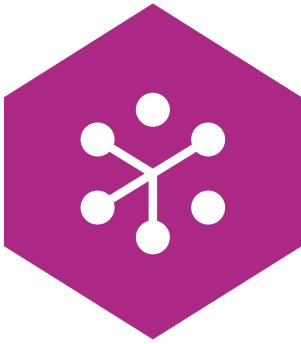




VOLUME 14 ISSUE 2

The International Journal of

Interdisciplinary Social and Community Studies

Social Re-Presentations of Migrants

A Case Study of Social Education Students in a
Multicultural Environment

ADRIÁN SEGURA-ROBLES, MARÍA ANGUSTIAS SÁNCHEZ OJEDA,
MIGUEL ÁNGEL GALLARDO VIGIL, INMACULADA ALEMANY ARREBOLA

EDITOR

Marcin Galent, Jagiellonian University, Poland

ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLISHING

Jeremy Boehme, Common Ground Research Networks, USA

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Megan Donnan, Common Ground Research Networks, USA

ADVISORY BOARD

The Interdisciplinary Social Sciences Research Network recognizes the contribution of many in the evolution of the Research Network. The principal role of the Advisory Board has been, and is, to drive the overall intellectual direction of the Research Network. A full list of members can be found at <https://thesocialsciences.com/about/advisory-board>.

PEER REVIEW

Articles published in *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social and Community Studies* are peer reviewed using a two-way anonymous peer review model. Reviewers are active participants of The Interdisciplinary Social Sciences Research Network or a thematically related Research Network. The publisher, editors, reviewers, and authors all agree upon the following standards of expected ethical behavior, which are based on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Core Practices. More information can be found at: <https://thesocialsciences.com/journals/model>.

ARTICLE SUBMISSION

The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social and Community Studies publishes biannually (June, December). For more about the submission process, please visit <https://thesocialsciences.com/journals/call-for-papers>.

ABSTRACTING AND INDEXING

For a full list of databases in which this journal is indexed, please visit <https://thesocialsciences.com/journals/collection>.

RESEARCH NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

Authors in *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social and Community Studies* are members of the Interdisciplinary Social Sciences Research Network or a thematically related Research Network. Members receive access to journal content. To find out more, visit <https://thesocialsciences.com/about/become-a-member>.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social and Community Studies is available in electronic and print formats. Subscribe to gain access to content from the current year and the entire backlist. Contact us at cgscholar.com/cg_support.

ORDERING

Single articles and issues are available from the journal bookstore at <https://cgscholar.com/bookstore>.

HYBRID OPEN ACCESS

The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social and Community Studies is Hybrid Open Access, meaning authors can choose to make their articles open access. This allows their work to reach an even wider audience, broadening the dissemination of their research. To find out more, please visit <https://thesocialsciences.com/journals/hybrid-open-access>.

DISCLAIMER

The authors, editors, and publisher will not accept any legal responsibility for any errors or omissions that may have been made in this publication. The publisher makes no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein.

**THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
INTERDISCIPLINARY SOCIAL AND
COMMUNITY STUDIES**

<https://thesocialsciences.com>

ISSN: 2324-7576 (Print)

ISSN: 2324-7584 (Online)

<https://doi.org/10.18848/2324-7576/CGP> (Journal)

First published by Common Ground Research Networks in 2019
University of Illinois Research Park
2001 South First Street, Suite 202
Champaign, IL 61820 USA
Ph: +1-217-328-0405
<https://cgnetworks.org>

*The International Journal of Interdisciplinary
Social and Community Studies* is a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal.

COPYRIGHT

© 2019 (individual papers), the author(s)

© 2019 (selection and editorial matter),

Common Ground Research Networks

All rights reserved. Apart from fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism, or review, as permitted under the applicable copyright legislation, no part of this work may be reproduced by any process without written permission from the publisher. For permissions and other inquiries, please contact cgscholar.com/cg_support.



Common Ground Research Networks, a member of Crossref

Social Re-Presentations of Migrants: A Case Study of Social Education Students in a Multicultural Environment

Adrián Segura-Robles,¹ Universidad de Granada–Ceuta, Spain
María Angustias Sánchez Ojeda, Universidad de Granada–Melilla, Spain
Miguel Ángel Gallardo Vigil, Universidad de Granada–Melilla, Spain
Inmaculada Alemany Arrebola, Universidad de Granada–Melilla, Spain

Abstract: For many years, research on social psychology has tried to answer the question of why some people are more prejudiced than others. At present, immigrants are the social targets of major political and economic controversy and debate, which has frequently been the case. The present research aims to offer a comprehensive vision of the social re-presentations of immigrants as formed by the students of the degree in Social Education in a city under intense migratory stress (Autonomous city of Melilla). The methodology was carried out using a qualitative methodology based on semi-structured interviews with the participants. This kind of instrument allows us to know the opinions in-depth of all the participants in the investigation. A total of sixty students were involved in this research. The results indicate that students with an outward-going social profile do not reject immigrants or show negative attitudes toward them. Another aspect to highlight is the efforts made by Spain to serve this population, which, while being acceptable, are not considered sufficient.

