

# An evaluation of opinions concerning immigration and multiculturalism in the School for Teacher Training

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** During the past academic year in Spain, more than 500,000 immigrant students were enrolled in primary and secondary schools. School is one of those places available to society for creating spaces for coexistence and for changing attitudes. The teacher plays a very important role in this task. In this paper we will observe opinions and attitudes of future teachers regarding immigration, and particularly immigration at school.

**Method.** In order to analyze these attitudes, we have developed two instruments: the scale of attitudes towards immigration and the scale of attitudes towards multiculturalism at school. In order to analyze the psychometric characteristics of these scales we worked with 300 students in Teacher Training at the Universities of Extremadura (Spain) and of Évora (Portugal). For data analysis related to this work we selected 200 students at the University of Extremadura.

**Results.** Both attitude scales have very acceptable psychometric characteristics. There were significant differences in the factor “Negative Social Distance” associated with the variables for type of degree program and for knowledge of, or lack of knowledge of, an immigrant group. There are significant correlations between the total scores and scale factors.

**Discussion.** For an explanation of differences associated with type of degree program, one must look into academic and preparatory criteria, and even consider the entrance profile which differentiates students in one degree program from another. Students unfamiliar with an immigrant group maintain more negative attitudes. This fact agrees with research which considers positive contact with immigrants and having immigrant friends as factors that reduce perceived threat and reduce prejudice and discrimination. The most negative perception towards immigrants is found toward North Africans, as opposed to Latin Americans, thus confirming prior research. Finally, significant correlations between the two scales and their factors confirm the need for future teachers, during their time at university, to be made aware of the importance of their beliefs towards immigration and how these will influence a multicultural classroom.

**Keywords:** Assessment, attitudes towards immigration, immigrants, teachers.

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## Introduction

Population migration from one geographic area to another due to economic, social, political and other motives has been a constant in human history. In recent years, Spain has gone from being a nation of emigrants to a country which receives immigrants. In 1914, at the beginning of World War I, a total of three million Spaniards emigrated, 80% to the Americas, and during the decades of the 50s, 60s and 70s, nearly two million emigrated to European countries. At this time, according to data from the National Institute of Statistics (2006), our nation is home to more than 3,700,000 immigrants, and according to a study drawn up by the *Cajas de Ahorros* Foundation (2003), in little more than six years this figure will reach 11,000,000, meaning that one of every four residents will be an immigrant.

During the 2006-2007 academic year, according to data from the Ministry of Education and Culture, approximately 550,000 immigrant students were enrolled in primary and secondary schools in Spain. Family reunification processes are among the reasons that have prompted a notable increase in the number of students in our classrooms who have different national origins, languages and cultures (Navarro & Huguet, 2006). More than 7.4% of students in Spanish schools are foreigners, with higher percentages in the regions of Madrid, Balearic Islands, Navarra, la Rioja, Murcia, Canary Islands, Valencia, Catalonia and Aragon. In our own region of Extremadura, during the past school year, there were 2.9% immigrant students in Early Childhood Education, another 3.3% in primary school and 2.3% in compulsory secondary education (*Estadística Educativa*, 2006). 60% of these are immigrants from Africa, particularly from Morocco.

The racial and ethnic variety seen in our society and in our schools, where we find diversity of interests, needs, styles and cultures, can be a source of new opportunities and social enrichment, both for the native population as well as for the immigrant population. Nonetheless, this contact between native and immigrant students is not free of problems and drawbacks. Contact will often be influenced by traditional stereotypes: “they’re coming to take away our jobs”, “take take advantage of our social benefits”, “they threaten our cultural identity”, “immigrants are delinquents”, and so forth. These stereotypes lead directly to prejudice and discrimination. For Fernández Enguita (2003), the rapid expansion of immigration and its exposure in the media give rise to less favorable opinions, including outright opposition. In Spain, surveys by Calvo Buezas (2003), administered to secondary and university students,

show a rise in rejection toward immigrants. Thus, for example, in 1997, 50.5% of school children are opposed to the idea of marrying a North African immigrant. In 1998 this rose to 54.7%.

School is one of those settings where attitudes toward different social groups begin to form, and at the same time it represents our main opportunity as a society for creating spaces for coexistence and for changing attitudes. Teachers play a very important role in this task, because their thoughts and attitudes take explicit shape in their teaching activity and in their expectations. Teacher expectations with regard to their students' present and future achievements, abilities and behavior are inferred; these may be generalized or may refer to individual students. It is normal for expectations to form part of human interactions, and thus to be present in education; without these it would be impossible to set down a curriculum plan and its sequencing, or to select the most suitable activities for students. As we can see, this resource is fundamental in task planning: if a teacher wants to set down plans regarding objectives for the school year, he or she must anticipate what skills the students are going to acquire during this period (Fernández-Castillo, 2005).

