



Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM): New contributions with regard to the study of acculturation

Marisol Navas*, María C. García, Juan Sánchez,
Antonio J. Rojas, Pablo Pumares, Juan S. Fernández

*Departamento de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales. Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación.
Universidad de Almería. Almería, 04120, Spain*

Abstract

The worldwide volume and social relevance of migratory processes justify the need to study the psychological acculturation of the host and immigrant populations through a model adapted to the social context in which they develop. Therefore, the main objective of this article is to carry out a review of some of the existing acculturation models (e.g., Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki. (1989). *Applied Psychology*, 38, 185–206; Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal. (1997). *International Journal of Psychology*, 32(6), 269–386; Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, & Obdržálek. (2000). *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 24, 1–26), ending up with a proposal for a Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM). This theoretical framework gathers some elements from previous models and adds some new ones in order to offer new explanations for the acculturation strategies and attitudes preferred by both the native and immigrant populations. The most relevant contributions of the RAEM can be summarised as, on the one hand, the consideration of different acculturation domains (political, work, economic, family, social, religion and ways of thinking) and on the other, the differentiation between the acculturation strategies adopted in reality and the acculturation attitudes ideally preferred by the groups in contact. This model also takes into account the

*Corresponding author. Tel.: 34 950 015015; fax: 34 950 015420.
E-mail address: msnavas@ual.es (M. Navas).

ethnocultural origin of immigrants and some variables predicting and modulating their acculturation strategies and attitudes.

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1. Introduction

Immigration has become one of the most outstanding global phenomena of present times. It poses the question of multicultural societies and the challenge to adequately incorporate these new groups into the host society. Western societies are very concerned about how to deal with it, as reflected in such commonly used, although frequently inaccurately, terms as “integration”, “interculturality” and “multiculturalism”.

Researchers therefore have the responsibility not only of defining these concepts and making them operative, but also of generating instruments that provide a deeper knowledge of reality and facilitate more accurate action. Based on these ideas, the main purpose of this article is to bring a new perspective to the study of the acculturation process that takes place between host population and immigrant groups, underlining the need to take into consideration a wide range of aspects, not just cultural, but also economic, legal, geographical and psychological.

2. The acculturation concept

The acculturation concept started to be used by American social anthropologists towards the end of the 19th century. Its wide application to the study of social changes and cultural contacts between different communities (e.g., peasants, native communities, etc.) prompted the magazine *American Anthropologist* to publish a memorandum on the study of acculturation in the 1930s (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). One of the earliest definitions of acculturation as a process came precisely from these authors, for whom acculturation comprises “*those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups*” (1936, p.149). Redfield et al. became the point of reference for later works in the 20th century and was incorporated in the UNESCO dictionary-thesaurus as the official definition of acculturation.

In the mid 1970s, the Canadian psychologist Berry and his colleagues (Berry & Annis, 1974; Berry, Kalin, & Taylor, 1977) began to take an interest in the acculturation phenomenon and, after much research in the field of Transcultural Psychology, formulated an Acculturation Model (Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989; Berry, 1990). The research developed from this model around the psychological acculturation process has focused on three elements: acculturation

attitudes, or the way in which immigrants wish to maintain their own identity, and at the same time, relate to the other groups in the host society; the precise changes in behaviour or ways of life in the new society; and, finally, the stress caused by acculturation, i.e., the level of difficulty experienced by individuals in confronting their new situation. Conceptual analysis of the acculturation attitudes shown in Berry's model has had and still has enormous influence on theory and research in this field, not only in North America, but also in Europe.

For this reason, this study focuses on acculturation attitudes. A revision of Berry's model in the light of contributions made by other authors (e.g. Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997; Piontkowski & Florack, 1995; Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker, & Obdržálek, 2000; Piontkowski, Rohman, & Florack, 2002) is the starting point of this article, from which a proposal for a Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM) is made.