Keywords: Migration, Student Attitudes, Undocumented Immigrants, Ethnic Stereotypes

Introduction

Greater social psychology research focus has been given lately to the question of racial prejudices and what produces them and why they occur more in some communities rather than in others. Social psychology of intergroup relationships focuses on the psychological processes of any individual within a like-minded group and how that group interacts with other social groups (Smith-Castro 2011). Some of the main elements studied are prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination. The literature in social psychology has traditionally focused therefore on the factors that combine to define national identity and the possible consequences of the same; that is, the component analysis of identity as a group-bonding factor and the relationship between groups of different identities (Moscato et al. 2014).

When we talk about racist attitudes, we are obliged to remit to concepts such as stereotypes, discrimination, and prejudices. The basic tenets of Social Psychology theory (Eagly and Chaiken 1993) posits a link between racist behavior and the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional dimensions of the individual as an individual and in a shared identity group. We consider stereotypes to belong within the person's cognitive dimension whereas discrimination is behavioral (Bueno Moreno and Garrido Torres 2015). Prejudice corresponds to the emotional dimension of the individual and group, as is underlined in most psychosocial models of intergroup reactions (Rojas et al. 2012).

A search of the available literature on the subject reveals a large number of studies that analyze prejudices between minority ethnic groups and their possible causes (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008; Riek, Mania, and Gaertner 2013) but there is a lack of literature with respect to

¹ Corresponding Author: Adrián Segura Robles, Cortadura del Valle, s/n, Department of Research Methods and Diagnosis in Education, Universidad de Granada, Ceuta, Ceuta, 51001, Spain. email: adrianseg@ugr.es

engrained prejudices in societies where there is permanent and intense contact with migratory flows such as those which occur in the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla. Close contact with “the other” on a day-to-day basis, logically speaking, should reduce prejudices normally considered to be the result of lack of knowledge or information with respect to other groups (Fiske, Gilbert, and Lindzey 2010; Rinken 2016). However, there is evidence that people with strong levels of prejudice tend to avoid any contact whatsoever with others outside their chosen closed social group (Pettigrew et al. 2011).

Likewise, scientific studies in recent years have researched how immigration and multicultural societies affect educational centers and shape a new model of European society (Rojas et al. 2012; Segura-Robles, Alemany-Arrebola, and Gallardo-Vigil 2016). Through immigrants, we understand an ethnic minority from a foreign country who maintain their original cultural and linguistic bonds. Prejudices and stereotypes have been studied from different perspectives and theories. In the former case, prejudices and stereotypes are based on natural processes inherent to human nature whereas in the latter, exception, we are witnessing something anomalous and pathological, both at the individual and the group level, leading to the “other” being rejected (Mula and Navas 2011).

There can be no denying that our society is changing because of migratory fluxes. Most migrants are victims, fleeing from political persecution, wars and extreme deprivation with no other way out but to take recourse by illegal means. In 2015, according to the border policing agency FRONTEX (2016) there was an upsurge of illegal immigrants into Europe. This fell significantly in 2016, not due to improvement of the aggravating circumstances, but rather as a result of the harsh migratory policies established in the “host” European countries. These laws and regulations do nothing to reduce racism, but rather exacerbate xenophobia, stereotyping, and prejudices toward migrants, even giving a boost to extremist right-wing movements in the host countries (Braunthal 2009), more so when the migrant is stripped of their dignity and humanity and merely labelled as “illegal” (Santa Ana 2013). People tend to oscillate between two poles, sociopolitically and culturally; either they defend cultural integrity and territorial rights, rejecting all types of integration that signify in their opinion the loss of “national cultural values,” or they attempt to empathize with the problems of the “other,” promoting true and total integration (Suárez 2015).