In summary, the teacher's perception and concept of students is a determining factor in the educational process; in other words, the success of immigrant students' integration will depend especially on the teacher's performance, and the latter will be highly influenced by his or her attitudes. For this reason we consider it important to not only understand native pupils' attitudes toward immigrants, but also teacher attitudes toward immigration—and more so as a considerable rise in prejudice in the Spanish society is being observed in the research (Ovejero, 2004; Repetto, Pena, Mudarra & Uribarri, 2007).

Allport (1962) indicated that attitude is probably the most distinctive and essential concept in Social Psychology. This reasoning is entirely probable if we consider that the object of study in psychology is behavior, and behavior relates strongly to attitudes. Attitude is a learned tendency or psychology disposition which is expressed through a favorable or unfavorable evaluation; it is the product of and summary of all the subject's experiences. Authors such as Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and Hovland and Rosenberg (1960) conceive of attitudes with a three-component structure: cognitive, affective and behavioral. There is wide consensus in considering attitude as a unitary system made up of three factors, though perhaps Breckler (1984) is the one who has provided the most evidence on the existence of the three-

component model of attitudes: cognitive, made up of beliefs, ideas, thoughts, as well as their expression or manifestation; affective, made up of feelings, moods and emotions associated with the target of the attitude; and conative-behavioral, made up of tendencies and dispositions as well as behaviors themselves. For Rodríguez and Retortillo (2006), cultural transmission processes act on the cognitive component, emotions that prompt the individual appear in the affective component, and the behavioral component is a consequence of the former two.

As for ethnic prejudice, the cognitive component (stereotype) is made up of ideas, cognitions, and beliefs laden with negative evaluation. The affective component (prejudice) involves negative feelings or emotions, or an absence of positive ones, with respect to the outgroup (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). We can understand the cause-effect relationships that are established between different components from different theoretical positions. The classic position (Duckitt, 1992) defends that the stereotype (negative beliefs) leads to feeling negative emotions toward the minority, and from there, to discriminative behaviors. The position of authors like Kinder and Sears (1981), McConahay, Hardee and Batts (1981) give greater importance to the affective component (prejudice), which is learned at a very early age. Along these lines, Brown (1995) understands prejudice not only as a belief which bears a cognitive component, but also bearing emotional and attitudinal components.

The first step to understanding these attitudes is to have the right evaluation tools. Two main methods were employed in this study for evaluating prejudice, the classic one represented by the U.S. tradition (Oskamp, 1991) which makes combined use of scales for social distance, equality principles and policies for implementing these principles. The European method, represented by Pettigrew and Meerteens (1995), McConahay, Hardee and Batts (1981) attempts to measure subtle prejudice. A democratic society supposedly inhibits open expression of racism toward other groups; however, it does not rule out coexistence of tolerance together with other half-way attitudes which, while not rejecting the out-group, do not favor it either. This subtle prejudice—modern, symbolic racism—takes shape in three components: defense of traditional values, exaggeration of cultural differences and denying positive emotions toward the out-group. The questionnaires designed from the latter position include one scale which aims to evaluate this lesser expression of positive emotions toward members of other racial groups.

We constructed two attitude scales for the more traditional, open form of prejudice, although we added some items aimed at evaluating subtle and symbolic prejudice. Our purpose with this project was to get to know the opinions and attitudes of future teachers—students in the Teacher Training Program—regarding immigration at school. Using a sample of *students* is based on the underlying idea that it is during training that attitudes can be changed, and especially that sensitivation programs can be designed, allowing the future teacher to approach the topic of immigration from a developmental, awareness-raising perspective. This is a prerequisite to being able to apply educational and pedagogical innovations which help fight against exclusion, favor integration, and adapt education to the diversity of the students.

## **Method**

### *Participants*

In order to analyze the psychometric characteristics of the scales, we worked with 300 Teacher Training students from different specializations and at different levels in their degree program at the Universities of Extremadura and of Évora; this paper is part of broader research where the attitudes of Spanish and Portuguese students toward immigration are compared. For data analysis related to this study we selected 179 students from the University of Extremadura (Spain). The selection system was random and stratified. First, four teacher training degree programs were selected randomly, then one year of the program was selected from each of these, and finally, the students themselves were selected. Some of the sample characteristics are as follows: 78% women, 22% men; 52% between the ages of 18-20 years, 31% in the 21-23 year interval, and 17% were over 24 years of age. 30% were studying Early Childhood Education, 31% Foreign Language Education, 20% General Primary Education and 19% in Music Education. Lastly, 40% of participants claim not to know any immigrant group, 39% know North African immigrants, 17% know Latin American immigrants and 4% know immigrants from Eastern Europe.

### *Instruments*

We constructed two instruments: the Scale of Attitudes toward Immigration and the Scale of Attitudes towards Multiculturalism at School. The two scales, with 32 and 8 items respectively, are presented in Likert format with intervals from 1 to 5, representing the con-

tinuum from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. We have attempted for the items to adequately cover the most relevant content from the domain which these scales seek to address. We also took into account properties which different authors have postulated as suitable for constructing attitude scales (Melía, 1991). As recommended by Morales (1988), we introduced inverted items in order to avoid answers being biased by the desire to give a good image, thus increasing discriminatory capacity in both scales.