3. The Berry acculturation model: acculturation attitudes

As Sabatier and Berry (1996) pointed out, acculturation has traditionally been regarded as a progressive adaptation in which people disassociate themselves from their group of origin to join the dominant host society. Orientation towards the group of origin or towards the host society are, according to this perspective, at opposite ends of the same continuum. Gordon's One-dimensional Assimilation Model is centred along these lines (Gordon, 1964). It states that, immigrants' attitudes over time move on a continuum which goes from maintaining their own cultural traits to the adoption of the host society culture, with biculturalism in the middle. According to this model, to be successful in the host society, immigrants must necessarily become assimilated, meaning that adaptation problems encountered by them in this process are due to their inability to become assimilated in the host society. It then follows that contact indicators with the host society and the adoption of its values have been the adaptation measures traditionally used (see Nguyen, Messé, & Stollak, 1999 for a review of different measurement approaches).

However, research has shown that adaptation is not linear. Berry was the first to affirm that the degree to which immigrants identify with the host culture and the degree to which they maintain their own cultural heritage must be measured independently as two separate dimensions, rather than two ends of a continuum. In his conceptual framework of acculturation attitudes, Berry proposed two independent attitudinal dimensions, whether immigrants consider their cultural identity and customs sufficiently valuable to maintain them within the host society and whether the relationships with other people or groups in the host society are valuable enough to be sought after and encouraged. Crossing the answers to both dimensions (Yes or No) produces a classic model where the four possible acculturation attitudes adopted by immigrants are shown: "integration" (Yes/Yes), "assimilation" (No/Yes), "separation" (Yes/No) and marginalisation (No/No).

The research carried out around Berry et al.'s (1989) model, mainly in Canada, but also in other countries with different ethnic groups, sufficiently supports their

premises (see Berry et al., 1989; Krishnan & Berry, 1992; Sabatier & Berry, 1996; Berry & Sam, 1997, for a summary). In general, these studies show that practically all groups prefer the “integration” option, and that the option they least desire is “marginalisation” (for example, Oriol, 1985; Campani & Catani, 1985; Neto, 1993, 2002; Partridge, 1988; Roccas, Horenczyk, & Schwartz, 2000; Sam, 1995; van Oudenhoven & Eisses, 1998). However, each ethnic group, for reasons inherent to their culture, and above all, because of the historical and social conditions of their own immigration, adopt or prefer different acculturation options (e.g., “assimilation” or “separation”). Likewise, within each group of immigrants there are different dispositions, that is to say, intergroup variations, related to various psychosocial indicators, which influence acculturation strategies (see Krishnan & Berry, 1992, for a review of the main body of research on this subject).

4. Contributions to Berry’s acculturation model

Starting out with Berry’s model, some researchers have tried to expand its principles by introducing other relevant variables that could influence the preference of the immigrants and also of host populations for any acculturation option. Although such contributions have been numerous, two of them have been especially useful in presenting this study as they convincingly combine most of these variables: the Interactive Acculturation Model by Bourhis et al. (1997) and the work of Piontkowski and cols., (Piontkowski & Florack, 1995; Piontkowski et al., 2000; Piontkowski et al., 2002).

The *Interactive Acculturation Model* by Bourhis et al. (1997) is intended to be a theoretical psychosocial frame for the study of intergroup relations and ethnolinguistic identity. This model, also devised in a Canadian context, has the advantage over Berry’s of taking into account not just the perspective of the immigrant group, but also that of the host society with regard to new incoming groups, because the two perspectives are to a great extent interdependent. This line of thought has been followed by other authors, such as Horenczyk (1996), Berry and Phinney who coordinated a recent study (“International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth”) carried out in 14 countries (see Phinney, 2003, for a summary of results).

As other authors have also pointed out (Berry, 1990; Lambert, Moghaddam, Sorin, & Sorin, 1990; Sabatier & Berry, 1996) Bourhis’ model states that both immigrant and host population orientations depend on the ethnocultural origin of the immigrants. On the one hand, it has been shown that the native population usually prefers different acculturation options depending on the origin of the immigrant group in question, and also depending on the political, demographic and socioeconomic circumstances of the host country. On the other hand, different immigrant groups also adopt different strategies depending on various factors such as their origin, social class, age, gender or degree of identification with the in-group. Furthermore, strategies can change from the first generation to the second, and depend on the upward or downward social mobility experienced in the host country.