There are studies that have analyzed migration from a gender perspective or as depicted in the mass media while others still have focused on the opinions of the migrants themselves, or of the host countries and residents with respect to the political and social changes (Huesmann et al. 2012; Paluck 2009). The present article looks at the situation of the Melilla, that is, a multicultural context under severe migratory pressure and illegal traffic of people to Spain and thence onward to Europe. Melilla is an example of a multicultural context in Africa (Soddu 2002). Most people are Christian or Berber; the rest of the cultural groups cannot be analyzed because of the low number citizens who represent them. There is also a marked increase of Asians in the city. Given its geographic location and the fact that the city belongs to Spain, Melilla represents one of the main accesses to Europe for illegal immigrants (Sánchez-Montijano and Zaragoza 2013).

Migration in Spain

Attitudes and opinions with respect to both legal and illegal immigration tend to be standard in national surveys and statistics, with prime examples such as those published in Spain by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística [National Institute of Statistics]. Most often the surveys are targeted at opinions towards specific social groups, as Duffy and Frere-Smith (2014) have pointed out. Each person has a different “migratory vision” associated to their lifetime experience, their cultural background, and the information that they possess or receive.

People’s perceptions of illegal immigrants in particular have been studied in the past in various parts of the world. One of the countries most affected by illegal immigration is the United States, mainly as a result of the undocumented Mexicans who have managed to get across

the borders illegally (O'Leary, Gómez, and Montoya 2014). This has meant that a large part of the white American population hold prejudices against immigrants in general, regardless of their status (Hartman, Newman, and Scott Bell 2014).

Much of the previously mentioned prejudice is dependent on the type of jobs immigrants are expected to perform. Many people consider that immigrants are only necessary to do the jobs that nobody else wants to do, and only then in times of economic boom, thereby assigning them a low social and economic role in society (Hjarnø 2017). This is the paradox of the “necessary” immigrant (Abad Márquez, Cucó, and Izquierdo Escribano 1993) that triggers a vicious circle. These people are poor and so accept jobs at the bottom of the wage-rung with long antisocial hours, thereby precluding any possibility of climbing up the social scale and finding a quality job. Discrimination produces work insecurity and negative social perception.

Immigrants in Spain tend to be perceived negatively because of their low status job, but also because of their perceived “threat” to the national security and culture. These perceptions do not relate to the economic context, but are permanent whether Spain is in crisis or experiencing an economic boom (Cea D’Ancona 2016). The stereotypes and negative perceptions of immigrants may, both in the short and the long-term, give rise to hostile behavior. The xenophobia index created by Diéz-Nicolás (2009) and validated by Herranz de Rafael and Fernández Prados (2017) is an interesting quantitative measurement that distinguishes between attitudes towards immigration in general, and towards immigrants themselves without further qualitative analysis. Here, we have focused exclusively on the qualitative perspective in order to attain greater depth and flexibility of study while filling the gap in the literature in this respect.

Prejudices, in general, have been studied extensively, above all considering the aspect of what other factors may have a bearing on their intensification. The influence of the written press and media in general on public opinion with respect to the construct and representation of the immigrant population, for example, has been studied extensively, noting that they either fuel or dispel xenophobic attitudes in their audiences depending upon the political ideology of the owners of the press and TV channels (Zapata-Barrero and Dijk 2007), usually by relating immigration to national security (Igartua, Muñiz, and Otero 2006). Immigration is rarely studied by itself, but rather as how it relates to other subjects, thereby obviating a greater reflection on the reality of the situation. For all of these reasons, the present research carried out with Social Education University students on the Melilla Campus of the University of Granada (Spain) focused on immigration from a qualitative perspective designed to give us a greater understanding of people’s attitudes. The very nature of our Degree Program, in our opinion, is designed to dispel negative attitudes through education in social values.

Methods

A traditional positivist approach to immigration, in this case, would not have made sense. The aim of the research was to understand how the students in Social Education construct their representations of illegal immigrants in the city of Melilla, and the social values and meanings they assigned to them. In other words, there was no attempt to produce a general profile of the immigrant construct as viewed by our population of Social Education students, but rather to carry out an in-depth interpretative analysis of the students’ responses.

Recent studies on social representations recommend reconsideration of the utility of data analysis techniques and statistical analysis to pull out links between the collective response and the individual (Clémence, Doise, and Lorenzi-Cioldi 2015), meaning, in short, that we should be capable of analyzing complex phenomena in-depth without merely making recourse to generalizations. Since the aim of the research was descriptive—searching to identify the social representations and attributes of the constructs formed by the students—the methodology used was qualitative. The validity and consistency of the data obtained were guaranteed through triangulation of the participants involved.

Sample

The population used as the study cohort was the Social Education University students in the Faculty of Education and Arts on the Melilla campus of the University of Granada. The study was qualitative and thus the information collected was extensive. The study was limited, as a result, to fifty students.