### *Design*

This paper can be qualified as being descriptive, exploratory and analytical. It is a descriptive and exploratory study because it studies and describes the characteristics, properties and relationships found in the reality under study: the evaluation of attitudes toward immigration in a sample of future teachers. On the other hand, it is analytical because it compares variables between groups, we are interested in determining whether there are differences in attitudes evaluated based on participants’ sex, age, degree program, knowledge or lack of knowledge of immigrants, etc. We have opted for a quantitative method, since this guarantees precision in results.

### *Statistical Analysis*

#### *Regarding the study of psychometric characteristics of instruments*

In order to describe the items, central tendency and dispersion statistics were used. In order to calculate internal consistency of the questionnaire and its scales, a Cronbach alpha was carried out. In order to verify construct validity, factorial analysis was used, the extraction of main components method, and Varimax rotation with Kaiser. Finally, in order to verify stability in time (test-retest reliability), we calculated the Pearson correlation index.

#### *Regarding differential and correlational analysis*

Descriptive analyses were performed as well as contrast testing between scores, using parametric tests: Student’s t and one-factor ANOVA. Student’s t allows us to compare the mean scores from the scales and their factors in two groups: male and female, those who know some immigrant group vs. those who do not, etc. One-factor ANOVA is an extension of the t-test for comparing several groups, such as different years in school or different degree

programs. In order to establish correlations between scores on the scales, the Pearson correlation test was used.

## Results

### *Psychometric analysis of the scales*

The Scale of Attitudes toward Immigration: this instrument, applied to the students, was made up of thirty-two items. Following in the line of work by Moreno and Durán (2002) and Reboloso, Fernández, Pozo, Hernández and Reboloso (1998), we constructed a questionnaire to measure the following: social favorability, social distance and equality principles. In Table I, we can observe some psychometric characteristics of this scale. Internal consistency of the questionnaire is measured through Cronbach's Alpha index, which is 0.900, very acceptable.

In order to control external sources of error in the questionnaire, and therefore, to determine if the scores are stable over time, we performed a test-retest study over an interval of five weeks and a sample of 35 students. Correlation between the scores was 0.789  $p < 0.001$ .

Finally, in order to calculate construct validity of the instrument, a factorial analysis was performed with all the subjects. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sample suitability gives a value of 0.855. Given that the sum of the coefficients of partial correlations squared among variables is very small, KMO is an index very near the unit ( $0.90 \leq KMO \leq 1.0$ ); thus, suitability for carrying out the factorial analysis is excellent.

The Bartlett test was used to verify whether the correlations matrix was an identity matrix, that is, if all the coefficients with the diagonal are equal to the unit and the diagonal extremes are equal to 0. The larger this statistic, and therefore the lesser its degree of significance, the more unlikely it is that the matrix is an identity matrix. In our situation, Bartlett's sphericity test was significant (Chi-squared = 4093, d.f.= 496 and  $p=0.000$ ). Both values, KMO and Bartlett, indicate that it is meaningful to perform factorial analysis and that it can provide us with interesting conclusions.

**Table I. Factorial analysis and internal consistency of the Scale of Attitudes toward Immigration, 32 items. (Main components, Varimax normalization with Kaiser)**



Mean	sd.	Instrument items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
2.43	.993	1. Immigrants are hardworking people.				.575	
2.38	.936	2. Immigrants are intolerant.					.630
2.49	.966	3. Immigrants are not trustworthy.					.684
2.35	1.006	4. They are not very intelligent.					.432
2.67	1.070	5. Negative attitudes toward women.					.482
3.08	.823	6. Immigrants are honest people.				.615	
2.13	.983	7. They are irresponsible types.					.474
3.00	.914	8. Immigrants are well-mannered people.				.562	
1.57	1.042	9. I would not go to the swimming pool with immigrants.			.635		
1.37	.818	10. I would not sit next to an immigrant at the cinema.			.510		
1.79	1.115	11. I would not buy from immigrants.			.710		
1.55	.939	12. No friendship with immigrants.			.797		
1.37	.851	13. Live in their own neighborhoods.	.301				
2.98	1.622	14. Immigrant co-worker.		.735			
3.11	1.144	15. I would marry an immigrant.				.556	
3.19	1.112	16. Sexual relations with an immigrant.				.548	
2.92	1.343	17. Immigrant boss.		.844			
2.90	1.437	18. Immigrant physician.		.828			
2.38	1.194	19. Share hospital room with an immigrant.		.735			
2.82	1.428	20. Immigrant neighbors.		.741			
2.40	1.339	21. The same rights for immigrants.	.752				
2.18	1.268	22. Rights to housing.	.786				
2.65	1.363	23. The right to vote in elections.	.719				
1.85	1.058	24. The right to education.	.820				
1.75	1.042	25. Portuguese language instruction for immigrants.	.701				
2.40	1.293	26. The right to move about freely.	.734				
2.80	1.146	27. Receive unemployment benefits.	.584				
2.80	1.140	28. Assistance for starting businesses.	.593				
1.68	.860	29. The right to public health care.	.594				
3.00	1.227	30. Reunification of immigrant families.	.406				
2.43	1.522	31. Discrimination is not a problem.			.601		
2.28	1.432	32. Racists are not a threat.			.512		
			Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
<b>Percentage of variance explained (Total 52.50%)</b>			<b>16.55%</b>	<b>12.65%</b>	<b>8.78%</b>	<b>8.39%</b>	<b>6.13%</b>
<b>Alpha (Total 0.900)</b>			<b>0.881</b>	<b>0.879</b>	<b>0.732</b>	<b>0.729</b>	<b>0.652</b>

