



Acculturation strategies and attitudes according to the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM): The perspectives of natives versus immigrants

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Abstract

The purpose of this work was to study acculturation of the African immigrant and host populations in an area in the southeast of Spain (Almería), characterized by a high rate of immigration. A new acculturation model, the *Relative Acculturation Extended Model*, RAEM [Navas, M., Pumares, P., Sánchez, J., García, M. C., Rojas, A. J., Cuadrado, I., & Asensio, M. (2004). *Estrategias y actitudes de aculturación: la perspectiva de los inmigrantes y de los autóctonos en Almería*. Sevilla: Dirección General de Coordinación de Políticas Migratorias. Consejería de Gobernación. Junta de Andalucía; Navas, M., García, M. C., Sánchez, J., Rojas, A. J., Pumares, P., & Fernández, J. S. (2005). *Relative Acculturation Extended Model: New contributions with regard to the study of acculturation*. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29, 21–37], is used for this. This model differentiates between the real and ideal planes of acculturation, that is, between the strategies that are actually put into practice and attitudes that are preferred. Moreover, the model distinguishes seven spheres, or domains, of acculturation (political, work, economic, social, family, religious and ways of thinking), in which persons (immigrants and natives) adopt and prefer different acculturation options (strategies and attitudes). About 1523 persons (397 Maghrebis, 434 Sub-Saharanans, 398 Spaniards who evaluated the Maghreb exogroup and 385 Spaniards who evaluated the Sub-Saharan exogroup), answered a questionnaire made expressly for the study. According to our

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predictions, immigrants and natives coincide in their choices for acculturation (“assimilation”) in the peripheral domains of the RAEM (work, economic); they also coincide in their acculturation attitudes in the social domain (“integration”); however, they differ enormously in the options preferred for the central spheres, or hard core, of the culture (e.g., family, religious, ways of thinking): While immigrants prefer “separation”, natives continue to prefer “assimilation”. Advantages of the RAEM division into domains of acculturation are discussed with regard to previous models, as well as the implications for predicting inter-group conflict.

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1. Introduction

In anthropology, “acculturation” has traditionally been considered cultural, comprehending “...those phenomena which result when groups of individuals from different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with each other, and subsequently, there are changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p. 149). However, Graves (1967) coined the concept of “psychological acculturation” to refer to the fact that this phenomenon involves not only group changes (ecological, cultural, social, institutional, etc.), but also occurs in individuals, that is, involves a series of changes in attitude, conduct, way of life, values, identity, etc. in persons and groups that come into contact (Sabatier & Berry, 1996). From this perspective, the already classic Acculturation Model formulated by Berry et al. (Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989; Berry, 1990, 2001, 2003), defines “*psychological acculturation*” as “*the changes that an individual experiences as a result of being in contact with other cultures and as a result of participating in the process of acculturation that one’s cultural or ethnic group is undergoing*” (Berry, 1990, p. 460).

The research carried out on the psychological acculturation process based on this model focuses mainly on three elements. On one hand, *attitudes toward acculturation*, which refer to the way in which immigrants desire to maintain their own identity and at the same time, relate to other groups in the host society; on another, the *behavioural changes* or ways of life in the new society; and finally, *acculturative stress*, that is, the level of difficulty experienced by persons facing the new situation. This work focuses on the first of these elements—acculturation attitudes—because this variable has had and continues to have an enormous influence on theory and research in this field, not only in North America, where it was formulated, but also in Europe.

In the conceptual framework of attitudes toward acculturation, Berry proposes two independent attitudinal dimensions: whether immigrants consider their cultural identity and customs sufficiently valuable for them to maintain in the host society, and whether the relationships with other persons or groups in the host society are valuable enough to seek them out and foster them. The combination of the responses to these two dimensions (Yes or No) produces a classic matrix (see Berry et al., 1989; Berry, 1990, 2001, 2003) in which the four possible attitudes toward acculturation adopted by immigrants are represented as: “integration” (Yes/Yes), “assimilation” (No/Yes), “separation” (Yes/No) and “marginalisation” (No/No). The definition of these options, and the terminology applied by Berry to designate them, has since been employed by many authors in psychosocial research on

acculturation (e.g., Bourhis, Möise, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997; Eshel & Rosenthal-Sokolov, 2000; Kopic, 2002; Piontkowski & Florack, 1995; Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, & Obdržálek, 2000; Roccas, Horenczyk, & Schwartz, 2000; Sam, 2000).

One of the most important, and constant results of research performed with this matrix—mainly in Canada, but also in other countries and with different ethnic groups (e.g., Campani & Catani, 1985; Nesdale, 2002; Oriol, 1985; Partridge, 1988; Roccas et al., 2000; Sam, 1995; van Oudenhoven & Eisses, 1998)—is the preference of minority groups studied for “integration” (e.g., Berry et al., 1989; Krishnan & Berry, 1992; Sabatier & Berry, 1996; Berry & Sam, 1997). That is, as pointed out by Sabatier and Berry (1996, p. 230), in minority groups that arrive in a new society, “*there is an evident desire to maintain and develop their cultural heritage and identity, participating fully in the institutions and daily life of the host society.*”

In recent years, research has also begun to consider the point of view of the majority, or mainstream, concerning the acculturation of subordinate groups. At the margin of possible changes in the culture of the mainstream group due to this acculturation process (Berry, 1990; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2004; Rudmin, 2003), many authors have pointed out the considerable influence of the attitudes of majority group members on the way in which minorities face their own acculturation process, and how important it is to study those attitudes (e.g., Berry, 1974, 2001, 2003; Berry & Sam, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997; Horenczyk, 1997; Kopic, Mannetti, & Sam, 2005; Moghaddam & Taylor, 1987; Piontkowski, Rohmann, & Florack, 2002; Sayegh & Lasry, 1993; van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998; Ward, 1996; Zagefka & Brown, 2002).