Another result of this model is the so called *clusters of state ideologies* that can influence immigrant integration policies, i.e., different ideologies and immigration policies, as forerunners of the acculturation strategies adopted by individuals, and the different types of immigrant and host society acculturation orientations, which involve different types of intergroup relationships. These relationships, depending on the acculturation strategy chosen by each, can range from consensual to conflictive, with problematic relationships in the middle.

On the other hand, Piontkowski et al. (Piontkowski & Florack, 1995; Piontkowski et al., 2000; Piontkowski et al., 2002) have made an initial attempt to combine elements from the Berry and Bourhis models discussed above in a European context. The concept of acculturation and the four-acculturation strategy model are patterned on the first. On the second, the interactive perspective of the acculturation process—in which subordinate and dominant groups influence each other—the idea that immigrant acculturation attitudes are not independent of those they find in the host country, and the relevance given to the acculturation attitudes of the dominant group, and their relations—consensual, problematic and conflictive—depending on whether their acculturation attitudes coincide.

Moreover, these authors introduce some psychosocial variables as dominant and subordinate group acculturation attitude predictors, which is an important innovation in the acculturation models proposed to date. Examples of these variables are in-group bias, perceived in-group/out-group similarity, perceived cultural enrichment and permeability of the group boundaries.

Piontkowski et al. add another important aspect by using samples of three different dominant groups and from three subordinate groups, in different countries—Germany, Switzerland and Slovakia. This permits comparison of the acculturation strategies chosen by diverse groups and in varied contexts. In fact, results obtained show important differences in those terms, confirming the relevance of acculturation studies in different societies and ethnic groups. Thus, although the strategy favoured by all groups is “integration”, Piontkowski et al. found that the preference for the rest of the options varies according to the binomial dominant-subordinate group under scrutiny. For example, Germans make a distinction between Turks and Yugoslavs and they are more inclined to integrate the second group than the first one. Likewise, Yugoslavs prefer “integration” more than Turks, who favour “separation”. Thus, it appears that, in agreement with Sabatier and Berry (1996), analysis of different cultural groups in different countries and regions clarifies psychological theories on acculturation.

5. New contributions to the study of acculturation: RAEM

Studies carried out in this field in Spain have focused on very specific aspects (see, for example, Páez & González, 1996; Azurmendi & Bourhis, 1998; Azurmendi, Bourhis, Ros, & García, 1998; Martínez, García, & Maya, 1999, 2001, 2003; Martínez, García, Maya, Rodríguez, & Checa, 1996; Navas, Rueda, & Gómez-Berrocal, 1997; Navas & Gómez-Berrocal, 2001). Therefore, the wide spectrum of

variables influencing the acculturation process has not been taken into account even though acculturation models are used. In order to fill these gaps, our research group has constructed an acculturation model (*Relative Acculturation Extended Model, RAEM*) which seeks, on one hand, to build on contributions from the models and authors mentioned above, while on the other hand, incorporating new aspects arising out of studies carried out by our research group. The RAEM has been applied to Almería, a province in southeast Spain with an 8% foreign population, for two immigrant groups: North-Africans and Sub-Saharan, or Black-Africans.

RAEM contributions in this area can be summarised in five fundamental points, of which the last two constitute, in our view, innovations in the study of the acculturation process. Thus, the *first point* is the joint consideration of the acculturation strategies of the immigrant group and of the native population, since it is the confluence of both groups' strategies which can lead to, according to Bourhis et al. (1997), a consensual, problematic or conflictive intergroup relationship. Secondly, the differentiation of various immigrant groups by ethnocultural origin. In the third place, a number of psychosocial variables already suggested by Piontkowski & Florack (1995) and Bourhis et al. (1997), along with some that are new,¹ and several behaviour indicators² to check their predictive ability and modulating influence on the acculturation attitudes of immigrants and natives. These variables are supplemented by some sociodemographic data (e.g., age, gender, education level, religious and political orientation, reasons for immigrating, duration of stay in our country, etc.).

In the *fourth place*, the RAEM makes a distinction between acculturation attitudes preferred by both populations and the strategies finally adopted, that is to say, the step from an *ideal situation* to a *real* one in the acculturation process. Finally, in *fifth place*, the consideration of various domains of sociocultural reality in which there may be different acculturation strategies and attitudes is proposed. Since these last two aspects are innovations with regard to previous models, they are dealt with in detail below.