Instrument

A semi-structured interview was prepared for this study, designed to collect the students' opinions with respect to illegal immigration. A semi-structured interview allows us to identify the ideas of the participants on the subject broached, while offering a balanced perspective somewhere between the flexibility of an open interview and the focus of a structured ethnographic survey (Kallio et al. 2016).

The questions chosen were reviewed by expert lecturers in the field, most of who belong to the research group, "Syllabus innovation in multi-cultural contexts" (HUM-358) that investigates all aspects of cultural diversity. The leading questions that were used during the research include the following:

- What is your overall image and opinion on immigrants in Spain?
- What moves immigrants to come to Spain, in your opinion?
- In a few words, define what an illegal immigrant means to you
- In what ways are we different from immigrants?
- What should Spain do for immigrants?
- What would move you to immigrate to another country?
- What would make you consider migrating without papers?

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Once the interviews had been carried out (each one an average time of twenty minutes), they were transcribed and formatted for later analysis via the qualitative analysis program Nvivo 11. The coding was carried out using subject matter as the unit of register and grouping the fragments of the interview relative to the topic under said category. The process itself led to new codes and categories being defined as a result of the fact that we asked for opinions and not specific responses, thus giving rise to richer and more varied information. Peer review was also applied in order to guarantee the methodological and conceptual strength of the study. The research framework and focus generated the categories presented here in Table 1.

Table 1: Categories, Sub-Categories, and Indicators of Each Category

Category	Sub-category	Indicator
<i>Reasons for migrating</i>	Search of a better life (in general)	To search out a better life or standard of living not possible in native country
	To help the family	To obtain money to send home to the family or to have them reunited in the new place of residence
	Wars	Running from warfare in their native land
	Famine	To cover basic needs for survival, such as food
	Bridge	On way to other countries in the EU
	Aid	In search of aid given by Spain to immigrants
<i>Image</i>	Positive	Opinions that could be classified positive
	Negative	Opinions that could be classified negative
<i>Differences</i>	Situation in native country	Contextual differences between native country and other destination
	Nationality or papers	Being legally documented to travel
	Developed country	Spain, a developed country by comparison with the immigrants' home countries
	Physical features	Physical features
	Culture and language	Cultural characteristics and different native tongue
<i>Spain's attitudes</i>	Facilitate integration	Facilitate integration of immigrants
	Others	Stop immigrant flows. Help the home countries to develop
<i>Reasons for emigrating</i>	Work	No job in home country
	Family	To help or protect the family
	Political	Unstable political system
	Health	Serious illness or something without available treatment in home country
	War	Armed conflict in country or nearby
<i>Reasons for illegal immigration</i>	Borderline situations	Country in borderline situation or possible risk of death
	Better life	In search of new opportunities
	Family	To save family, children, or parents
	Politics	Unstable political situation

Source: Segura-Robles et al. 2019

Results

Once all the interviews had been analyzed, the results and main ideas obtained under each code heading were described and analyzed from the perspective of the values and beliefs expressed by the different groups with respect to illegal immigration.

Reasons for Illegal Immigration and Image of Immigrants

There was a general overall consensus on the reasons that led migrants to move to Melilla and Ceuta. A large percentage considered that immigrants are looking for a better life (56%). This they qualify, defining their answers in the following terms: "They are looking for better living conditions—economic, social, political, and health—because they want to move up in the world,

have a job and look after their families, etcetera” (P14). “The reasons are wars, crisis, family matters, or simply looking for a better future” (P15).

Helping their families was another reason given by 34 percent for people migrating. “The family is falling apart because of their scarce economic resources so they are obliged to move to try to solve the situation” (P1) Twenty-six percent evinced fleeing from wars as a reason for migration, while 14 percent made allusion to famine and poverty as factors driving people toward more developed economies: “Most immigrants are from under-developed countries where the citizen’s life is worthless or they are constantly endangered by war” (P19). Only 6 percent of the University students indicated that the migrants used Spain as a bridge to another European country and a mere 4 percent of the participants interviewed considered that the immigrants came in search of the aid offered by Spain: “Most immigrants come here thinking that they will be showered with aid and will find a job” (P24).

When asked for their image of illegal immigrants, a clear division was established in the responses. There were people who reacted proactively toward illegal immigrants and others who rejected them outright, either implicitly or explicitly. The people who were proactively inclined toward immigrants were overall positive in their responses (90%). “These people are simply seeking out a better quality of life, running away from poorer living conditions. I think they are hard-working and brave.” (P21) Twenty-four percent of the negative responses were of the following ilk: “There are immigrants who are delinquents and who threaten people and rob them. Although they may be a minority, we have no way of knowing who is a ‘good’ immigrant and who is ‘bad.’ That makes us generalize with respect to them” (P1).