From this broader approach, which considers the reciprocal influence of both populations—immigrants and host—on the acculturation process, the Interactive Acculturation Model of Bourhis et al. (1997) and the more recent work by Piontkowski and Florack (1995), Piontkowski et al. (2000, 2002) should be mentioned for their outstanding contributions. Both are, along with the Berry model mentioned above, the starting point for developing the acculturation model our work is set in (*Relative Acculturation Extended Model*; Navas et al., 2004, 2005).

However, in spite of noteworthy advances in psychosocial literature on the acculturation process, in our opinion, there are still a few important points missing. In the first place, most of the research mentioned only considers general acculturation options, and usually on an ideal plane, that is, what the immigrants would like to do in their new society or what the options preferred by the natives are. In the second place, although some authors suggest that the acculturation process does not take place in the same way in different spheres or areas of life (e.g., Berry, 1990; Berry & Sam, 1997; Horenczyk, 1996; Eshel & Rosenthal-Sokolov, 2000), only a few consider a set of areas, usually those referring to values, language, culture and social relations (Eshel & Rosenthal-Sokolov, 2000; Kopic, 2002; Nguyen, Messé, & Stollak, 1999; Roccas et al., 2000; Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000; Sam, 2000, among others); and even fewer authors offer separate results for each area (e.g., Arens-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003, 2004; Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000; Kwak & Berry, 2001). Thirdly, no studies simultaneously consider the double plane of options preferred and put into practice in each of the areas, or by the two different contact groups (immigrants and natives). Finally, although the option preferred by most of the members of the minority groups—and also by the mainstream societies—in the new host society is “integration”, the literature describes many factors that condition immigrant preferences (and also those of the natives) and, therefore, influence the acculturation process that is

going on between the contact groups. These factors may be individual (e.g., age, sex, time in the host country, education, ethnocultural origin), psychosocial (e.g., endogroup bias, intergroup contact, mutual prejudice, perceived similarity, cultural enrichment perceived, endogroup identification, visibility, group status, etc.) or group/context (e.g., specific peculiarities of each immigrant and/or host group country, political context, cultural distance, regulations, predominant ideologies, etc.) (see, e.g., Berry, 2001; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001; Piontkowski et al., 1995; Piontkowski et al., 2002; Ward, 2001, for an analysis of some of these factors).

Taken altogether, these studies confirm the need for research on the acculturation process in different societies or contexts, studying ethnic groups of different origins, as suggested by Berry (2003). Furthermore, the acculturation process must be separated into different areas and acculturation options put into practice and desired must be considered simultaneously in the displaced groups and the host society.

To overcome these deficiencies, the research group to which the authors of this paper belong has designed an Acculturation Model (*Relative Acculturation Extended Model: RAEM*), which includes the contributions of various authors to this field. This model has been applied in the province of Almería, an area of Spain with high immigration rates, (e.g., Navas et al., 2004, 2005). Specifically, in our opinion, the model's two most innovative and relevant contributions are:

- (1) The model differentiates between acculturation strategies and attitudes. That is, between the *real plane*, those acculturation options, which immigrants say they have put into practice in their new society, and those the natives perceive that the immigrants have adopted, and the *ideal plane*, those options that the immigrants would use if they could choose, and those natives would prefer for the immigrants.
- (2) The RAEM postulates that there is no single or general acculturation attitude as inferred from some of the traditional models (e.g., Berry et al., 1989). In the RAEM, the adaptive process is understood to be *complex* (different options can be adopted and preferred at the same time), and *relative*, since the same strategies are generally not employed nor are the same options usually preferred, for interaction with persons from other cultures in different areas (e.g., in peripheral areas such as work *versus* private or core areas such as family relationships, religion or values). Because of this, *seven areas* are distinguished in the model, from the nearest to the world's material or peripheral elements (*political, work, economic*), to those farthest away, such as symbolic representation, ideology or religion (*religious beliefs and customs, ways of thinking—principles and values—*) with intermediate areas (*social and family relationships*).

This work was part of research done in the province of Almería (Southern Spain), one of the provinces with the highest immigration rates in Spain, a place we consider especially suitable for testing the model. This research took into account both the native population and two groups of immigrants (Maghrebis and Sub-Saharan Africans). These two groups of immigrants were chosen because, on one hand, they are the most representative in the province and, on the other, because, in spite of their mutual African origin, and majority Islamic religion, their customs are quite different. Finally, another point that was critical to the choice is that Maghrebis appear again and again in all the opinion polls as the immigrant group held in the lowest consideration, with very strong negative stereotypes, derived partly from a history of intense, conflictive relations.

This article approaches, on one hand, the acculturation strategies and attitudes of Maghrebi and Sub-Saharan immigrants. That is, what they do (*real plane*) and what they would like to do (*ideal plane*) in the new host society. And on the other, the acculturation strategies natives perceive Maghrebi and Sub-Saharan immigrants to be putting into practice (*real plane*), as well as their acculturation attitudes toward them. That is, their preferences with regard to how of these groups should adapt in the host society (*ideal plane*). In both cases, both the strategies and attitudes studied refer to the seven areas of acculturation in the RAEM.