As seen in Table I, the data show existence of 5 factors (two more than those initially used for designing the instrument) that explain nearly 60% of the total variance of the scales. The factor extraction model used was that of main components. The objective was to find a series of components which explain the maximum total variance of the original variables. This method is possibly the most widely used and accepted method in educational research (Gavira, 2000). With Kaiser's varimax rotation, we have minimized the number of variables with high weights or saturations in each factor.

We will call the first factor "*Equality principles and policies*"; it explains 16.55% of the variance and refers to equal opportunity principles and policies of implementing egalitar-

ian principles (the right to housing, voting in elections, education, benefits, public aid, choice of jobs, and so on). This shows an internal alpha consistency equal to 0.881.

The second factor “*Positive social distance*” explains 12.65% of the variance and refers to situations of close contact with immigrants (having an immigrant boss, an immigrant physician, immigrant neighbors, etc.) It shows a Cronbach alpha of 0.879.

The third factor “*Negative social distance*” explains 8.78% of the variance and refers to situations that one would not share with immigrants (would not go to the cinema, to the swimming pool if immigrants were there, would not buy from immigrant vendors, etc.) It shows a Cronbach alpha of 0.732.

The fourth factor, which we call “*Positive favorability*”, explains 43.65 % of the variance, and refers to an evaluative dimension referring to trust or the human quality that can be expected when dealing with immigrants (hardworking, honest, well-mannered, etc.). Internal consistency is acceptable, Cronbach alpha is 0.729.

The fifth factor, “*Negative favorability*”, explains 6.13% of the variance and refers to an evaluative dimension regarding negative aspects of immigrants’ character (intolerant, male chauvinists, not trustworthy, etc.) Internal consistency as measured by the Cronbach alpha is 0.652.

The Scale of Attitudes toward Multiculturalism at School: this instrument is made up of eight items. In Table II we can observe some psychometric characteristics of each scale. Internal consistency of the questionnaire, as measured by Cronbach’s alpha, is very acceptable at 0.806.

**Table II. Factorial analysis and internal consistency of the Scale of Attitudes toward Multiculturalism at School, 8 ítems. (Main components, Varimax normalization with Kaiser)**

Mean	sd.	Instrument items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1.90	1.039	1. A multicultural school would be a good thing.		.849	
1.44	.763	2. Immigrants have the right to education.		.837	
1.74	1.010	3. The presence of immigrants is a positive, enriching experience.		.870	
1.73	1.039	4. Immigrants are a negative influence on group performance	.794		
1.54	.958	5. Immigrants are a negative influence on the reputation of the school.	.808		
2.38	1.104	6. Immigrant students are more poorly prepared than the native born.			.944
1.78	1.043	7. Immigrant students make it more difficult to carry out classroom activities.	.750		
1.59	1.023	8. Having immigrant students is a serious problem for schools.	.798		
			Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Percentage of variance explained (Total 73.67%)			32.63%	28.16%	12.88%
Alpha (Total 0.806)			0.824	0.826	

In order to check the questionnaire’s reliability over time, we carried out a test-retest study with an interval of five weeks and a sample of 35 students. Correlation between the scores was 0.840,  $p < 0.001$ .

To calculate construct validity of the instrument, a factorial analysis was performed with all the subjects. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sample suitability offers a value of 0.786. Bartlett’s sphericity test turns out significant (Chi-squared= 850, d.f.= 28 and  $p = 0.000$ ). Both values, KMO and Bartlett, indicate that performing the factorial analysis is meaningful and can provide interesting conclusions. As can be observed in Table II, the data show the existence of 3 factors which explain nearly 75% of the total variance of the scales.

The first factor, which we will call “*Negative perception of multiculturalism at school*” explains 32.63% of the variance and refers to negative consequences of the existence of immigrant pupils in the classroom (Low performance of the group, problems and conflicts, school loss of reputation, etc.) It shows an internal consistency of Alpha equal to 0.881.

The second factor, “*Positive perception of multiculturalism at school*”, explains 28.26% of the variance and refers to positive opinions of immigration in the classroom (ethnic

diversity is a positive experience, enriching, etc.). Internal consistency is Alpha equal to 0.826.

The third factor, composed of a single item, explains 12.88% of the variance, and we call it “*Perception of the immigrant pupil’s aptitude as compared to the native-born*”. This evaluates presence of the opinion that immigrant pupils are more poorly prepared than the native born pupils.