In general, we can say that the Social Education students evidence high levels of empathy. They understand what leads the immigrants to flee at whatever cost is far superior to any kind of fear or hostility that they may face in the host countries. Empathy, according to Rocha (2006) is what most present-day political and social responses lack. Negative reactions to illegal immigrants are not new as the pertinent research has shown. However, negative perceptions and links between crime, social problems, and immigration have markedly increased over the last few years in most developed countries (Mula and Navas 2011).

Identifying Concepts

In order to move toward combating the perpetuation of stereotypes and negative attitudes toward immigrants, there is a need to identify the range of characteristics commonly attributed to immigrants and whether they are ever considered as individuals by the subjects of the survey (Pecho 2017). In contrast to when identifying adjectives are invited openly at group level in qualitative research, in quantitative research the adjectives are offered within a closed system to the participants (Devine and Elliot 1995) thereby precluding the possibility of any other adjectives being offered that the researcher may consider relevant to the ends of the analysis.

Therefore, the qualitative approach was adopted as before and the participants were asked to offer five adjectives that they felt were representative to concisely define immigrants. Once classified and analyzed (see Table 2), the results show that there were more positive adjectives than negative with repetitions of: hard-working, persevering, constant, brave, and humble, whereas the negative repetitions included aggressive, violent, and selfish.

Table 2: Summary of the Most Repeated Adjectives in Participants' Comments on Immigrants

<i>Most Repeated Adjectives</i>	<i>Number of Times Repeated</i>
Tough/Constant/Motivated/Persevering	26
Strong/Hard-Working/Brave/Well-Built	21
Needy/Poor	11
Humble/Good/Kind	10
Searching To Be Happy/Free/ Better Accommodated in Life/Aid/ Better Life/ Richer/ Better-Off/Lucky/Prosperous	8
Hard-Working	8
Desperate	7
Human Beings/Persons	7
Marginalised/Excluded/Rejected	6
Friendly/Group-Oriented/United	5

Source: Segura-Robles et al. 2019

As seen before, the students tended to highlight the positive aspects of illegal immigrants although, likewise, there were a small number of negative adjectives, although it was underlined again that these were linked to a small minority of the immigrants and thus that the adjectives were not to be extrapolated upon.

What makes us Different from Immigrants?

When people are placed in uncomfortable situations such as not feeling in control of their destinies, they will not immediately reveal racist or xenophobic attitudes (Schlueter and Scheepers 2010). By asking students anonymously how they define what differentiated us from immigrants, a key aspect of this study, we were attempting to remove any kind of obstacle to the students expressing their true feelings.

Thirty-six percent of the participants considered that the basic differences resided in the unfavorable comparison offered by the original political, social, and economic contexts of the immigrants' home countries: "Their context, the socioeconomic situation, their education, and family prospects are what make them different from us" (P33). It is likewise important to highlight that 20 percent of the students interviewed indicated that the only difference that existed was their nationality: "They were born in one country and us in another" (P37); "It's a bureaucratic difference, nothing else. I think we are all the same" (P22).

Some of the students interviewed made reference to a different culture and a different language (10%): "It's their culture, traditions, and language that make them different from us" (P50); "We as Spaniards have assimilated our culture and traditions from a very early age onward and are lucky because the immigrants have to learn how to adapt little by little to us" (P38). Others made additional references to physical features as differentiating factors: "I think it's a matter of genes, although maybe not, but you can tell them apart from us at first glance" (P47). In other words, overall the participants responded by remarking upon legal and political differences with only a small number of interviewees revealing racist or xenophobic attitudes, in no way representative of the group as a whole.

How Spain has Reacted

It cannot be denied that social policies directed at eliminating immigration have had a bearing on the natives' perception of immigrant flows (Almeida et al. 2016), but what exactly has Spain done to manage the situation? Most of the students interviewed (64%) declared that immigrants

should receive State aid and that Spain should facilitate their integration by offering them legal security and education: “They should be helped to adapt as much as possible to our customs and to learn the language so that they can find work and earn the kind of life they are looking for” (P2); “They should be given all the tools they need to facilitate their integration into society and sustainable development” (P46). Twelve percent, however, made firm affirmations totally to the contrary of how Spain and Europe should react: “There must be an end to immigration. States cannot even handle looking after their own citizens, far less those from outside. Just look at Germany, France...” (P12).