Based on the RAEM, the main hypotheses that have guided this research are the following:

1. The *acculturation strategies put into practice by immigrants (real plane)*, are different depending on the area of acculturation in question. We would expect immigrants to develop “assimilation” or “integration” options in more public or peripheral areas (e.g., *political, work or economic*), because in these areas, the adoption of elements from the predominant culture are often “imposed” on individuals (e.g., at work) in order to survive in the new society. However, as we near the more intermediate areas (e.g., *social relations*), or those that make up the hard core of the culture and more private aspects (e.g., *family, religious or ways of thinking*), the immigrants feel “freer” to preserve their own culture to a greater extent without having to adopt that of the host (“separation”). Our work concerning the *acculturation strategies the natives perceive in immigrants (real plane)*, is merely exploratory. That is, we do not know whether the natives will have a perception that fits to what the immigrants do in the host society of each of the areas of the RAEM.
2. Just as with the acculturation strategies, we also expect the *acculturation attitudes of immigrants (ideal plane)* to be different depending on which area they are in. Specifically, we would expect immigrants to prefer to keep their original culture and not adopt Spanish customs (“separation”) in the central areas or hard core of the RAEM (e.g., *family, religious or ways of thinking*), while they would be willing to give them up completely (“assimilation”) or partly (“integration”) in the peripheral or public areas of their culture (e.g., *political, work or economic* areas). The reason is that adoption of elements of the mainstream culture is more important in these areas for adapting to the new society than preserving their original customs.
3. Starting out from the basis that there are always demands made by the host society on minority groups for them to “assimilate” into their own sociocultural model, we expect the preferences or acculturation attitudes of the native population to always be very similar to those desired by the immigrants in the peripheral areas (e.g., *political, work, economic*). That is “assimilation” or “integration”. However, we believe that there will be a big difference between natives and immigrants as they get closer to the more central or private areas (*family, religious, ways of thinking*), in which “assimilation” or “integration” attitudes will predominate in the native population, in contrast to immigrant preferences for “separation”.
4. Finally, we would expect to find differences in acculturation strategies and attitudes between the two groups of immigrants studied and also in the native population toward each of them. That is, we think, as other authors do, that the *ethnocultural origin of immigrants* is a highly important variable in how both the host society and the immigrants themselves face the acculturation process (Bourhis et al., 1997; Piontkowski

& Florack, 1995). This is the reason two groups of immigrants with differentiating characteristics are included in the study. Our intention, in this sense, is absolutely exploratory, because we have no prior data to base it on. Specifically, we assume that the Maghrebis would be less willing to give up their original customs in any of the areas of the RAEM than the Sub-Saharan, especially in the private or core areas. Likewise, the greater rejection of the Maghrebis by the native population (e.g., Molero, Cuadrado, & Navas, 2003; Navas et al., 2004; Navas, García, Rojas, Pumares, & Cuadrado, 2006; Rueda & Navas, 1996), leads us to suppose that there will be a greater demand for “assimilation”, that is, to reject their own customs and adopt Spanish customs, for this group than for the Sub-Saharan, in all areas of the RAEM, especially at the core.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

A total of 1523 persons, distributed in four samples, participated in the study. The first sample was made up of 397 persons who had immigrated from the Maghreb (94.6% born in Morocco; hereinafter Group MI), of which 83.2% were men and 16.8% women, average age 31.2 yr (s.d. = 6.28). The second was made up of 343 Sub-Saharan immigrants (46.2% from Senegal and the rest from Mali, Nigeria and other central and south African countries; hereinafter Group SI) with characteristics similar to the above in so far as composition by sex (88.2% men and 11.8% women) and age (mean = 30.8; s.d. = 5.11). Both samples were selected incidentally and had the natives or Spaniards as the reference exogroup in their answers. The unequal distribution by sex of participating immigrants (more men than women), and average age (young), reflects the real stratification of these groups in the host society.

The other two samples were made up of 398 and 385 Spaniards, who answered the questionnaire with regard to the reference exogroup, which was either the Maghrebi (hereinafter Group MA) or Sub-Saharan (hereinafter Group SA), immigrants, respectively. The composition of the samples with regard to age and sex was very similar: Group MA was made up of 50.3% men and 49.7% women, with an average age of 40.87 yr (s.d. = 16.18). The other group, Group SA, was made up of 49.5% men and 50.5% women (avg. age = 41.86 yr; s.d. = 17.02). The last two samples were selected at random, by polyphase sampling, stratified by township, sex and age (proportional allocation) and in the last stage by random routes, among inhabitants over 18 yr of age in towns with high immigration rates (over 10% of the population) in the province of Almería (south of Spain).

2.2. Instruments

The participants answered a questionnaire prepared expressly for the study, in which several different items were included as indicators of the specific acculturation strategies and attitudes by domain (Navas et al., 2004, 2005). That is, four questions were used to measure *the acculturation strategies and attitudes*.

The indicator of acculturation strategies (*real plane*) used by the two groups of African immigrants was obtained by combining the scores in the two questions for each one of the domains defined. In the first question, the person had to indicate “*the degree to which*

he/she currently maintains his/her original culture in each of the domains specified.” In the second question, the person had to indicate “the degree to which he/she has currently adopted the host culture in each of the domains specified.” The samples of the natives answered two similar questions, but referred to the degree in which they perceived that the immigrants (Maghrebis or Sub-Saharan) maintained their original culture/adopted the host culture in each of the domains specified.

The indicator of *acculturation attitudes (ideal plane)* was also obtained by the combination of scores on two questions similar to the above for each one of the domains. In the first, the person indicated, if he/she could choose, “the degree to which he/she would like to maintain his original culture in each one of the domains specified.” In the second, he/she had to indicate “the degree to which he/she would like to adopt the host culture in each of the domains specified.” The two native groups answered these questions indicating “the degree to which they would like the African immigrants (Maghrebis or Sub-Saharan) to maintain their original culture or adopt the host culture in each of the domains specified”.

The scale for the answers to these questions was 5 points (1 “not at all”, 2 “a little”, 3 “some”, 4 “quite a lot” and 5 “very much”).

2.3. Procedure

The questionnaire prepared for the study was given individually in face-to-face interviews, by a person trained for the purpose, either in the subject’s home, or in union halls or immigrant associations or in an NGO.