With regard to the fourth contribution, the RAEM makes a distinction between the ideal and real situation in the acculturation process for both the immigrant and for the native population. An ideal situation for immigrants consists of the acculturation attitudes of this group, in other words, the option they would choose if they could. For the native population, this ideal plane is defined by the position they would like immigrants to take, that is, the acculturation options the members of the host society would like to see adopted by immigrant groups that come into it. On the other hand, the real situation would be, in the case of immigrants, those acculturation strategies that immigrants say to have put into practice. As far as the natives are concerned, it means their perception of the acculturation strategies that immigrants put into practice (see Fig. 1).

¹For example, in-group bias, perceived cultural enrichment, in-group identification, perceived in-group and out-group similarity, inter-group contact, prejudice towards the out-group, perceived group vitality, individualism–collectivism orientation, permeability of group boundaries, etc.

²For example, linguistic practices, use of the communication media, association membership, political participation, etc., are supposed to be related to the acculturation strategies.

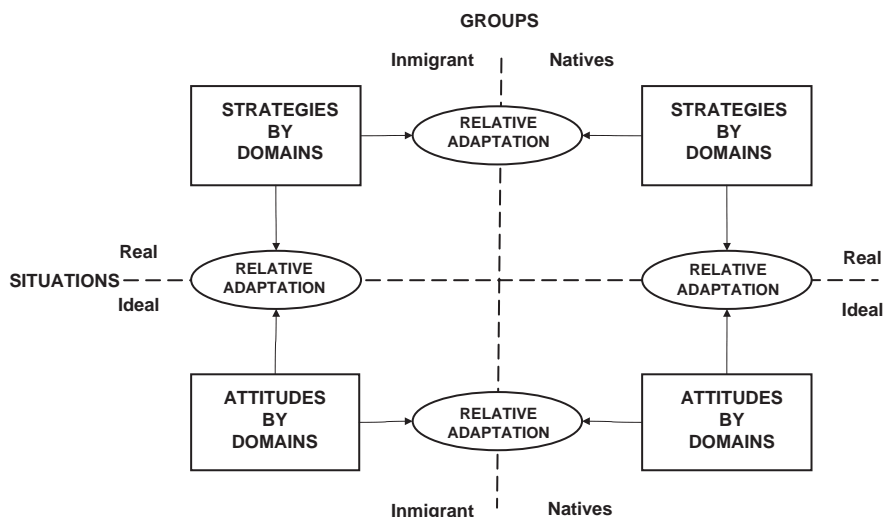


Fig. 1. Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM).

However, in the RAEM there is no one single acculturation strategy or attitude. The adaptation process is *complex* (different options can be preferred and adopted at the same time) and *relative*, since the same strategies are not always used or the same options preferred when the interaction with other cultures takes place in different domains (i.e., work, family relationships, religious beliefs and customs). In light of this, the sociocultural space has been subdivided into different domains within which different acculturation strategies and attitudes can be chosen.

In fact, this idea is not new, since the majority of authors who have studied the acculturation process have acknowledged the importance of dividing the general acculturation context into different domains, within which individuals can choose different acculturation strategies.³ The novelty of the RAEM is that they are placed in the centre of the matrix, as a key element to understanding how immigrants adapt to the new environment and how the native population perceives this adaptation.

Taking as a point of reference the division established by Leunda (1996), the RAEM considers *seven secondary areas or domains* that go from those closest to nature and to material elements, to the furthest, like the symbolic, ideological or religious representation of the world.