### *Descriptive analysis of scoring on the scales*

Next, Table III presents central tendency and dispersion statistics of participants’ scores obtained on the scales and their factors.

Keeping in mind that prejudice indices on the attitude scale toward immigration range from 32 to 160 (the higher the score the greater the prejudice), indices in our study range from 38 to 119, with a mean of 77.21 and standard deviation of 18.70. The same occurs with the attitude scale toward multiculturalism at school, with a mean of 14.22 and indices that range from 8 to 38. In general, our sample does not present high levels of prejudice, quite the opposite.

**Table III. Descriptive statistics of scoring on the scales and their factors.**

	n	Mean	sd.	Minimum	Maximum
<b>Total Score</b>					
<b>Attitudes toward immigration scale</b>	179	77.21	18.70	38	119
<b>Factor 1: Equal opportunity and egalitarian policies</b>	179	38.42	8.07	17	53
<b>Factor 2: Positive social distance</b>	179	15.63	5.86	5	25
<b>Factor 3: Negative social distance</b>	179	11.18	4.53	6	24
<b>Factor 4: Positive favorability</b>	179	15.00	3.61	5	23
<b>Factor 5: Negative favorability</b>	179	12.32	3.21	5	22
<b>Total Score</b>					
<b>Attitudes toward multiculturalism at school scale</b>	179	14.22	5.51	8	38
<b>Factor 1: Negative perception of multiculturalism</b>	179	13.07	2.44	3	15
<b>Factor 2: Positive perception of multiculturalism</b>	179	6.88	3.54	4	20
<b>Factor 3: Poor preparation of immigrant students</b>	179	2.40	1.14	1	5

*Differential analysis of scoring on the scales*

We did not find significant differences with regard to the variables age, sex or participant's year in school. As for the degree program variable, after submitting the data to an ANOVA test, we found significant differences in the "Negative social distance" factor from the Scale of Attitudes toward Immigration (see Table IV).

**Table IV. Results of the ANOVA test. Scale of attitudes toward immigration. Degree Program Variable. (N=179)**

	Degree Program	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F	Sig. (bilateral)
<b>Total score for the Scale</b>	ECE	55	75.11	18.36	2.253	0.084
	For. Lang's	56	74.48	20.92		
	Gen. Primary	36	83.94	14.76		
	Music Ed	32	78.03	17.96		
<b>Equal opportunity and egalitarian policies</b>	ECE	55	39.07	8.21	0.437	0.727
	For. Lang's	56	38.66	8.41		
	Gen. Primary	36	37.14	8.39		
	Music Ed	32	38.31	6.98		
<b>Positive social distance</b>	ECE	55	15.29	6.04	2.362	0.073
	For. Lang's	56	17.27	5.74		
	Gen. Primary	36	14.36	5.02		
	Music Ed	32	14.78	6.21		
<b>Negative social distance</b>	ECE	55	10.38	4.30	5.168	<b>0.002</b>
	For. Lang's	56	10.18	4.68		
	Gen. Primary	36	13.53	4.33		
	Music Ed	32	11.66	3.97		
<b>Positive favorability</b>	ECE	55	15.31	3.38	0.548	0.650
	For. Lang's	56	14.77	4.18		
	Gen. Primary	36	14.53	2.75		
	Music Ed	32	15.41	3.82		
<b>Negative favorability</b>	ECE	55	11.78	3.45	1.896	0.132
	For. Lang's	56	12.21	3.45		
	Gen. Primary	36	13.39	2.62		
	Music Ed	32	12.25	2.80		

By applying the Bonferroni test (Table V), we discover that these differences are seen between the groups from General Primary Education, Foreign Language Education and Early Childhood Education. Students in General Primary maintain a higher level of distance from immigrants, they tend to avoid contact situations.

**Table V. Bonferroni of the Degree Program as a function of Negative Social Distance (N=179)**

(I) Deg Prog Interval	(J) Deg Prog Interval	Difference of means (I-J)	Typical Error	Sig.	Confidence interval at 95%	
					Lower limit	Upper limit
<b>Early Childhood Education</b>	For. Lang's	0.203	0.831	1.000	-2.0137	2.4202
	Gen. Primary	-3.146*	0.938	<b>0.006</b>	-5.6495	-0.6424
	Music Ed	-1.274	0.973	1.000	-3.8709	1.3220
	ECE	-0.203	0.831	1.000	-2.4202	2.0137
<b>Foreign Languages</b>	Gen. Primary	-3.349	0.935	<b>0.003</b>	-5.8439	-0.8545
	Music Ed	-1.477	0.970	.776	-4.0656	1.1102
	ECE	3.146*	0.938	<b>0.006</b>	.6424	5.6495
<b>Primary Education</b>	For. Lang's	3.349*	0.935	<b>0.003</b>	.8545	5.8439
	Music Ed	1.871	1.063	.481	-.9658	4.7088

\*:  $p < .05$

As for the Scale of Attitudes toward Multiculturalism at School, after applying the ANOVA technique, significant differences were found ( $F=2.870$ , squared sums: 104.705,  $d.f.=3$  and  $Sig.=0.038$ ) between the different degree programs for the factor “*Negative consequences of immigration in the classroom*”. After applying the Bonferroni test, we discovered that the differences ( $Sig.=0.045$ ) were established between students in the Musical Education degree program (Mean=5.75) and those in Foreign Languages (Mean= 7.84), the latter score higher on such issues as immigrant students causing lower performance for the group, problems and conflicts, loss of reputation for the school, etc.