3. Results

As mentioned above, the indicators for each specific acculturation strategy and/or attitude are obtained by the combination of the scores on two questions on a five-point scale, the first referring to maintaining the original culture and the second to adopting the host culture. A score on both questions of less than three points would indicate that immigrants have adopted a *marginalisation* strategy (or its perception by natives) or else the preference for a *marginalisation/exclusion* option. If the mean score for the group were higher than three on the first of the questions and less than three on the second, the strategy/attitude would be *separation/segregation*. If the mean score for the group were lower than three on the first and higher than three on the second, the strategy/attitude would be *assimilation*. And finally, if the mean score for the group on both questions were over three, the strategy/attitude would be *integration*.

The comparisons made of acculturation strategies that the immigrants say they are putting into practice and the perceptions that natives have of what the immigrants are doing is shown below. The acculturation attitudes (desires or preferences) for the four samples are also shown. For all of them, the difference between means was checked for independent populations using the Student’s-*t* test.

3.1. Acculturation strategies: real plane

3.1.1. Maghrebis and the natives who evaluated them

According to our first hypothesis, the *acculturation strategies* adopted by Maghrebi immigrants are different depending on the area of acculturation in question. Likewise,

although we had not formulated a hypothesis in this respect, the results show that the strategies adopted by the Maghrebis and those perceived by the majority of natives for them, coincide in each area (see Table 1). That is, in the domain *labour or work* (W) the immigrants say they are “assimilated” and the natives also perceive their “assimilation”; in *social* (S), *family* (F), *religious beliefs and customs* (R) and *ways of thinking (principles and values)*, (T) domains, the strategy was indicated by the immigrants and perceived by the natives to be one of “separation”; finally, in the *economic (consume habits and family economy)*, (E) domain, the natives believe that the Maghrebis are in a situation of “marginalisation”, while the Maghrebis themselves feel they are half-way between this option and “assimilation”. Nevertheless, when the averages of the two groups are compared (IM–AM), we find statistically significant differences between Maghrebi immigrants and the natives who evaluate them. On the two questions used to measure acculturation strategies on the real plane, there are differences in the intensity with which the immigrants say they have put into practice a certain strategy and the natives perceive it in certain areas of acculturation. This can be seen graphically in Fig. 1.

As seen in Table 1 and in Fig. 1, in *labour or work* (W), where “assimilation” is the coincident strategy, the natives perceive more conservation of original customs and less

Table 1
Two-sample test (MA versus MI groups) of acculturation strategies by domains, real plane

Real plane	Areas	Groups	<i>N</i>	Mean	Stand. dev.	<i>t</i>	d.f.
Maintains	Work	MA	344	2.65	1.19	6.35***	707.77
		MI	390	2.10	1.12		
	Economics (consume habits and family economy)	MA	345	2.87	1.21	1.01	694.41
		MI	393	2.78	1.08		
	Social relations and friendship	MA	394	4.44	0.69	13.59***	738.52
		MI	396	3.66	0.90		
	Family relations	MA	359	3.70	1.18	4.07***	737.40
		MI	381	3.33	1.28		
	Religious beliefs and customs	MA	379	4.14	1.04	6.82***	731.27
		MI	394	3.54	1.37		
	Ways of thinking: principles and values	MA	363	4.11	1.00	9.19***	736.00
		MI	383	3.38	1.18		
Adopts	Work	MA	380	3.26	1.12	−4.19***	765
		MI	387	3.59	1.06		
	Economics (consume habits and family economy)	MA	367	2.65	1.15	−5.20***	725.51
		MI	391	3.06	1.00		
	Social relations and friendship	MA	395	2.56	0.89	−4.97***	786
		MI	393	2.90	0.99		
	Family relations	MA	366	2.08	0.95	−4.36***	544.56
		MI	372	2.56	1.92		
	Religious beliefs and customs	MA	380	1.66	0.98	1.44	762
		MI	384	1.55	1.00		
	Ways of thinking: principles and values	MA	364	1.83	0.94	−9.51***	717.98
		MI	373	2.55	1.12		

Response scale: 1(nothing) to 5 (very much); *** $p < 0.001$.

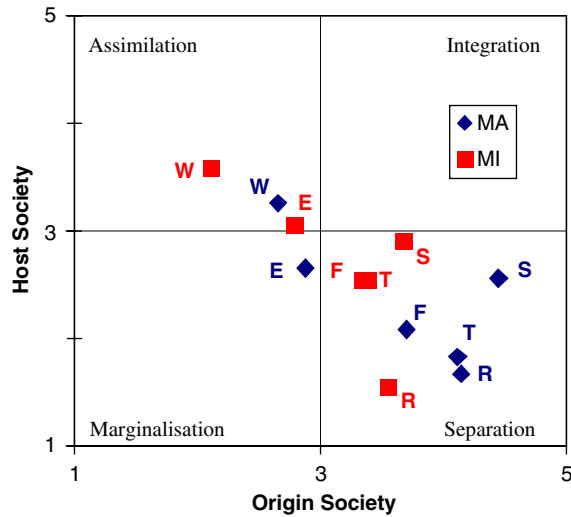


Fig. 1. Acculturation strategies by domain (real plane). MA and MI groups. W, work; E, economics; S, social relations and friendship; F, family relations; R, religious beliefs and customs; T, ways of thinking: principles and values.

adoption of Spanish customs than what the Maghrebi immigrants say they do. That is, the perception of “assimilation” by the natives is less intense than the adoption of this strategy as expressed by the immigrants. This result also appears in the analysis of the percentages (36% of the Maghrebi immigrants state that they have been “assimilated” at work, while only 23% of the natives see it this way).

The opposite is true in other domains in which the natives perceive the separation more intensely than what the Maghrebi immigrants say. Specifically, the domains in which this tendency appears, both in the analysis of the means and the percentages, are *social* (S)—48% of the natives consider that the Maghrebi immigrants are “separate”, compared to 27% of them who say they are—*family* (F) (48% versus 23% of each group, respectively), and especially the ways of *thinking (principles and values, T)*—63% of the natives compared to 26% of the Maghrebis—and in *religious beliefs and customs* (R)—68% of the natives and 47% of the Maghrebis—.

