring not only to "prototypical" immigrants, that is, those coming from less economically developed countries than Spain, the majority of whom arrived on makeshift rafts or through mafia smuggling networks, and

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large numbers of whom prowl the streets without documentation and outside the law. Although this type of immigrant does exist, the majority coming from less developed countries are working with contracts, live in proper housing, take their children to state schools and are quite integrated in Spanish society (Díez Nicolás, 2005). Moreover, when we refer to immigrants we are also talking about the French, English, Dutch, Germans, and so on who come here to live and work in social and economic conditions far removed from those of non-EU immigrants.

Given the changes that have occurred, it is necessary for psychology professionals to study empirically the phenomenon of immigration in relation to the employment context, so as to arrive at a fuller understanding of the principal mechanisms that explain the presence of foreign workers in various job sectors (hotel and catering, shops, domestic service, etc.) and its consequences.

In order to understand the impact of immigration on Spanish society it is necessary to take into account not only the psychological and psychosocial aspects of the social construction of the immigrant's image, but also the actual material conditions in which immigrants operate (labour market, sectors in which they work, access to housing, access to social services, and so on). According to Solé, Parella, Alarcón, Bergalli and Gubert (2000), the Spanish population develops negative attitudes toward immigrants in accordance with three dimensions: citizen's security, cultural identity (understood as aggression against "our" customs and as fear of the irreducibility of cultural differences) and economics – basically, competition for resources (especially jobs). In relation to the third of these aspects, analysis of the employment record of non-EU immigrants shows that they are situated on the lowest rungs of the employment ladder, victims of marked discrimination in both access to jobs and working conditions. Immigrants are concentrated in five main sectors: agriculture, construction, domestic service, hotel and catering, and textiles and dressmaking, all of which are labour-intensive rather than capital-intensive. These are sectors for which there is either a lack of indigenous workforce – despite high unemployment –, so that there is a substitution effect, or where there is a predilection for employers to take on immigrants, with the concomitant deterioration in wages and working conditions.

The IOÉ Group (Colectivo IOÉ, 2000) carried out an interesting study in the hotel and catering sector, whose results helped to clarify some important questions related to the world of work and both Spanish and immigrant workers, and which broadly illustrated the situation of immigrants. In a similar line is the research by Parella (2005), who studied the way jobs are assigned to Spanish and immigrant women by domestic service companies in Barcelona. The results reveal that companies recruit according to stereotypes and prejudices related to gender

and ethnicity or nationality, setting the two groups (indigenous and immigrant) apart and condemning the immigrants to an employment situation of subordination not only for the fact of being women (lower wages, less job stability, etc., regardless of qualifications or ability), but also of being immigrants, so that they suffer twofold discrimination and fill the labour market gaps resulting from Spanish women's rejection of certain types of work. Almost 20% of the total of foreign women registered with the Social Security Department pay their contributions in the category of Domestic Service Employees (66,363 persons). Data on foreign workers registered with the Department, by nationality, show that 63% of Filipino, 40.2% of Dominican, 37.7% of Peruvian, 29.9% of Ecuadorian and 27.9% of Colombian women are in domestic service. But these figures are undoubtedly far below the true ones, given the large numbers of women who work in this sector without such registration (Colectivo IOÉ, 2001). Here too we can observe a powerful influence of stereotypes: Latin-American women are most in demand for live-in domestic service jobs, since they are believed to be "easier to handle and more affectionate", whilst for work paid by the hour Spanish women are preferred (they are thought to be quicker and cleaner workers). However, in general, clients prefer immigrant workers because they think they will save money, assuming that they will have to pay them less for their work and that they will be less demanding and aware of their rights than Spanish women. In this situation an interesting phenomenon occurs, insofar as, once immigrant workers begin to penetrate a certain category of work in considerable numbers, it becomes labelled as an "immigrant job", so that it is less and less likely for indigenous workers to be attracted to it (Hollifield, 1992).

In sum, jobs become a vital resource for which immigrants and the Spanish population compete in a context of high unemployment and job insecurity – a situation that generates uncertainty among both groups, as well as having other, no less important, psychosocial consequences.