Regarding the variable of knowing some immigrant group or not, Table VI reveals significant differences in the factor “*Negative Social Distance*” on the Scale of Attitudes toward Immigration.

**Table VI. Student's t of the scales as a function of “Knowing a particular group of immigrants or not” (N=179)**

	Variable	n	Mean	Sd.	t	df	Sig. (bilateral)
<b>Total score for the Scale *</b>	Knows	110	75.55	18.42	1.493	141.4	0.138
	Does not know	69	79.85	18.96			
<b>Equal opportunity and egalitarian policies</b>	Knows	110	39.10	7.72	1.430	177	0.154
	Does not know	69	37.33	8.54			
<b>Positive social distance</b>	Knows	110	15.75	6.04	0.328	177	0.743
	Does not know	69	15.45	5.58			
<b>Negative social distance</b>	Knows	110	10.64	4.42	2.042	177	<b>0.043</b>
	Does not know	69	12.04	4.59			

<b>Positive favorability</b>	Knows	110	15.09	3.74	0.425	177	0.672
	Does not know	69	14.85	3.40			
<b>Negative favorability</b>	Knows	110	12.24	3.28	0.460	177	0.646
	Does not know	69	12.46	3.12			

\* Equal variances were not assumed.

Students who do not particularly know or deal with any immigrant group tend not to share situations with immigrants (Would not go to the cinema, to the swimming pool if immigrants were present, would not buy from immigrant vendors, etc.) to a greater degree than those who do know an immigrant group. We did not find significant differences in the Scale of Attitudes toward Multiculturalism at School nor in its factors.

Finally, it seemed interesting to analyze the existence of significant differences due to the variable “most familiar immigrant groups”, in our case Moroccan and Latin American. As can be observed in Table VII, differences were found for the factor “*Equal opportunity and egalitarian policies*” from the Scale of attitudes toward immigration and in the factors “*Negative perception of multiculturalism*” and “*Immigrant pupils more poorly prepared*” from the Scale of attitudes toward multiculturalism at school. In general, students who are more familiar with the Moroccan group have more negative opinions than those who know the Latin American group.

**Table VII. Student’s t of the scales as a function of the most familiar immigrant group (N=97)**

	<b>Variable</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sd.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (bilateral)</b>
<b>Equal opportunity and egalitarian policies</b>	Moroccans	68	38.38	7.87	-2.347	95	<b>0.021</b>
	Latin Americans	29	42.24	6.18			
<b>Positive social distance</b>	Moroccans	68	15.72	6.07	-1.041	95	0.300
	Latin Americans	29	17.14	6.29			
<b>Negative social distance</b>	Moroccans	68	10.79	4.84	.783	77.59	0.436
	Latin Americans	29	10.14	3.23			
<b>Positive favorability</b>	Moroccans	68	14.98	3.74	-1.064	95	0.290
	Latin Americans	29	15.86	3.67			
<b>Negative favorability</b>	Moroccans	68	12.15	3.28	.581	95	0.562
	Latin Americans	29	11.72	3.28			
<b>Positive perception of multiculturalism</b>	Moroccans	68	12.94	2.64	-1.449	95	0.151
	Latin Americans	29	13.72	1.87			
<b>Negative perception of multiculturalism*</b>	Moroccans	68	7.56	3.99	2.281	73.51	<b>0.025</b>
	Latin Americans	29	5.93	2.83			

<b>Poor preparation of immigrant students</b>	Moroccans	68	2.56	1.20			
	Latin Americans	29	1.90	0.98	2.619	95	<b>0.010</b>

\* Equal variances were not assumed.

### *Correlational analysis between scoring on scales and their factors*

We found a correlation of 0.524 ( $p < .001$ ) between scores from both scales. In other words, students with a high level of prejudice toward immigrants also have a negative opinion of immigration at school. Table VIII reflects results from Pearson's correlation test between scores for the factors from both scales.

**Table VIII. Pearson's correlation test of the scale variables.**

Scale of Attitudes toward Immigration	Scale of Attitudes toward Multiculturalism at School		
	Positive perception of Multiculturalism	Negative perception of Multiculturalism	Poor preparation of immigrants
Equal opportunity and equality policies	0.623**	-0.264**	-0.130
Positive social distance	0.217**	-0.067	-0.190*
Negative social distance *	-0.328**	0.319**	0.134
Positive favorability	0.470**	-0.273**	-0.264**
Negative favorability *	-0.322**	0.302**	0.217**

\*\* :  $p < .01$  bilateral; \* :  $p < .05$  bilateral.