3.1.2. Sub-Saharan and natives who evaluated them

The *acculturation strategies* that Sub-Saharan immigrants say they have put into practice are also different depending on the area of acculturation (Hypothesis 1). In this group, the coincidence between their statements and the perception of natives concerning them in each area are faithfully reflected in the absence of statistically significant differences (in the majority of the areas), between the answers of both groups in the two questions used. All of this can be seen in Table 2 and graphically in Fig. 2.

Thus, only in those aspects related to work (*labour or work domain, W*) and in *ways of thinking (principles and values, T)* are the differences between the groups statistically significant in the answers to the two questions. In the first domain, although both Sub-Saharan immigrants and natives believe that they have “assimilated” Spanish customs, the immigrants have opted for this strategy more intensely than it is perceived by the natives.

Table 2

Two-sample test (SA versus SI groups) of acculturation strategies by domains, real plane

Real plane	Areas	Groups	N	Mean	Stand. dev.	t	d.f.
Maintains	Work	SA	339	2.60	1.07	3.53***	680
		SI	343	2.29	1.15		
	Economics (consume habits and family economy)	SA	336	2.91	1.05	2.89**	656.4
		SI	341	2.69	0.90		
	Social relations and friendship	SA	382	4.38	0.73	0.44	722
		SI	342	4.35	0.66		
	Family relations	SA	341	3.72	1.03	3.22**	678.9
		SI	341	3.46	1.07		
	Religious beliefs and customs	SA	352	4.08	0.98	5.75***	691
		SI	341	3.66	0.92		
Ways of thinking: principles and values	SA	346	3.95	1.01	8.51***	684	
	SI	340	3.33	0.87			
Adopts	Work	SA	365	3.42	1.03	-15.94***	653.97
		SI	343	4.49	0.72		
	Economics (consume habits and family economy)	SA	352	3.00	0.94	-1.86	693
		SI	343	3.13	0.92		
	Social relations and friendship	SA	382	2.67	0.85	1.43	723
		SI	343	2.58	0.89		
	Family relations	SA	340	2.29	0.95	0.23	679
		SI	341	2.27	1.07		
	Religious beliefs and customs	SA	354	1.76	0.93	-0.77	689
		SI	337	1.82	0.98		
	Ways of thinking: principles and values	SA	348	2.13	0.99	-6.33***	688
		SI	342	2.59	0.91		

Response scale: 1(nothing) to 5 (very much); ** $p < 0.005$; *** $p < 0.001$.

The analysis of percentages confirms these differences. Thus 49% of the Sub-Saharan immigrants assure that they have opted for “assimilation” at work, but only 25% of the natives perceive it as such. In the *ways of thinking (principles and values)* domain, the natives perceive the Sub-Saharan immigrants as more “separate” than they say they are (51% versus 22%, respectively). It is important to point out that in both domains, results are similar to comparison of Maghrebi immigrants-natives who evaluated them (MI and MA). Finally, the Sub-Saharans assured that they had “assimilated” Spanish customs in their consumption habits and family economy (*economic* domain, E) while the natives did not perceive a clear strategy. In the rest of the domains—*family* (F), *social* (S) and *religious beliefs and customs* (R)—the analysis of the means shows that strategies perceived by the natives and adopted by the immigrants of this group coincide (“separation”), and that there were no significant differences between them. However, the frequency distribution in some these domains shows a tendency similar to that found in the comparison between Maghrebis and the natives who evaluated them, that is, an overestimation by the natives as to the degree to which the Sub-Saharan immigrants maintain their original customs without adopting Spanish customs (“separation”). Specifically, this is the case in the *family*

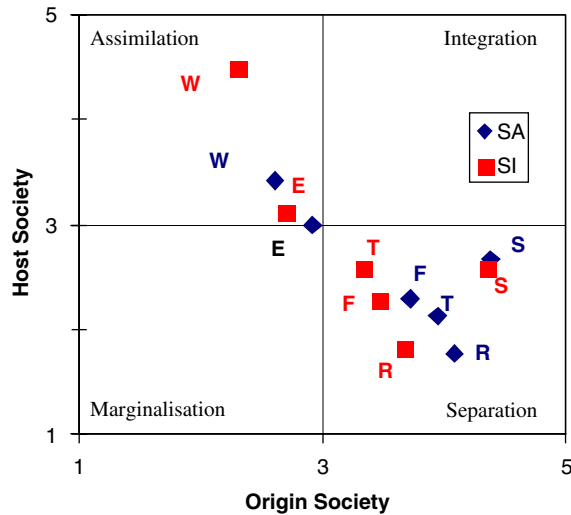


Fig. 2. Acculturation strategies by domain (real plane). SA and SI groups. W, work; E, economic; S, social relations and friendship; F, family relations; R, religious beliefs and customs; T, ways of thinking: principles and values.

domain (42% of natives *versus* 33% of immigrants), in *religious* domain (64% *versus* 48%, respectively) and as already mentioned, in *ways of thinking*.

3.2. Acculturation attitudes: ideal plane

3.2.1. Maghrebis and the natives who evaluated them

The differences in means between Maghrebi immigrants and the natives who evaluated them on the *ideal plane* are statistically significant for questions in all the domains, except *labour or work* (W) and *political system and government* (P), in which the differences were only in the first question (to maintain original customs). In these two domains, one and another group prefer “assimilation”, but the Maghrebis wanted to maintain the customs of their country of origin more in the first (*work*, W), and less in the second (*political*, P), in comparison to what the natives would like for them (or what they perceive they want, in the case of the *political* domain). These results can be seen in Table 3 and in Fig. 3.