### STEREOTYPES IN RELATION TO IMMIGRANTS

A *stereotype* consists in a set of shared beliefs about the personal attributes of the members of a group (Morales & Moya, 1996), whilst *stereotyping* refers to the use of stereotypes to make inferences, judgements, or predictions, or to perform behaviours.

To date there have not been many studies in Spain on the specific content of the stereotypes of immigrants, or of some of the sub-groups that make up this category – there are more on attitudes towards immigration or prejudice against immigrants, which we shall discuss in the following sections –, but there is at least some research that helps to illustrate the stereotype existing in our country in relation to immigrants.



The study by Moya and Rodríguez Bailón (2002) measured immigrant stereotypes and their rating (in relation to the employment context) and compared these stereotypes with those of another three groups: the disabled, Gypsies and women. In order to measure the stereotypes, each person was asked to come up with five characteristics they considered typical of the members of the group in question, in the employment or job context. Once they had produced these five characteristics, for each one they were required to indicate the percentage of members of the group who, in their opinion, had this characteristic in the sphere of work (on a scale of 0 to 100). Finally, they were asked to consider the characteristics once more, rating them on a 7-point scale from -3 (extremely negative) to +3 (extremely positive). For each group, a score was obtained by multiplying the percentage of people in the group considered to have each typical characteristic by the rating of that characteristic, and then the five scores were averaged (thus, the higher the score, the more positive the stereotype). The results showed the following stereotypes: disabled (63.57), Gypsies (-42.78), women (70.49), immigrants (-27.49). As it can be seen, for two groups there are positive stereotypes in the work context (women and the disabled), whilst in the other two cases the stereotypes are negative (Gypsies and immigrants).

In another study, Galán (2006) analyzed the image of immigrants in two series broadcast by one of Spain's private national TV channels (*Telecinco*) between 1999 and 2005: *El Comisario* (The Police Inspector) (84 episodes) and *Hospital Central* (Central Hospital) (102 episodes). Of all these episodes, immigrant characters appeared in 42 – almost 25% of the total –, reflecting the influence and importance they are acquiring in Spanish society. By frequency of appearance, they were from: 1) Latin America; 2) Eastern Europe and Africa (in similar proportions); 3) Asia (China). The origins of these characters broadly coincided with those of the real immigrant population in Spain, but with one notable exception – immigrants from developed countries within the European Union. Also, of all the immigrant characters appearing in the episodes analyzed there are very similar percentages of illegal and legal immigrants, with the characters playing two different types of role: active roles or “baddie” – those who cause conflicts, normally of a criminal nature – and passive roles or “victims” – those who suffer the consequences of the conflict caused by immigrants or other characters. Except for the two Argentine characters in *Hospital Central* – who are characterized in a positive way –, the immigrants generally have negative connotations, since a high percentage of them appear in contexts of irregularity or illegality, in plots with themes of drug-trafficking, prostitution or crime and in conflictive situations. Moreover, as Galán (2006) points out, not much attempt is made to deal in any depth with

the psychology of the immigrant characters – their emotions or feelings, or the reasons why they have become involved in particular criminal situations. Even so, in recent seasons of these programmes there has been something of a tendency to give immigrant characters positive roles, and the Spaniards who exploit them negative ones.

Results in a similar line emerged from the study by Igartúa, Muñiz and Otero (2006), who made a content analysis of the news treatment of immigration and immigrants in the Spanish press and on TV news in the year 2004. To this end they reviewed a week of peak-time TV news broadcasts on three national channels – *TVE1* (state) and *Antena 3* and *Tele 5* (both private) – and items in the principal national newspapers (*El País*, *El Mundo*, *ABC* and *La Razón*). The results showed that the majority of the news items relating to immigrants referred to events of a negative character; moreover, there was a noticeable tendency to frame such news in a way which linked crime to immigration, and the news items framed in this way were those whose positioning was most prominent. It was also found that the television news tended to be more sensationalist in its presentation.

An interesting aspect to take into account in this context is the conception underlying the general term “immigrant” in Spanish society as a whole. In the study by Pérez and Desrués (2006), with a representative sample of Spaniards aged 18 and over (data-collection took place at the end of 2005), the authors found a marked tendency to identify immigrants in a specific rather than a generic way, the most widely-used criterion for referring to them being geographical origin (76.5%), whilst just 8% refer to groups based on other factors (religious, legal, economic, etc.). The groups most frequently mentioned are those from the Arab world (35.1%) – and within this group basically Moroccans (18.5%) –, Latin-Americans (28.3%) and sub-Saharan Africans (14.6%).