In brief, it was considered that the National Government should be responsible for any action taken. Likewise, there was mention made to the European Union as the body indirectly responsible for the aid necessary to attend immigration and the required investment in the immigrants’ home countries. Again, there was a group of fairly pointed negative remarks that were not representative of the overall response, specifically aimed at illegal immigrants. When it is a question of money, the answers were not so clear-cut and defined, with subjects responding as positively as possible (social aid, investment) but also underscoring that the “normal” home citizens of Spain also require aid and investment.

Reasons for Immigrating to another Country

The reason most evinced for immigrating was job opportunities or improvement of promotion possibilities and experience (Azcona Pastor 2016). To know what would cause our students to immigrate legally, they were asked and 76 percent replied that they would immigrate if there were no job possibilities in their own countries: “I would become an immigrant in another country if there was no work in mine or basic resources or housing” (P7); “There might be many different reasons, but the main one would be for lack of employment” (P11). The second most evinced response (18%) was for family reasons: “To improve my quality of life, for health reasons or for my family” (P21); “If my family were struggling to make ends meet” (P31).

Few responses mentioned the possibility of war, but 6 percent did and said they would leave if there were a war in their country: “Another reason would be if there were a war in my country and mass killings of innocents. I wouldn’t think twice about heading off to some other place where there was peace” (P19); “If there were a war or famine etc.” (P28). Another 6 percent said they would leave for reasons of health or political turmoil: “I would immigrate if I saw myself in any one of a number of situations, such as being out of work, for my family, or for my health, etc.” (P21); “I would go for economic or family reasons or others such as if my health was in danger or the health of one of my family” (P22);

When asked what situation would lead them to illegal immigration, 60 percent answered that they would do so in extreme situations such as war, famine, or economic privation: “It would have to be a situation as desperate as the circumstances that make immigrants come to Spain: war, famine etc.” (P9). Likewise, 34 percent said that they would immigrate illegally to improve their quality of life without specifying explicitly if they had no other option for reasons of deprivation in their own country: “I might go because I was not happy with my lot in life in my country and if my ambitions were not met” (P1). Twenty-four percent declared that they would do it for their families to protect them from extreme circumstances or to help them economically from another country: “I would consider the possibility if I had kids and couldn’t give them what they needed” (P17); “To help my family” (P34).

In brief, the students established various reasons for which they would try to immigrate with or without papers. Legally, they would immigrate because of job opportunities alone or, at most in some cases, for family reasons. That is, in absence of risk either immediate or long-term to their lives or to their families, the reasons were mainly career-oriented. The situation was totally different when asked about undocumented immigration where the reasons cited were extreme circumstances such as total economic privation, war or famine, political turmoil, and when one of the family members’ health was endangered.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present research was aimed at detecting whether there were negative responses of the Social Education students at the Faculty of Education and Arts in the multicultural environment of Melilla toward illegal immigrants. Although no explicit reference is made to that effect, almost all the questions were immediately associated with illegal immigration with no associations made with respect to legal immigrants. That alone shows a possible bias in the students' thinking.

The participants considered that the immigrants were moved to flee their countries illegally or compulsorily, mainly to escape an unstructured existence plagued by extreme poverty and privation. In other words, people flee to cover their basic needs (food, housing, health), and to obtain access to a basic education. The interviewees also considered that war and political unrest would move people to leave their countries in search of a better life. These reasons evinced coincided totally with the results obtained by Castles (2010) and Martínez de Pisón Caverro and Giró (2003).

In relation to the way in which university students would be willing to emigrate, almost all of the subjects analyzed consider that the first option would be to try on a regular basis. But, if they find that impossible, the students answer that they would do it irregularly, at almost any cost to protect themselves, their families, and to achieve what they consider a decent life. Although when comparing immigration of African and Asian origin with that of European origin, important differences should be noted, the former usually leave relatives in their countries of origin, while Europeans who emigrate, and thanks to the Schengen treaty, do so with all or a large part of the family (Arjona Garrido, Checa Olmos, and Checa Gómez 2014), so it is difficult for participants in this study to understand the real situation of an immigrant in an irregular situation.

When asked about the role that Spain has played in immigration, most replied that greater efforts and investment should be made in the attention given to this segment of society without ignoring the needs of the original citizens, with some saying that the locals were priority. These results coincide to a great extent with the international report published by the German Marshall Fund of the United States (2014) where people demonstrate concern with respect to immigrants but also to local needs. They do not however, coincide with the main research findings of the Centre of Sociological Research in Spain (CIS 2008) where it was concluded that Spaniards considered immigration and the management of the immigrants to be the main problem in Spain (19.5%), a number that dropped precipitously to 3.4 percent in February 2017 (CIS 2008).