In general, the Maghrebi immigrants prefer to maintain only their original customs and not adopt Spanish customs (“separation”), in their family relations (*family* domain, F), in their *religious beliefs and customs* (R) and in their *ways of thinking* (*principles and values*, T). However, the natives prefer just the opposite for this group in all those domains (“assimilation”), except for *religious*, in which there does not seem to be a clear option.

There is also a preference of the natives for “assimilation” in the *economic* domain (E) in which the immigrants prefer “integration”. Finally, in the *social* domain (S), the option in both groups is the same (“integration”), although more intense in the natives (who prefer them to maintain more friendships with their home country and adopt the host society more, in comparison with what the immigrants themselves want, and who find themselves closer to “separation”).

The analyses of percentages confirm each of these tendencies in each domain, so they need no further comment. It may therefore be said that results back up Hypotheses 2 and 3.

Table 3
Two-sample test (MA versus MI groups) of acculturation attitudes by domains, ideal plane

Ideal plane	Areas	Groups	N	Mean	Stand. dev.	t	d.f.
Would like to maintain	Political system and government	MA	390	2.48	1.16	4.18***	770.71
		MI	394	2.15	1.04		
	Work	MA	340	2.41	1.12	-2.18*	725.65
		MI	388	2.60	1.31		
	Economics (consume habits and family economy)	MA	342	2.83	1.12	-5.22***	732
		MI	392	3.27	1.11		
	Social relations and friendship	MA	368	4.11	0.76	5.28***	752.11
		MI	397	3.79	0.93		
	Family relations	MA	359	2.74	1.27	-16.42***	653.11
		MI	385	4.09	0.93		
	Religious beliefs and customs	MA	360	2.90	1.30	-13.13***	726.20
		MI	390	4.09	1.18		
	Ways of thinking: principles and values	MA	360	2.69	1.21	-11.45***	719.20
		MI	375	3.67	1.10		
Would like to adopt	Political system and government	MA	390	3.32	1.16	-1.52	752.64
		MI	392	3.44	0.96		
	Work	MA	362	4.03	0.89	0.76	750
		MI	390	3.98	0.86		
	Economics (consume habits and family economy)	MA	350	3.54	0.97	2.29*	737
		MI	389	3.37	1.01		
	Social relations and friendship	MA	370	3.76	1.03	6.05***	765
		MI	397	3.33	0.92		
	Family relations	MA	361	3.76	1.03	11.53***	732
		MI	373	2.85	1.12		
	Religious beliefs and customs	MA	353	2.96	1.35	13.81***	701.56
		MI	380	1.67	1.18		
	Ways of thinking: principles and values	MA	364	3.60	1.14	9.27***	714
		MI	352	2.82	1.12		

Response scale: 1(nothing) to 5 (very much); * $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$.

3.3. Sub-Saharanans and the natives who evaluated them

As seen in Fig. 4 (see also Table 4), in the case of the Sub-Saharan immigrants and the sample of natives who evaluate them, the differences in means are statistically significant in both questions in all the acculturation domains considered, except the *economic*, in the question on maintaining the customs of their home country (both groups wish to maintain those customs to a similar degree).

We therefore find that there are differences in the acculturation option preferred in three domains. In the *family* domain (F), the Sub-Saharanans immigrants would prefer to keep only their originally customs that is, “be separate”, and the natives would prefer an intermediate option between “assimilation” and “integration”. In the *religious beliefs and customs* domain (R), the natives have no clear preference and the immigrants want to be

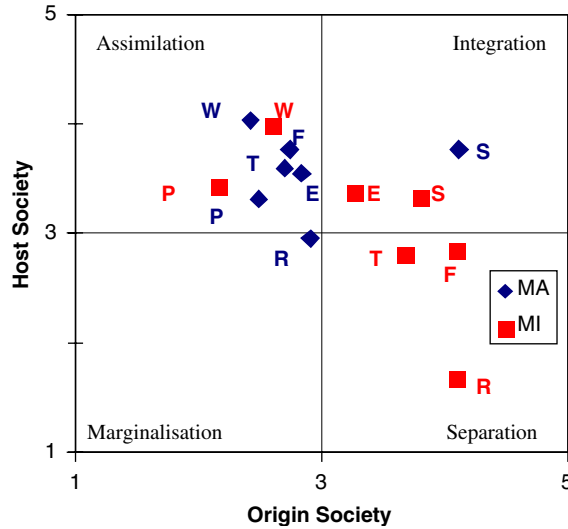


Fig. 3. Acculturation attitudes by domain (ideal plane). MA and MI groups. P, political system and government; W, work; E, economic; S, social relations and friendship; F, family relations; R, religious beliefs and customs; T, ways of thinking: principles and values.

“separated” And, in *ways of thinking (principles and values)* domain (T), the natives would prefer “assimilation” and the immigrants want just the opposite, “separation”.

In the *labour or work* domain (W), although both groups choose “assimilation” as the preferable option, curiously, the natives want the Sub-Saharanans to maintain their own customs and adopt the Spanish customs to a lesser extent than the immigrants themselves. In so far as social relations (*social domain, S*), both groups prefer “integration”, but the immigrants value conservation of relationships and friendships in their home country and less in the host country more than the natives. Finally, with regard to *political system and government* (P), the option in both cases is the same (“assimilation”), although the Sub-Saharan immigrants opt more intensely for it than what the natives believe.

The frequency distribution, as was the case with the Maghrebis, confirms these general tendencies in each domain, so no further comment is necessary. Therefore, Hypotheses 2 and 3 are also backed by results for the group of Sub-Saharan immigrants.

4. Discussion

Before attempting to offer an explanation for the results described above, they are given in schematic form in Table 5, which shows the average attitude preferred and strategy adopted (means analysis) for each group of immigrants (Groups MI and SI) and natives that evaluate them (Groups MA and SA) by domain, on the real and ideal planes.