### PREJUDICE TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS

Most definitions of prejudice conceive it as negative thoughts, behaviours or emotions toward certain groups and their members. The concept is a broader one than that of stereotype, since it includes not only beliefs or thoughts about immigrants, but also emotions and behaviours towards them. Currently, it is also argued that prejudice is an ideology that justifies inequality between groups, such justification being achieved not only through a negative image of other groups, but also in some cases through a positive image of them, though restricted to particular dimensions (e.g., members of certain groups may be seen as “spontaneous”, “good-natured”, “funny”, and although this is positive, it can facilitate the maintenance of this group in a situation of inferiority).

The results of various studies carried out in our country show a



relatively negative rating of the different immigrant groups, though not as unfavourable as might be expected a priori; moreover, there are clear differences according to the immigrant group concerned. For example, research over several years by Díez Nicolás (2005) has provided data on the way the Spanish view different types of immigrant. Using a scale of 0 (lowest possible rating) to 10 (best rating), the highest-rated groups were Western Europeans (between 6 and 6.7, depending on the year), followed by South Americans (5.8-6.6), Asians (5.7-6.4), black Africans (5.6-6.4), Eastern Europeans (5.5-6.6), Russians (5.5-6.2), North Americans (5.4-6.1), Jews (5.3-6.2), Gypsies (4.7-5.5) and Arabs-Muslims (4.5-5.8). Between 1998 and 2003 rating of all the groups fell, in general, but in four cases in particular (Eastern Europeans, Arabs-Muslims, Gypsies and Jews), the decrease was more marked. It can be said that Spaniards rate foreigners of all origins fairly positively, including immigrants. Until 2001, Gypsies were the lowest-rated group, but from then on, possibly as a consequence of the 9/11 terrorist attack, their position was taken by Arabs-Muslims; the rating of Eastern Europeans has also fallen.

There are also other ways of measuring prejudice among Spaniards towards immigrants and towards the members of other groups, such as by asking them if "they would mind having them as neighbours", "what they would do if their daughter fell in love with or wanted to marry a man from a given social group", or "what they think about racist insults". Responses to such questions do not suggest particularly negative attitudes toward immigrants (see Díez Nicolás, 2005 and Ramírez & Rodríguez, 2005). For example, on being asked what they would do if their daughter fell in love with or wanted to marry a man belonging to a particular social group, the data from 14 studies (Díez Nicolás, 2005) show that more than 30% of interviewees said they would let their daughter do what she liked, whilst less than 25% would forbid or advise against their daughter becoming emotionally involved with a man from one of the nine social groups studied.

A significant finding is that when Spaniards are asked how they think their family and friends, or society in general, perceive immigrants, and about their degree of racism and xenophobia, the responses indicate that Spaniards perceive more discriminatory attitudes among their compatriots in general than among their relatives and friends, and among the latter than in themselves (Morales, 2003). Thus, for example, in studies on public opinion towards immigrants it was found that whilst 13% of the population gave negative answers of distrust or disdain to the question "How do you treat them?", 61% did so to the question "How does Spanish society treat them?" (Díez Nicolás & Ramírez Lafita, 2001).

Some research has focused on identifying the variables that best predict prejudice toward immigrants. According to Díez

Nicolás (2005), the sociodemographic characteristic that best differentiates between people with high and low levels of xenophobia is educational level, followed by age (no effects being found for sex, income or other variables). Díez Nicolás' work has also explored ideological characteristics: ideological self-positioning (from "extreme left" to "extreme right"), religious practice (from "non-practising" to "highly devout"), Spanish nationalist sentiment (from 1 = "I only feel Basque, *madrileño*, etc." to 5 = "I only feel Spanish") and post-materialism (measured on a 12-item scale developed by Inglehart). The results show that the personal ideological variables that predicted xenophobia over several years were materialist orientation (giving priority to economic and personal security) versus post-materialist orientation (giving priority to social relations, to social participation and to the capacity to decide about things that affect us), and self-categorization as being on the right politically.