The first domain is *political and government system*, which organises the power relationships and establishes, at least formally, social order. The second—*labour or work*—refers to the job (i.e., occupation, tools and machinery used, work schedule,

³Berry (1990) underline that certain culture and behaviour domains can be altered without comparable changes in other domains. Moreover, Horenczyk (1996) points out that individuals tend to adopt different acculturation options in different situations, and suggests that the acculturation strategy of a minority group individual can be better described as a compound profile rather than as a single choice. Berry and Sam (1997) also state that, although there is usually a general preference for a particular acculturation strategy, it may vary according to the domain.

etc.). The third area is *economic*, sharing goods produced, economic transactions and consumer habits (e.g., items purchased, money spent and saved, ways of managing income, etc.). The fourth domain is the *family* and refers to biological reproduction and cultural transmission of behaviour guidelines and values (e.g., marital relationships, with their children, etc.). The fifth domain is *social*, formed by the social relationships and networks maintained outside the family, fundamentally friendships. The sixth domain is *ideological*—the representation of the world which takes an ideological, philosophical or religious form. However, this model has two further subdivisions in this domain: *religious beliefs and customs* and *ways of thinking, principles and values*. As in every system, the different areas are closely interrelated, in such a way that any modification in the content of one brings about changes in the rest of them. This means that the adaptation strategies in them may not be uniform either. On the contrary, in some cases a person will follow the patterns of their heritage culture and in others will open up to the novelties and contributions of the host society culture.

Leunda (1996) proposes a system of relationships between cultures in contact, according to which there is, on the one hand, the heritage culture of the immigrant group and, on the other, the culture of the host society. The encounter between the two cultures leads immigrants to finally undergo an adaptation process from one culture to the other in each of the seven domains mentioned above: political, work, economic, family, social, ideological (religious beliefs and customs, and ways of thinking, principles and values) (see Fig. 2).

This scheme is supported in general by predictions and results of other authors who distinguish between the “hard core” and the “periphery” of the culture of origin (Schnapper, 1988), or between their zones of private and public action (Berry & Sam, 1997), with the heritage more strongly maintained in the former than in the latter. According to this scheme, the different cultures transmit specific morals, a system of

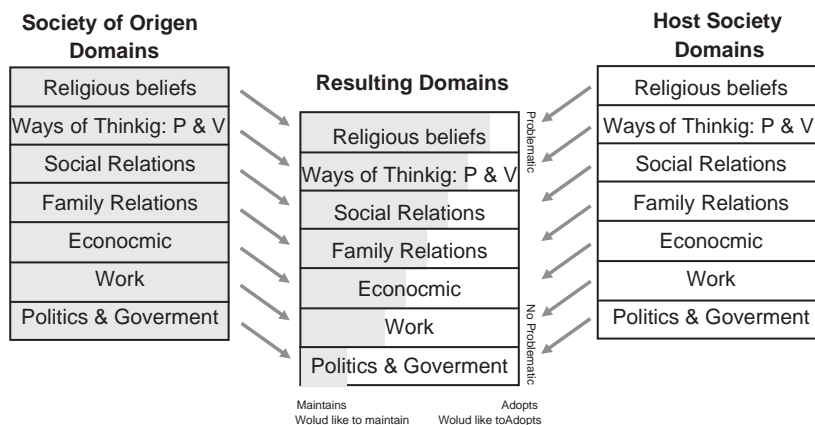


Fig. 2. Acculturation process of immigrants as relative adaptation between the origin society and host society in different domains.

values which affects behaviour directly, especially with regard to social and family situations—marriage rules, concept of honour, relations between the sexes, etc.. These constitute the “hard core” of this culture, which is very difficult to change even after years in the new society. However, other aspects of life, such as work or consumerism—located on the “periphery” of the culture—may not be directly linked to the concept of sexual or family roles, allowing for a dichotomy between work and family life or between public and private life, which is where the most traditional concepts are basically preserved. In view of this, Horenczyk (1996) states that an individual from a minority group can adopt, for example, a “separation” strategy with regard to choosing a spouse, “assimilation” in dress codes and “integration” with regard to food or to celebrating holidays.

Following these theories, the RAEM maintains that the acculturation process could be identified with a *selective or relative adaptation*, where each individual devises his own cultural synthesis accepting or rejecting elements from both cultures. In this sense, according to Leunda (1996) and Schnapper (1988), elements from the material or instrumental areas (e.g., work, economic) would be expected to be adopted more readily whilst there is a grater tendency to preserve symbolic or ideological elements (religious beliefs and customs, ways of thinking, principles and values) of their cultural heritage. This hypothesis can also be applied to the host society. The sociocultural system of the host society is also questioned when it is confronted by the values, representations of reality and customs of the immigrant groups and, consequently, the sensitivity towards immigrant acculturation strategies is different depending on the domain at issue.