According to the RAEM, as we rise from the more peripheral areas (*work, economic*), to the more central, ideological or symbolic (e.g., *religious beliefs and customs, ways of thinking—principles and values—*), *acculturation strategies* (real plane) adopted by immigrants would also go through “integration” or “assimilation” to a clear “separation” (Hypothesis 1). The results obtained in our study confirm these predictions, both for the

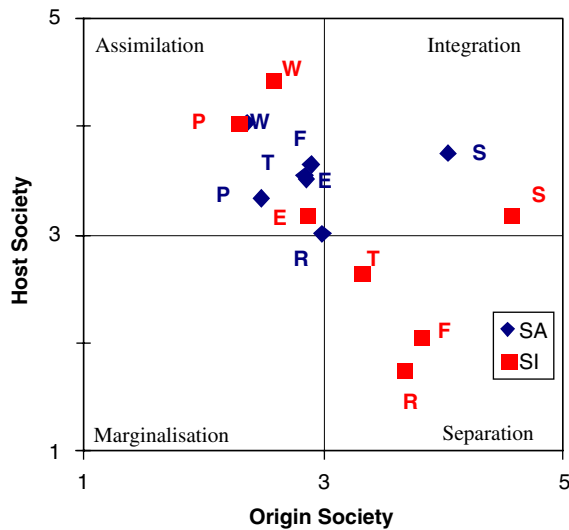


Fig. 4. Acculturation attitudes by domain (ideal plane). SA and SI groups. P, political system and government; W, work; E, economic; S, social relations and friendship; F, family relations; R, religious beliefs and customs; T, ways of thinking: principles and values.

two groups of immigrants surveyed and for the two native samples that were evaluated (about which we had no specific hypothesis). As we have seen, both groups of immigrants say they have rejected (at least in the practice) their own customs at work and in their consumption habits and family economy (*labour* and *economic* domains) and “assimilated” our culture (the Maghrebis even reject adoption of host society customs in the *economic* domain, putting a “marginalisation” strategy in practice there too). However, in the domains that form the hard core of their culture (*social, family, religious and ways of thinking*), the strategy adopted is one of “separation”.

The same thing occurs in our samples of natives with regard to the acculturation strategies perceived in the immigrants, showing that they have a rather good perception of what the Maghrebis and Sub-Saharanans say they do: the natives perceive that the immigrants opt for “assimilation” strategies in the peripheral domains (*politics, work, economics*), and “separation” in the core domains (*social, family, religious, and ways of thinking*). The only exception to this pattern of results is in the *economic* domain where the natives perceive that the Maghrebis opt for “marginalisation” (while the Maghrebi immigrants themselves say, along with that option, to have been “assimilated”), and do not perceive a specific strategy for the Sub-Saharanans (who say they have opted for “assimilation”).

Our results also generally confirm the predictions for *acculturation attitudes* (ideal plane), found by the RAEM. In the first place, we found that in both groups of immigrants, “integration” only appears as a desired option in the domain of *social* relations (more intensely in the Maghrebis), and in the *economic* domain only in the Maghrebi group. In the second place, the options desired by the immigrants vary as we move inward through the domains (Hypothesis 2), just as was the case with the strategies put into practice (Hypothesis 1). “Assimilation” is the option desired by both groups of

Table 4
Two-sample test (SA versus SI Groups) of acculturation attitudes by domains, ideal plane

Ideal plane	Areas	Groups	<i>N</i>	Mean	Stand. dev.	<i>t</i>	d.f.
Would like to maintain	Political system and government	SA	367	2.48	1.15	2.17*	708
		SI	343	2.29	1.20		
	Work	SA	336	2.36	1.07	-2.70**	676
		SI	342	2.58	1.06		
	Economics (consume habits and family economy)	SA	314	2.85	1.00	-0.09	633.80
		SI	343	2.86	0.90		
	Social relations and friendship	SA	362	4.05	0.74	-9.63***	703
		SI	343	4.57	0.69		
	Family relations	SA	331	2.90	1.16	-11.2***	638.97
		SI	342	3.82	0.95		
	Religious beliefs and customs	SA	324	2.99	1.20	-8.10***	614.51
		SI	339	3.68	0.95		
	Ways of thinking: principles and values	SA	336	2.86	1.18	-5.69***	611.57
		SI	335	3.31	0.86		
Would like to adopt	Political system and government	SA	370	3.34	1.15	-8.90***	694.23
		SI	343	4.03	0.91		
	Work	SA	346	4.03	0.81	-6.83***	686.22
		SI	343	4.44	0.77		
	Economics (consume habits and family economy)	SA	330	3.54	0.94	4.75***	669
		SI	341	3.19	0.97		
	Social relations and friendship	SA	362	3.75	0.94	7.95***	703
		SI	343	3.18	0.95		
	Family relations	SA	333	3.64	1.05	20.47***	660.95
		SI	340	2.06	0.95		
	Religious beliefs and customs	SA	323	3.01	1.30	14.88***	606.98
		SI	341	1.74	0.95		
	Ways of thinking: principles and values	SA	338	3.52	1.06	11.88***	642.20
		SI	336	2.65	0.84		

Response scale: 1(nothing) to 5 (very much); * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

immigrants in the *political* and *work* domains (and in the *economic* for the Sub-Saharan). In the rest of the domains, those which make up the “hard core” of the culture, the option preferred is “separation”, although the Maghrebis opt for it with greater intensity than the Sub-Saharan in *family relations* and in *ways of thinking (principles and values)*.

The options preferred by the natives for the immigrants (Hypothesis 3) are limited to “integration” in the domain of *social relations* and “assimilation” in the rest (the exception is in *religious beliefs and customs*, about which there is no clear preference by the natives for any of the immigrant groups, probably because of the difficulty of comparing religions which are in principle quite different).