From a more psychosocial perspective, other variables have been considered as predictive of attitudes toward immigrants. Thus, Ramírez and Rodríguez (2006), in a study with secondary-school students in the Region of Murcia (eastern Spain), found that the variables which best predicted responses to a single measure of attitudes toward immigrants (0, highly favourable, 10, highly unfavourable) were (in descending order of importance): similarity to immigrants (the more similar, the higher the rating), perception of immigrants' contribution to the host society (when the contribution is positive, i.e., the benefits outweigh the costs, the rating is higher), experience of positive emotions toward immigrants, contact with immigrants (which leads to greater knowledge and to doing shared activities) and positively-rated stereotype.

As we have seen, then, Spaniards' view of immigrants is not particularly negative. However, we should not forget that the situation of the immigrants themselves is far from giving grounds for such optimism, as we saw in the introductory sections of the present article. How can we explain levels of xenophobia and prejudice that are apparently so low? Several explanations have been proposed: 1) In Spain there are few immigrants compared to the cases of other European countries (as a counter to this argument once could adduce statistics showing that although the volume of immigration in our country from less developed countries has gradually increased, the level of xenophobia has not varied that much) (Díez Nicolás, 2005); 2) Spaniards lie, concealing their true attitudes about immigrants and other races or nationalities, and in general about all socially marginalized or excluded groups (but such "social desirability" is also high in other European countries, where nevertheless we can observe greater expression of xenophobia) (Díez Nicolás, 2005); and 3) Prejudice is adopting new forms (Moya & Puertas, 2005) – that is, many people still have negative emotions and feelings about



members of certain groups, among them immigrants, but at the same time know that it is no longer socially acceptable to express or have such feelings, so that their prejudice is manifested in more subtle ways. Let us consider some of these new conceptions of prejudice (Moya & Puertas, 2005).

- a) *Modern racism*. In this form of racism, support for principles of justice and non-discrimination would coexist with negative feelings towards immigrants and members of other minorities, leading to the expression of prejudice in an indirect and symbolic way – for example, opposing measures to favour integration (e.g., subsidies to businesses started by immigrants) – but also opposition to segregationist or clearly exclusive measures (McConahay, 1986).
- b) *Aversive racism*. Somewhat similar to the above form, since this type of racism results from the coexistence of a negative attitude towards the ethnic group and a positive attitude demanded by egalitarian and justice-based values, except that it is manifested in a different way: alternating positive and negative responses towards members of ethnic groups depending on the situation and the possibility of generating a non-racist justification of a discriminatory behaviour (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986).
- c) *Symbolic racism*. (Kinders & Sears, 1981). This would occur as a consequence of an individual having both negative feelings towards minorities and strong beliefs in traditionally Western values (discipline, independence, individualism, hard work, obedience, etc.). Symbolic racists would claim that minorities do not assume these values and do not contribute to the development of the nation, and would in this way justify their negative affect toward them. This type of racist does not perceive him or herself to be personally threatened by immigrants, but rather feels that what are under threat are the values of the nation.
- d) *Blatant and Subtle racism*. (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). *Blatant* (traditional) racism is based on the perception that the outgroup is a threat, and on opposition to close contact with its members. *Subtle* racism, on the other hand, is manifested in our culture in three acceptable ways that avoid one being labelled as prejudiced: 1) Defence of traditional values (which leads to blaming immigrants for their own situation, since they do not behave in the appropriate way for being successful in society). 2) Exaggeration of cultural differences: the disadvantaged situation of the group experiencing discrimination is due not to their inferiority, but to cultural differences. 3) Not showing positive emotional reactions to members of outgroups (since showing negative emotional reactions towards outgroup members can be seen as an indication of racism, and subtle prejudice does not admit the existence of

such negative feelings), but at the same time showing an absence of positive emotional reactions.

### ATTITUDES TO IMMIGRATION

Also important, apart from attitudes towards immigrants, are attitudes to *immigration*. We shall first of all explore general attitudes to the presence of foreigners and immigrants in our country. This will be followed by a consideration of attitudes to more specific aspects related to immigration.