Summarising, it will be easier to resolve the contradictions arising from the interaction of cultures in certain, basically more material, domains, and there will be greater resistance to overcoming the differences arising in the intermediate domains, particularly the family. Finally, contents that refer to the representation of the world, of life, of religion and values, will be those in which adaptation will prove more problematic and synthesis or change will be more difficult. In any case, it is clear that any modification of the content of a cultural system, even at basic levels, is bound to have repercussions on the whole, requiring a global readaptation of the person or group that can be in any of various directions. The host society will also adapt, although differently, as their acculturation preferences or attitudes towards immigrants vary depending on the different domains and on the ethnocultural origin of the immigrants.

6. Indicators of the acculturation domains

Different procedures have been used to measure acculturation (e.g., single indices, the one-dimensional, bipolar approach based on the assimilationist perspective, two-dimensional approaches; see, for example, Nguyen, Messé, & Stollak, 1999, for a critical summary; and also Ward, 2001 for a review of measurement issues). Frequently, scales or tests are used to obtain an individual psychological measure of acculturation. These scales sometimes include items that seek to cover psychological

acculturation domains (e.g., attitudes, behaviours, values, etc.). Scores obtained indicate placement in one of the four options of Berry's matrix (see, for example, Donna & Berry, 1994; Ward & Kennedy, 1994 or Felix-Ortiz, Newcomb, & Myers, 1994).

Our research group has created several indicators for approaching empirical measurement of theoretical contributions. Although these indicators, like those above, are two-dimensional, their aim is not to construct an instrument to measure individual psychological acculturation, but measure group acculturation by each of the domains in the RAEM.

Due to space limitations, in this article only those indicators used for native and immigrant populations with regard to both the acculturation strategies perceived by the host population and put into practice by the immigrants (real situation) and the acculturation attitudes preferred by the two populations (ideal situation) are shown. This is examined in each of the seven domains or spheres in the model (see Appendix).

The indicator of native population perception of immigrant acculturation strategies (real situation) is obtained by combining the score on two questions. The first asks *"to what extent you believe that immigrants maintain their original culture"* in each of the specified areas or domains. The second is *"to what extent you believe that immigrants have adopted the host culture"* in each of the domains. The indicator of native acculturation attitudes towards immigrants (ideal situation), is obtained by combining the score from two questions which are similar to the above. The first asks *"to what extent you would like immigrants to keep their original culture"* in each of the specified domains. The second asks *"to what extent you would like immigrants to adopt the host culture"* in each of the specified domains.

The indicator of immigrant acculturation strategies (real situation) is obtained by crossing the scores from two more questions. The first is *"to what extent you maintain your original culture"* in each of the specified domains. In the second they indicate *"to what extent you have adopted the host culture"* in each of the spheres. The immigrant acculturation attitudes indicator (ideal situation) is obtained by crossing the score from two questions similar to the above. The first one is *"to what extent you would like to maintain your original culture"* in each of the areas and the second is *"to what extent you would like to adopt the host culture"* in each of the specified domains.

The answer to each question is on a scale of from 1 to 5 (*"not at all"*, *"a little"*, *"somewhat"*, *"quite"*, *"a lot"*). Combining the answers to these questions two-by-two leads us to a four option matrix similar to the one proposed by Berry et al. (1989). Those scores lower than three in both questions would thus indicate an acculturation strategy and/or attitude of *"marginalisation/exclusion"*. If the group score (immigrant or native) is higher than three in the first question and lower in the second, the preferred acculturation strategy and/or attitude is *"separation/segregation"*. If the group score is lower than three in the first question and higher than three in the second, the acculturation strategy and/or attitude would be *"assimilation"*. Finally, if the group score in both questions is over three, the acculturation strategy and/or attitude preferred would be *"integration"* (see Fig. 3).