As we can observe, there are significant correlations between practically all the scale factors. The tendency prevails that whoever has a positive perception of equal opportunity principles, prefers situations of close contact with immigrants and has a favorable opinion of immigrants' character, also has a positive perception of multiculturalism at school, believing in positive consequences from the presence of immigrant pupils in the classroom. Conversely, whoever avoids situations with immigrants and has a negative perception about their character, holds negative opinions about the presence of immigrants in the classroom and considers that multiculturalism at school brings negative consequences.



## Discussion

The two attitude scales possess very acceptable psychometric characteristics, good internal consistency and reliability over time. Analysis has shown the existence of five factors on the Scale of Attitudes toward Immigration which explain nearly 60% of the variance, and three factors on the Scale of Attitudes toward Multiculturalism at School which explain nearly 75% of the total variance.

Taking into account the prejudice indices on both scales and the means obtained, we can conclude that generally speaking our sample does not show high levels of prejudice. It is logical that a sample made up of students, future teachers, should hold favorable opinions toward immigration and especially toward immigration at school, thus maintaining “politically correct” attitudes. Nonetheless, we are aware of the different methods which have been used for evaluating prejudice, the classical one represented by the U.S. tradition (Oskamp, 1991) which makes combined use of scales of social distance, equality principles and policies on implementing those principles, and the European method, represented by McConahay, Hardee and Batts (1981) and Pettigrew and Meertens (1995), which seeks to measure subtle prejudice. Although we used some items in our scales relating to subtle prejudice, perhaps given the characteristics of the sample (unwillingness to openly express prejudice toward other groups due to greater cognitive control over what is politically correct), we should have included items aimed at evaluating the defense of traditional values, exaggeration of cultural differences and a reduced expression of positive emotions toward members of other racial groups, these being measurements of a more subtle, symbolic prejudice.

We found differences for the factor “*Negative social distance*” from the Scale of Attitudes toward Immigration in relation to the variable “degree program”. Students in Primary Education keep a greater degree of distance from immigrants, tend to avoid contact situations more than do students in Early Childhood Education and Foreign Language Education. On the other hand, students in Foreign Language score higher on such questions as immigrant students causing a lower performance for the group, problems and conflicts, school loss of reputation, than do students in Musical Education. Perhaps the explanation for this fact should be searched for in academic and developmental issues, or even in the profile of such students at the point of enrolling in one degree program vs. another. Nonetheless, we are

aware that one variable which we have not taken into account (percentage of students from different degree programs who do not know immigrant persons or the group that they are most familiar with are North Africans) may be what causes these results.

Regarding the variable “familiar with some group of immigrants or not”, we found significant differences for the factor “*Negative social distance*”. Students unfamiliar with an immigrant group tend to not share situations with immigrants (would not go to the cinema, to the swimming pool if there were immigrants there, would not buy from immigrant vendors, etc.) to a greater degree than students who do know an immigrant group. This fact concurs with research such as that done by Stephan, Boniecki, Ybarra, Bettencourt, Ervin, Jackson, McNatt and Renfro (2002), who consider that positive contact with immigrants and having immigrant friends is a factor which will reduce the perception of threat and decrease prejudice. However, these results go against other theories such as Allport’s (1962): mere superficial contact not only does not improve inter-ethnic relations, but it can worsen them. Allport indicates that coexistence of different racial groups in the same area is complex and potentially conflict-prone. It is undoubtedly a controversial topic which must be investigated further, differentiating between physical-presence contact and personal contact with an immigrant group.

Regarding a more negative perception of immigrants when the reference group is North Africans rather than Latin Americans, this concurs with other research. Undoubtedly the third-world, backward, scarcely-civilized image of North African cultures which comes to us through the media does not help toward having more positive estimations. This group does not have a good image in other nearby countries; for example, studies carried out in France indicate that this is one of the groups which arouse the most negative attitudes: 40% of the French affirm that they feel a certain dislike for North Africans (Sabatier & Berry, 1996). Research carried out in Spain (*Barómetro del CIS*, 2002-2003; Calvo Buezas, 2003 and the Ombudsman’s Report on “Schooling the immigrant child”, 2003) shows that the most negative attitudes are associated with the North African immigrant group. Other studies on stereotypes show that the most rejected group in Spain are the gypsies, followed by the North Africans and then the Sub-Saharan immigrants (Díez-Nicolás & Ramírez, 2001).

Finally, significant correlations found between the two scales and their factors confirm that, in general, those who avoid situations with immigrants and who have a negative percep-

tion of their character hold negative opinions about the presence of immigrants in the classroom and consider that multiculturalism at school brings negative consequences. This fact is of utmost importance in the educational setting, since personal beliefs held by the teacher regarding immigration will affect how they are treated, and therefore, the school performance of immigrant children. Classroom behavior and quality and frequency of teacher-pupil interaction will be determined by the expectations, stereotypes, attitudes, and motivations that the teacher holds with respect to his or her pupils. As Ovejero (1990) affirms, teacher expectations are one of the variables affecting school failure. These issues which fall under the theory of self-fulfilling prophecy (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) are generalized, above all, to school problems related to integration of certain social groups: ethnic and racial minorities and immigrants.