#### a) *General attitude to immigration*

As regards the general attitude to immigration, one of the researchers that has done most work on this issue in the Spanish context is the sociologist Díez Nicolás (2005). One form of representing these attitudes is through the so-called “xenophobia index”, which ranges from 0 (not at all xenophobic) to 14 points (highly xenophobic). Results from the year 2003 show that around 60% of Spaniards over age 18 are not at all or only slightly xenophobic, but a third show some degree of xenophobia or racism, and 8% more intense levels of xenophobia. Average xenophobia index has consistently been below 3 points, and decreased from 1991 to 1998, increasingly slightly from then until 2003.

In the study by Pérez and Desrués (2006) with a representative sample of Spaniards aged over 18 – data collection took place in late 2005 – 65.4% of interviewees gave a positive rating to the existence of people of different racial, religious and cultural origin within Spanish society, as against 14.3% who perceived this fact in a rather negative way.

However, although the general attitude to immigration seems positive, beliefs about the general consequences of immigration are not so favourable. Thus, Mateos and Moral (2000) report that 41% of young Spaniards (compared to 31% of the general population) believe immigration to have “negative consequences”, and only 28% (as against 37% of the general population) think it has “positive consequences”. It is worthy of note that the age group with the most negative view of immigration is the youngest one (15-19 years): 43% of this age group feel that the negative aspects of immigration outweigh the positive aspects. Furthermore, the negative aspects become even more important when the immigration issue concerns a more immediate setting: Spain. In these cases, 56% of the young people think immigration has “only disadvantages, or more disadvantages than advantages” (compared to 28% who think it has “only advantages, or more advantages than disadvantages”). The people who see most disadvantages with immigration are those with low educational level and whose ideology is on the right of the political spectrum.

Another way of measuring general attitude to immigration is through surveys about the number of immigrants in the country.

National data from 2005 (Pérez & Desrues, 2006) show that when asked "In your opinion, is the number of immigrants currently in Spain excessive, acceptable, low or insufficient?", 62% of respondents said it was excessive and 29% felt it was acceptable (only 3% thought the number of immigrants was low or insufficient). The results from Mateos and Moral (2000), on young people's perceptions about where Spain's immigrants originated from, clearly show an overestimation of the presence of North Africans: they believe 77% of immigrants come from Morocco, when the official figures from Spain's national statistical institute, according to Mateos and Moral, are much lower, at 14%; moreover, the same sample of young people greatly underestimated the proportion of immigrants from other European Union countries, estimating it at 9%, when the official figure is 47%.

### **b) Attitudes to specific immigration-related issues**

**Access policy.** According to data from Spain's Centre for Sociological Research (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, CIS), in the period 2002-2004 around 85% of those surveyed supported a policy of access for immigrants conditional upon their having a work contract. This figure was more than 20 points above the percentage that had been typical since 1993 (60-63%). In line with this, the percentage of Spaniards supporting the option of easier access for immigrants, with no restrictions, fell from 20% in 1996 to just 7.2% in May 2004.

The research carried out by Díez Nicolás (2005) suggests that Spaniards think the specific measure that should be applied to immigration is the restriction of entry into Spain of immigrants from less developed countries. The way to implement this restriction would be to fix an annual quota of workers. Since 2001 the view that the most effective measure is the repatriation of "illegal" immigrants, though still held by only a very small proportion of the population, has gained ground. However, as regards immigrants from developed countries (e.g., the United States, Japan and Western Europe), over 50% of Spaniards are in favour of their continuing to come and live in Spain.

**Immigrants and the labour market.** Mateos and Moral (2000) found that 45% of the young people they interviewed agreed with the statement "immigrants take jobs away from Spaniards," this percentage being even higher in the general population (54%). However, in the study by Pérez and Desrues (2006), a large majority of Spaniards aged over 18 felt that immigrants did not compete with the Spanish population in the job market, since 76% of respondents agreed with the statement that "immigrants do jobs that Spaniards do not want to do"; also, a large majority (65.5%) agreed that immigrants make an important contribution to Spain's economic development. Likewise, Spaniards do not appear to have any objection to accepting an immigrant as their boss (86.6%). Nevertheless,

opinions are more divided over the preference for employing a Spaniard before taking on an immigrant: although 50% of respondents thought it unacceptable to give preference to Spaniard over an immigrant, 40% were of the opposite opinion.