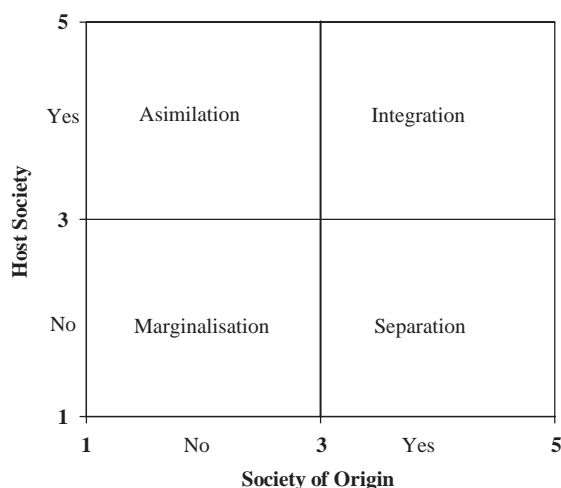


Fig. 3. Acculturation strategies and/or attitudes from the starting point of the indicators devised.

7. Some RAEM predictions concerning the acculturation process

The basis of the RAEM is that the acculturation context affects the majority group as much as the minority group, although the control and influence that can be exerted on “the other” are not the same and so the pressures and demands for acquiring the positions of the other culture are not equal. Therefore, the acculturation strategies adopted and attitudes preferred by immigrants and by the host population vary in many respects, which must be assigned relative weight in terms of the host society and immigrant group power. The more powerful a society is, the fewer changes and compromises its members are forced to make as a consequence of their relations with other cultures. Conversely, it could be said that less powerful minorities will have to make a greater effort to adapt, and make greater cultural changes and compromises. However, both, the minority and the majority are affected by this acculturation context and will have to modify their own system as a result of the interaction.

Immigrants do not adopt just one adaptation strategy in the host country. The adaptation process is *complex and relative*. That is, although there may be a predominant option, various strategies may be adopted depending on several factors, most especially the precise areas or domains of the sociocultural system (e.g., work, economic, family, social, etc.), the socioeconomic reality in which immigrants live and the adaptation attitudes and strategies of other groups present in the social context, specially those of the host society they interact with. Hence the dialectic conception of the acculturation process proposed by our model.

The same strategies are not applied in all of the domains, and interaction with other cultures in the workplace is not the same as when it affects the complex world

of religious experience or family relationships. Thus immigrants would be expected to develop behaviour appropriate for “integrating” or even “assimilating” in the more materialistic domains (e.g., work and economic), while as they shift to more symbolic or ideological domains (e.g. religious beliefs and customs, ways of thinking, principles and values) their behaviour patterns approach “separation”. That is why adaptation is relative or selective depending on the domain at issue and that is why this term is included in the title of this model.

In view of this, the adaptation options preferred by the host population would be expected to be very close to those favoured by the immigrants in the more materialistic domains (e.g. work and economic), where “assimilation” or “integration” attitudes will prevail. Conversely, differences between the groups will increase in the rest of the spheres (family, social and ideological), where the immigrants tend to prefer the “separation” option while the host society would like them to “assimilate” or “integrate”. The greater the disparity between the options preferred by the host population and those desired by the immigrants, the greater the potential risk of conflict will be, both individual or intergroup. Conversely, the more the expectations and desires of both groups coincide, the more possibilities of agreement and of satisfactory adaptation open to both populations. Thus, both groups would agree in the most peripheral domains, while the greatest conflicts will predictably occur as more ideological or central domains are reached.

According to our hypotheses, the desired choice (ideal situation) will not always coincide with the strategies adopted by individuals or groups (real situation). Evidently, the greater the disparity between the desired options and those that can actually be realised by the immigrants, the greater the frustration and conflict that could occur. Again, our prediction is that this will take place especially in the more symbolic domains, the “hard core” or “private domain” (family, religious beliefs and ways of thinking).

On the other hand, the process of adapting to the new society responds to a reality that is subjected to a continuous dynamism in which immigrants change their attitudes diachronically, in terms of their own evolution, as a consequence of their interaction with both their society of origin and the host society. Thus, their original attitudes and strategies may change in different directions over time with experience or as they acquire knowledge, depending on the positive or negative evaluation of those experiences. Such changes can also take place in individuals of the host society.