The participants were overall positively disposed toward immigrants in general, making no distinction whatsoever between them, even although in the Temporary Refuge Centre for Immigrants there are illegal immigrants from many different countries living together. This result also runs contrary to what was found in the studies of Diéz Nicolás (2005) and Gustafson (2008) where the participants' opinions varied by country of origin of the immigrants.

The perceptions of the degree students in Social Education revealed that they were largely free of prejudices. This fact was reaffirmed by the number of adjectives they used to describe the immigrants, and the reasons they included for their situation. These results do not coincide with the research of Lahav (2004) or Schneider (2007) who concluded that, given the general crisis in Spain, negative opinions toward immigrants abounded. This positive perception of the Social Education students may be due to the contact they have in their training process with this and other related social problems, therefore making them more aware and more empathetic with the illegal immigrants' circumstances (Segura-Robles, Alemany-Arrebola, and Gallardo-Vigil 2016).

Therefore, and as could logically be expected, the students of Social Education did not reject immigrants, legal or illegal, although immersed in a context with such severe migratory pressure as is experienced in Melilla. It would be interesting likewise if the studies could be replicated in non-multicultural contexts and with students of other degree programs, since the fact that ours belonged to Social Education may have had a significant bearing on the results.

There were certain limitations encountered when interpreting the results. First, there was a total over-representation of women and thus a female bias (84%). Second, some of the questions

asked were too general or broad-ranging, thus making them difficult to answer and to analyze. Third, the cohort of students used was another bias since Social Education students by their very nature have a greater awareness and sensitivity to social matters and problems. Lastly, we should perhaps highlight “the errors caused by the role of the researcher as interviewer and analyst that analyze may blind him/her to certain aspects, despite having computerized data analysis back-up or making recourse to triangulation of experts” (Arellano Torres and Peralta López 2015, 25).

REFERENCES

- Abad Márquez, Luis Vicente, Alfonso Cucó, and Antonio Izquierdo Escribano. 1993. *Inmigración, Pluralismo y Tolerancia* [Immigration, Pluralism, and Tolerance]. Madrid: Popular.
- Almeida, Joanna, Katie B. Biello, Francisco Pedraza, Suzanne Wintner, and Edna Viruell-Fuentes. 2016. “The Association between Anti-Immigrant Policies and Perceived Discrimination among Latinos in the US: A Multilevel Analysis.” *SSM—Population Health* 2:897–903. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2016.11.003>.
- Arellano Torres, Araceli, and Feli Peralta López. 2015. “El Enfoque Centrado En La Familia, En El Campo de La Discapacidad Intelectual ¿Cómo Perciben Los Padres Su Relación Con Los Profesionales?” [The Family-Centered Approach in the Field of Intellectual Disability: How do Parents Perceive their Relationship with Professionals?] *Revista de Investigación Educativa* [Journal of Educational Research] 33 (1): 119. <https://doi.org/10.6018/rie.33.1.198561>.
- Arjona Garrido, Ángeles, Juan Carlos Checa Olmos, and David Checa Gómez. 2014. “Extranjeros En Almería: Lengua Meta y Código Escrito” [Foreigners in Almería: Meta Language and Writing Code] *Alabe. Revista de Investigación Sobre Lectura y Escritura* [Journal of Research on Reading and Writing], 10 (1): 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.15645/Alabe.2014.10.8>.
- Azcona Pastor, José Manuel. 2016. *Emigración y relaciones bilaterales* [Migration and Bilateral Relations]. Madrid: Dykinson.
- Braunthal, Gerard. 2009. *Right-Wing Extremism in Contemporary Germany*. Basingstoke, UK: New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bueno Moreno, María Reyes, and Miguel Ángel Garrido Torres. 2015. *Relaciones interpersonales en la educación* [Interpersonal Relationships in Education]. Madrid: Pirámide.
- Castles, Stephen. 2010. “Migración Irregular: Causas, Tipos y Dimensiones Regionales” [Irregular Migration: Causes, Types, and Regional Dimensions] *Migración y Desarrollo* [Migration and Development] 8 (9): 49–80.
- Cea D’Ancona, Ma Ángeles. 2016. “Immigration as a Threat: Explaining the Changing Pattern of Xenophobia in Spain.” *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 17 (2): 569–91. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-015-0415-3>.
- Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS). 2016. “Estudio CIS N° 2.781” [CIS Study No. 2,781]. Accessed June 4, 2016, http://www.cis.es/cis/opencm/ES/1_encuestas/estudios/ver.jsp?estudio=8960.
- . 2017. “Estudio CIS N° 3.168” [CIS Study No. 3,168]. Accessed June 4, 2016. http://www.cis.es/cis/opencm/ES/1_encuestas/estudios/ver.jsp?estudio=3168.
- Clémence, Alain, Willem Doise, and Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi. 2015. *The Quantitative Analysis of Social Representations*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Devine, Patricia G., and Andrew J. Elliot. 1995. “Are Racial Stereotypes Really Fading? The Princeton Trilogy Revisited.” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 21 (11): 1139–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672952111002>.