Therefore, according to the RAEM (and Hypothesis 3), our results show that the options preferred by the native population are very close to those desired by the immigrants in the more peripheral domains (e.g., *work* and *economics*, “assimilation”). However the two groups (natives and immigrants) are quite distant in the rest of the

Table 5
Summary of acculturation strategies and attitudes by domains by groups

Domains	Real plane (acculturation strategies)			
	MI Group	MA Group	SI Group	SA Group
Political system and government	Assimilation	—	Assimilation	—
Work	Assimilation	Assimilation	Assimilation	Assimilation
Economics (consume habits and family economy)	Assimilation/marginalisation	Marginalisation	Assimilation	No specific
Social relations and friendship	Separation	Separation	Separation	Separation
Family relations	Separation	Separation	Separation	Separation
Religious beliefs and customs	Separation	Separation	Separation	Separation
Ways of thinking: principles and values	Separation	Separation	Separation	Separation
	Ideal plane (acculturation attitudes)			
	MI Group	MA Group	SI Group	SA Group
Political system and government	Assimilation	—	Assimilation	—
Work	Assimilation	Assimilation	Assimilation	Assimilation
Economics (consume habits and family economy)	Integration	Assimilation	Assimilation	Assimilation
Social relations and friendship	Integration	Integration	Integration	Integration
Family relations	Separation	Assimilation	Separation	Assimilation/integration
Religious beliefs and customs	Separation	No specific	Separation	No specific
Ways of thinking: principles and values	Separation	Assimilation	Separation	Assimilation

domains, in which attitudes of “assimilation” or “integration” predominate in the natives, *versus* “separation” preferred by the immigrants. The only exception to this pattern of results is in the *social* domain, in which both groups (natives and immigrants) prefer “integration” (although to different degrees, as we have pointed out). Our interpretation of these results is that immigrants try to adjust to the permanent demands the native society makes on them to adopt mainstream customs and reject their own (“assimilation”). However, they do so only in those areas in which it is necessary to survive (e.g., *political* and *work*), and where their identity is not compromised. However, in the central or private areas, the rejection of their own culture is extremely difficult, although the host society may continue to demand it.

It may therefore be said that the native-immigrant comparison shows very little difference on the *real plane*, since the natives have a rather good perception of the strategies immigrants say they put into practice in almost all of the areas (especially for the Sub-Saharanans). Nonetheless, there are many differences in the preferences of both contact groups on the *ideal plane*, specifically in the areas of the “hard core” of the culture (e.g., *family*, *religious* and *ways of thinking*). The existence of these wide differences between immigrants and natives in such central areas of life as the family, religion or principles and values that guide the way we face the world, can at least potentially lead to significant

intergroup conflict. This should be kept in mind when planning intervention to improve intergroup relationships in a social context such as this, where the volume and social importance migratory movements have acquired is already very obvious. However, it must also be pointed out that the coincidence between natives and immigrants—although with different intensity in each case—in the options desired in some areas (e.g., *work, economic, political* and, especially, *social*), open a road to consensus that must be made use of and strengthened by governments in order to make harmonious life together possible among the different contact groups.

Contrary to our predictions (Hypothesis 4), the *ethnocultural origin* of the immigrants does not seem to be a sufficiently important variable, at least in this study, to produce a change in dominant acculturation strategies and attitudes, either in those of the immigrants themselves, or those of the natives when referring to them. There seems to be a general tendency among the natives to a better perception of the Sub-Saharanans than the Maghrebis, and to make fewer demands on them to reject their own culture. This tendency is also reflected in the results of another series of variables considered in the study (e.g., intra-group bias, blatant and subtle prejudice, perceived cultural enrichment, intra-inter-group similarity perceived or tension perceived between the two groups). Due to lack of space, these variables and their results are not included in this paper (e.g., Navas et al., 2004; Rojas, García, & Navas, 2003).

The results of this work in the various different acculturation domains may seem incoherent with those of other studies in which a general preference for “integration” has been found among immigrants of different origins (e.g., Nesdale, 2002; Roccas et al., 2000; Sam, 1995; van Oudenhoven & Eisses, 1998), or even with the general attitude of acculturation of the immigrants who participated in this same study—especially the Maghrebis—(e.g., Navas et al., *in press*). However, in our opinion, the general and specific results for immigrant acculturation options are not necessarily contradictory. In this case they rather demonstrate, confirming the predictions of the RAEM, that the division into domains of acculturation provides a richer, more precise perspective of the way in which immigrants face their own acculturation process, compared to the classical models (e.g., Berry et al., 1989). There are two reasons for this. First, the results make it clear that the acculturation process, as predicted by the RAEM, is *complex* and *relative*, because it may be different in each domain the strategy adopted/perceived or the attitude preferred. Second, the general preference for “integration” need not be reflected by a preference for that option in each of the spheres of life considered. That is, the immigrants may find different ways of shaping a general acculturation attitude, “assimilating” in some domains, while seeking “integration” in others.

The concept of “integration”, in the sense of “acquire and maintain”, participating while remaining as they are, may take different forms. This could be transferred to each domain, and “integration” chosen in each. But in fact, (and here is where the RAEM is of interest) they “adopt quite a lot and keep only a little” in some domains and “acquire only a little and keep quite a lot” in others. Both acculturation options are, in principle, compatible with “integration”, although it is not perceived as such by the samples of natives in the study. It must be kept in mind that the native participants clearly prefer “assimilation” of African immigrants in all the domains of the RAEM, except for *social* relations. This result conditions and probably biases what they understand by “integration” of the immigrants, which would translate into convergence with what the host society desires in each domain. It could therefore be concluded that for the natives to

perceive a general attitude of “integration” by the African immigrants, they would have to choose it (or “assimilation”) in each of the domains. In contrast, for the immigrants, the process of “adopting and maintaining” is carried out with different intensities depending on the domain, without this meaning a lack of desire to “integrate”.

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