**Integration of immigrants.** In general, attitudes of rejection related to integration are very much in the minority. The percentage of Spaniards over 18 that would reject working with immigrants, allowing their children to bring immigrant friends home or accepting an immigrant boss is under 10% in all cases (Pérez & Desrues, 2006). Likewise, with regard to other relationships that depend to a greater extent on the disposition of the respondents, such as living in the same neighbourhood as immigrants or their son or daughter marrying an immigrant, attitudes of rejection are always below 20%. Of all the relationships proposed, that which is least well-received is that of renting a house or flat to immigrants (only 56.9% would accept this), whilst for the remainder of the proposals, acceptance rates range from 74% to 90%. According to this same study, the percentage of respondents who are trusting or very trusting of immigrants is very similar to that of those who trust them very little or not at all (38.7% and 37.3%, respectively), though these responses do depend on the immigrant group in question: those deemed most trustworthy are Latin-Americans (58.7%), followed at some considerable distance by immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (15.5%) and Eastern Europeans (10.4%). At the other extreme, those considered most untrustworthy among the Spanish population are immigrants from Arab countries (49.3%), followed by those from Eastern Europe (25%).

The vast majority of Spaniards show themselves to be in favour of immigrants living in a stable and regularized manner in Spain to enjoy both social rights – such as bringing their families over or claiming unemployment benefit – and citizens' or political rights – such as obtaining Spanish nationality or voting in municipal elections (Pérez & Desrues, 2006). In all cases, the percentage of support among respondents is over 80%. This finding should be considered, however, against the background of interviewees' attitudes to the question of preference according to nationality, since a high percentage (around 40%) are in favour of Spaniards having priority over immigrants in areas such as choice of school for their children and access to jobs and healthcare.

Some 75% of Spaniards are of the opinion that the social integration of immigrants should be favoured – and this view has gained significant ground since 1991 –, whilst the rest think they should be encouraged and helped to return to their countries of origin (Díez Nicolás, 2005). Around 60% of Spanish people think the State should help immigrants find accommodation and guarantee them unemployment benefit, some 75% think they should receive free education for their

spouse (training and Spanish language courses), and 80% even think they should have free education for their children and the right to free public healthcare. Those interviewed by Pérez and Desrues (2006) show broad agreement with the opinion that the presence of immigrant children in schools is enriching for all pupils (65.5%).

With regard to two specific issues that have sparked some controversy in Spain (Pérez & Desrues, 2006), to the question "considering all possible cases, do you think it acceptable or unacceptable to exclude a pupil from school for wearing the Islamic veil?", 67.3% responded "unacceptable", and the majority (57%) felt it was unacceptable for people to protest about the construction of a mosque in their neighbourhood, though a significant minority (30%) thought this type of demonstration acceptable.

**Irregular immigration.** Spanish public opinion has been, and continues to be, very understanding and compassionate toward irregular immigrants, to such an extent that just 13% are in favour of expelling them or repatriating them, around 30% would give them three months to find work, repatriating them if they failed, and close to 25% would be in favour of regularizing their situation if they had a job, or even if they did not (Díez Nicolás, 2005). This same author found that the majority of Spaniards thought irregular immigrants should have access to public healthcare, emergency services for humanitarian reasons, public education for their children and classes for learning Spanish; 35% also thought that the State should provide them with professional training courses and housing. These data coincide with those of Pérez and Desrues (2006).

**Effects of immigration.** According to Díez Nicolás (2005), the majority of Spaniards think that immigration from less developed countries does not have an influence on Spanish culture – though more think it influences positively than think it influences negatively; opinions are divided more or less equally on the subject of whether it increases unemployment or does not affect it; and the majority believe it has no effect on wages (though those who think it causes them to fall outnumber those who think it causes them to increase). However, as far as immigration from more developed countries is concerned, over half of Spaniards think it affects neither unemployment, wages nor crime. Finally, in relation to the possible effect of immigrant workers on the future of the pensions system, the prevailing opinion in 1995 was that they did not have an influence because the majority of foreign workers were in illegal situations and did not pay social security contributions; however, in 2003 the majority opinion was that they benefited the system because they rejuvenate the active population.

**Immigration and crime.** An issue frequently debated in the media and in the political arena is the link between immigration and crime. In this case the tendency is the contrary to that

observed with regard to the aspects discussed above: the vast majority (around 70%) of Spaniards over 18 (Pérez & Desrues, 2006) believe that increased immigration has a reasonable (42.2%) or strong (28.5%) effect on the increase in Spain's crime rate. The opposite view is held by just 24% of respondents.