Finally, differences in acculturation strategies and attitudes would be expected between the different immigrant groups studied and also in the host population towards them. In other words, the ethnocultural origin of the immigrants will influence the ideal options and implementation of different acculturation strategies. The host population itself will also perceive the various immigrant groups in a different way (depending on prejudice, cultural distance, socioeconomic level, etc.) and would prefer different options for each of them. We would therefore expect a greater discrepancy between how North-African immigrants are perceived by the host population and what they would actually like to see happen compared to the Sub-Saharan (or Black-Africans) and the new arrivals (Eastern Europeans and

Latin Americans). This leads us to assume that there will be a greater demand for “assimilation” for this group compared to the others and greater conflict with them is understandable.

We cannot end this article without referring, however briefly, to the fact that the strategies put into practice (or perceived to be) as well as the acculturation attitudes preferred by both populations in contact with one another, will be influenced by a number of psychosocial and sociodemographic variables, which are taken into consideration in the RAEM. Analyses of these variables are underway. It is also important to point out that from the complex framework of the variables studied in the RAEM (real and ideal situations; acculturation domains; predicting psychosocial and modulating variables; behaviour indicators and sociodemographic variables), both in the native population and in the different immigrant groups, we hope to achieve an accurate evaluation of the intergroup relationships and of the acculturation process which is taking place in our social context. We trust that this evaluation will lead to a series of practical implications that will enable orientation of the political action necessary to ensure a peaceful and satisfactory life for all the groups in contact with one another.

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Appendix. Indicators of acculturation domains

Host population, real situation: perception of the acculturation strategies of immigrants

To what extent do you think immigrants (...) maintain at present the customs they observed in their country of origin in relation to the following domains?

To what extent do you think immigrants (...) have adopted the customs of this country, in relation to the following domains?

With regard to social relationships and friendships,

Immigrants, real situation: acculturation strategies

To what extent do you maintain at present the customs you used to observe in your country of origin, in relation to the following domains?

To what degree have you adopted the customs of this country, in relation to the following domains?

With regard to social relationships and friendships,

To what extent do you think immigrants (...) mix with people from their countries of origin?

To what extent do you think immigrants (...) mix with people from this country?

As to the political and government system (way in which governments are elected, make political decisions, distribution of wealth and power, justice, sanitary assistance, access to education and housing)

To what extent do you think immigrants (...) prefer the political system of their country of origin?

To what extent do you think immigrants (...) prefer that of this country?

Host population, ideal situation: acculturation attitudes towards immigrants

We have spoken previously about what you think of some aspects of immigrants' life...Please think now of how you would like things to be. If you had a choice:

To what extent would you like immigrants (...) to maintain the customs of their country of origin, in relation to the following domains?

To what extent would you like immigrants (...) to adopt this country's customs in the following domains?

With regard to social relationships and friendships,

To what extent would you like immigrants (...) to mix with people from their countries of origin?

To what extent do you mix at present with people from your country of origin?

To what extent do you mix at present with people from this country?

Immigrants, ideal situation: acculturation attitudes

We have spoken before of the changes that have taken place in your life since you came here. Please think of how you would like things to be. If you had a choice:

To what degree would you like to maintain the customs of your country of origin, in relation to the following domains?

With reference to social relationships and friendships,

To what degree would you mix with people from your country of origin?

To what degree would you mix with people from this country?

As to the political and government system (way in which governments are elected, make political decisions, distribution of wealth and power, justice, sanitary assistance, access to education and housing)

To what extent would you keep your country's political/government system?

To what extent would you adopt the one in this country?

To what extent would you like
immigrants (...) to mix with people from
this country?

The domains referred to in the first two questions in both situations (real and ideal) are the following:

- Work (type of work carried out, tools and machinery they use and work timetable)
- Consumer habits and family economy (items they buy, money they spend, money they save)
- Family relationships (relationships between spouses, with their sons, with their daughters and upbringing of their sons and daughters)
- Religious beliefs and customs
- Ways of thinking, principles and values

The response format to all questions ranges from 1 to 5 (“not at all”, “a little”, “somewhat”, “quite”, “a lot”).

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