The current multicultural situation in society requires that teachers be prepared to act suitably in multicultural contexts in their professional practice. It has always been said that teachers are the key element in quality education. The case of intercultural education is no different. We can affirm that, as in other educational dimensions involving values, the figure of the teacher becomes the pedagogical instrument *par excellence*. Thus teacher training becomes the key to educational processes characterized by cultural diversity, without forgetting that multicultural education involves all aspects of the functioning of the school.

For Palomero (2006), public authorities, and in particular the University, should train education professionals in Intercultural Pedagogy, including it in study programs for initial teacher training. Currently there are few classroom subjects on “Intercultural Education”, “Multicultural Education” or “Sociocultural Diversity” included in these programs. It is thus necessary to call for inclusion of this Intercultural Pedagogy content in initial teacher training, as well as to promote a type of pedagogical culture. At the beginning of a multicultural training program, we consider development of certain attitudes basic; later, importance should also be given to communication skills, content organization, methodological techniques, and so on. We consider it important for future teachers to be trained in cooperative learning techniques. Lessening of prejudices can be attained, as affirmed by Allport (1962) and Brown (1988), through contacts taking place in conditions of equality and through cooperative pursuit of common goals. Techniques of cooperative learning appear to meet these conditions and would be an essential methodology for improving inter-ethnic relations in the educational setting. Research carried out over the last three decades on the effects of cooperative learning

has consistently found that these techniques improve human relations in groups which are heterogeneous due to inter-ethnic differences (Devries & Edwards, 1974; Slavin, 1978 and Slavin & Cooper, 1999).

In summary, during the future teacher's training period it is necessary to sensitize him or her to the importance of beliefs toward immigration and how these influence student performance and behavior. At the same time, future teachers should be encouraged to evaluate and to be constructively self-critical so as to increase their control over the educational process. Sensitization programs should be designed which allow the future teacher to approach the immigration topic from a developmental, awareness-raising perspective, a prerequisite to being able to apply educational and pedagogical innovations which help fight against exclusion, encourage inclusion and adapt education to student diversity.

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## Scale of attitudes toward immigration

**Below you will find a series of affirmations; please indicate to what extent you are in AGREEMENT: (Check the box that best represents your opinion.)**

	Not at all	Somewhat	Indifferent	Quite a bit	Very much
1. Immigrants are hardworking people.					
2. Generally speaking, immigrants are intolerant.					
3. Immigrants are not trustworthy.					
4. Immigrants are not very intelligent.					
5. Immigrants hold negative attitudes toward women.					
6. Immigrants are honest people.					
7. Immigrants typically are irresponsible types.					
8. Immigrants are well mannered people.					
9. I would not go to the swimming pool if immigrants were there.					
10. It would bother me if the cinema usher seated an immigrant next to me.					
11. I would not buy from traveling immigrant vendors.					
12. I would not form friendship ties with an immigrant.					
13. Immigrants should live in neighborhoods reserved for them.					
14. I wouldn't mind having an immigrant co-worker.					
15. I would marry an immigrant.					
16. I would have sexual relations with an immigrant.					
17. I wouldn't mind having an immigrant boss.					
18. I wouldn't mind if my physician were an immigrant.					
19. I would accept sharing a hospital room with an immigrant.					
20. I wouldn't mind if a group of immigrants were my neighbors.					
21. Immigrants should have the same rights as we do.					
22. Immigrants should have the same rights to housing.					
23. Immigrants who are residents in our country					

should have the right to vote in elections.					
24. The government should guarantee immigrants the right to education.					
25. The State should promote programs for immigrants to learn the Spanish language.					
26. The government should allow immigrants to move about freely.					
27. I agree with a law which allows for receiving unemployment benefits.					
28. I would accept the existence of aid to immigrants for creating their own businesses.					
29. I agree that immigrants should be provided with public health care.					
30. The government should facilitate immigrant family members' coming to Spain.					
31. Discrimination is not a serious problem in our country.					
32. Racist groups are no longer a threat for immigrants.					

### Scale of attitudes toward multiculturalism at school

Below you will find a series of affirmations; please indicate to what extent you are in **AGREEMENT**: (Check the box that best represents your opinion.)

	Not at all	Somewhat	Indifferent	Quite a bit	Very much
1. A multicultural school would be a good thing.					
2. All immigrant students have the right to an education.					
3. Ethnic variety in schools is a positive, enriching experience.					
4. The presence of immigrant students at school is a negative influence on the performance of the group.					
5. The presence of immigrant students at a school is a negative influence on the school's reputation					
6. Immigrant students are more poorly prepared than are the native-born.					
7. The presence of immigrant students at school makes carrying out classroom activities more difficult.					
8. Having immigrant students is a serious problem for schools.					