As regards attitudes to immigrants who commit crimes, 72% of those interviewed consider it acceptable for them to be expelled from the country even if they are legally established.

## THE IMMIGRANTS' PERSPECTIVE

### a) Reasons for emigration

As for the reasons why people emigrate, according to the Spanish Institute of Migration and Social Services (IMSERSO, 2000), the most substantial reason for migrants leaving their country of origin is economic problems, followed by political reasons. And the reasons why they choose Spain as their target is because they have family there, followed by its proximity and the fact that it is the most appealing to them.

From a psychological point of view, the ultimate decision to emigrate appears to depend on three main types of factor (Moya & Puertas, 2005): 1) factors that make the host country attractive, 2) factors affecting the migrants that encourage them to leave their own country; and 3) the existence of family networks in the host country. Furthermore, numerous individual characteristics have been analyzed (expectations, values, goals, etc.) that may influence the decision to emigrate, and which also affect successful adaptation to the new country. Boneva and Frieze (2001) argue that there are two basic aspects: the desire to emigrate (which depends to a large extent on personality factors and individual characteristics) and migratory behaviour (influenced by contextual factors and opportunity). Moreover, within the area of individual characteristic, motivations interact with values, influencing the desire to emigrate, so that it is not sufficient to consider only the person's motivations.

### b) Immigrants' perception of Spanish society

The data provided by Díez Nicolás (2005) indicate that, in general, the immigrant population interviewed has a fairly positive opinion of Spaniards. Specifically, Spaniards have repeatedly received the highest rating among all the groups presented (though always behind the respondent's own group): over 7 points on a scale of 0 to 10. Furthermore, according to these studies, Spaniards are not considered by the immigrant community as xenophobic or racist.

On being asked about interpersonal relations (Díez Nicolás, 2005), over 60% of immigrants respond that if a daughter of theirs were to fall in love with a Spaniard they would let her do what she wanted. Only less than 10% would prohibit her from pursuing the relationship, though a larger proportion would suggest she took into account the cultural differences before



going on with the relationship. Even more tolerant attitudes emerge in the hypothetical case of an immigrant's son falling in love with a Spanish woman. However, these percentages vary considerably depending on the immigrant group. Thus, whilst practically all the Latin-Americans and Eastern Europeans would permit this type of intimate relationship, among North Africans the proportion falls to 43%.

### ACCULTURATION AND THE MIGRATORY PROCESS

The migratory phenomenon involves contact between the members of at least two different cultures or subcultures, in a process known as "acculturation". Within this process, two levels can be identified: individual (or psychological acculturation, which refers to psychological changes that occur in individuals as a result of acculturation) and group (changes in areas such as politics, economics or demography). Acculturation involves changes in both the immigrant group and the host society. Not only can we observe the necessary adaptation from the immigrant to resolve the clash of cultures, but the socio-cultural system of the host society is also called into question through confrontation with the values, representations of reality and customs of immigrant groups.

One of the most widely-accepted models of the acculturation process is that of Berry (2001). For this author, immigrants, on settling in their new society, must confront two crucial decisions in their life: (1) to decide whether their own culture is something of value that should be maintained in the new context; and (2) to decide whether they are going to establish relationships with the members of the host society. The combination of these two elements gives rise to four possible acculturation strategies that individuals can adopt: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. In *assimilation*, the individual rejects his/her culture of origin and tries to become just another member of the new culture; *separation* implies that individuals wish to maintain the original culture and at the same time avoid interaction with the other cultural group; in *marginalization*, immigrants' lack of interest in maintaining their own culture or establishing relationships with the outgroup is combined with an adverse context that facilitates processes of discrimination and social exclusion; finally, *integration* is an option in which individuals set out to both maintain their original culture and establish contacts with and learn about the new culture. Research has shown that although the acculturation strategy may vary according to the ethnic and/or cultural group, the majority of immigrants choose the *integration* strategy, with only a few opting for *assimilation* and *separation*. Likewise, a relationship has been found between the type of strategy chosen and stress from culture shock, so that minimum stress values are associated with *integration*, the highest with *separation* and the intermediate values with *assimilation*.

More recently, the above model has been improved by incorporating the perspective of the host society. In this case, *integration* involves its members' acceptance of biculturalism among immigrants (that is, the newcomers would maintain their traditions but at the same time respect and accept those of the host society), which could contribute to society evolving toward cultural pluralism. When the ideology of *assimilation*, or absorption, predominates, immigrants are expected to abandon their traditions, values, language, and so on. Those who believe in an ideology of *segregation* would not approve of cross-cultural contacts, and would prefer immigrants to live in separate enclaves. *Exclusion* involves both denial of immigrants' rights to maintain their cultural inheritance and the impossibility of their becoming incorporated into the host society as citizens with full rights; ultimately, what is sought is expulsion of the immigrants and the closing of borders. Finally, the *individualist* ideology implies a belief among members of the host society that what is most important are people's individual characteristics, rather than the groups they belong to, giving scant importance to cultural distinguishing aspects. The resulting acculturation process will be, therefore, a combination of the acculturation strategies chosen by the immigrants and those preferred by the host society. The way the two groups' strategies are combined can lead to a consensus-based, problematic or conflictive inter-group relationship.

Navas and cols. (2004) have recently carried out a series of studies on the acculturation strategies of the immigrant population in the province of Almería (southern Spain). This is a region that has seen a spectacular increase in its immigrant population, due to its flourishing intensive agriculture sector based on greenhouse production, which has resulted in a profound economic and social transformation over recent years. The work of these authors has focused on attitudes towards acculturation among both the local people (*almerienses*) and two immigrants groups: Moroccans and sub-Saharan Africans. The results show that only the Moroccans incline towards "integration" as the preferred option, since sub-Saharan Africans choose both this strategy and that of "assimilation" – that is, they would be more prepared than the Moroccans to renounce their customs and adopt those of the host society. The kind of acculturation preferred for sub-Saharan Africans among the local population (halfway between assimilation and integration) coincides with the preference of that immigrant group itself, but the kind preferred by the locals for the Moroccans is not in accordance with what the Moroccans prefer for themselves: while "integration" is the preferred option for the Moroccans, the *almerienses* would prefer them to opt for "assimilation".

In a later study, Navas and cols. (2006) showed the relationship between type of assimilation strategy preferred by



the indigenous population and their levels of prejudice. Participants (783) were a representative sample of inhabitants (men and women) aged over 18 from 6 municipal districts in Almería province with high proportions of immigrants. Of this total, 398 were asked to respond in relation to the North African outgroup and 385 in relation to sub-Saharan Africans. Analysis of the relationship between prejudice and the general attitude to acculturation chosen for each immigrant group revealed that the locals' prejudice, regardless of whether it is expressed in a blatant or a subtle fashion, varies in its extent depending on attitudes to the acculturation process of immigrants. The main conclusions of the study were: 1) the relationship between prejudice and attitudes to acculturation is similar in the two samples of indigenous inhabitants, regardless of the outgroup being rated (North Africans or sub-Saharan Africans); 2) there are no differences in attitudes toward the form of acculturation preferred for immigrants that are associated with the maintenance of blatant or subtle prejudiced beliefs: high levels of both types of prejudice are always associated with "exclusion" and low levels with "integration".

## CONCLUSIONS

Immigration in the Spanish context is set to undergo profound changes – indeed, it is already doing so. Such changes will affect all areas of our lives, from the more physical and structural (architecture and landscape, economic system, and so on) to the more sociological and psychological (interpersonal relations, education, beliefs and values). Therefore, it would seem crucial to the exercise of psychology to increase our knowledge and understanding of the immigration phenomenon and the processes underlying it, as well as its consequences. Processes of acculturation, adaptation and the employment and social integration of immigrants are frequently associated with significant disorders and maladjustment at both the personal level and others, such as the social, family and work levels. Clinical professionals need specific and comprehensive training in order to be able to offer appropriate support and help to immigrants. Furthermore, many of the phenomena studied by Social Psychology, such as prejudice and discrimination, take on special relevance given the presence in our society of substantial numbers of immigrants. The present study has set out to provide psychologists with some basic ideas, together with a set of bibliographical references, which will permit them to broaden and develop their professional activity in response to the reality of the new social context in Spain.

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