- Díez Nicolás, Juan. 2005. *Las Dos Caras de La Inmigración* [The Two Faces of Immigration]. Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, Subdirección General de Información Administrativa y Publicaciones [Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, General Directorate of Administrative Information and Publications].
- . 2009. “Construcción de un Índice de Xenofobia-Racismo” [Construction of an Xenophobia-Racism Index]. *Revista Del Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración* [Journal of the Ministry of Labor and Immigration] 80:21–38.
- Duffy, Bobby, and Tom Frere-Smith. 2014. *Perceptions and Reality: Public Attitudes to Immigration*. London: Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute.
- Eagly, Alice H., and Shelly Chaiken. 1993. *The Psychology of Attitudes*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.
- Fiske, Susan T., Daniel T. Gilbert, and Gardner Lindzey, eds. 2010. *Handbook of Social Psychology*, 1st ed. Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470561119>.
- FRONTEX. 2016. “Fewer Migrants At EU Borders In 2016.” *Frontex Europa Eu*. <http://frontex.europa.eu/news/fewer-migrants-at-eu-borders-in-2016-HWnCIJ>.
- German Marshall Fund of the United States. 2014. “Transatlantic Trends: Key Findings.” 2014. Washington DC: Fund of the United States. https://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/gfmd_turkey2014-2015_tm2_contribution_german_marshall_fund.pdf.
- Gustafson, Per. 2008. “Transnationalism in Retirement Migration: The Case of North European Retirees in Spain.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (3): 451–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870701492000>.
- Hjarnø, Jan. 2017. *Illegal Immigrants and Developments in Employment in the Labour Markets of the EU*. London: Routledge.
- Hartman, Todd K., Benjamin J. Newman, and C. Scott Bell. 2014. “Decoding Prejudice Toward Hispanics: Group Cues and Public Reactions to Threatening Immigrant Behavior.” *Political Behavior* 36 (1): 143–63. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-013-9231-7>.
- Herranz de Rafael, Gonzalo, and Juan Sebastián Fernández Prados. 2017. “Comparación de Dos Índices de Medición de La Xenofobia En Andalucía.” [Comparison of Two Indexes of Measurement of Xenophobia in Andalusia] *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas* [Spanish Journal of Sociological Research]. <https://doi.org/10.5477/cis/reis.160.139>.
- Huesmann, L. Rowell, Eric F. Dubow, Paul Boxer, Violet Souweidane, and Jeremy Ginges. 2012. “Foreign Wars and Domestic Prejudice: How Media Exposure to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Predicts Ethnic Stereotyping by Jewish and Arab American Adolescents.” *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 22 (3): 556–70. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2012.00785.x>.
- Igartua, Juan, Carlos Muñoz, and José Otero. 2006. “El Tratamiento Informativo de La Inmigración En La Prensa y La Televisión Española. Una Aproximación Empírica Desde La Teoría Del Framing” [The Informative Treatment of Immigration in the Press and Spanish Television. An Empirical Approach from the Framing Theory]. *Global Media Journal México* 3 (5): 1–15.
- Kallio, Hanna, Anna-Maija Pietilä, Martin Johnson, and Mari Kangasniemi. 2016. “Systematic Methodological Review: Developing a Framework for a Qualitative Semi-Structured Interview Guide.” *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 72 (12): 2954–65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031>.
- Lahav, Gallya. 2004. *Immigration and Politics in the New Europe: Reinventing Borders*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511558887>.
- Martínez de Pisón Cervero, José, and Joaquín Giró, eds. 2003. *Inmigración y Ciudadanía: Perspectivas Sociojurídicas* [Immigration and Citizenship: Socio-Legal Perspectives] Logroño: Universidad de La Rioja.

- Moscato, Gianluigi, Cinzia Novara, Isabel Hombrados-Mendieta, Floriana Romano, and Gioacchino Lavanco. 2014. "Cultural Identification, Perceived Discrimination and Sense of Community as Predictors of Life Satisfaction among Foreign Partners of Intercultural Families in Italy and Spain: A Transnational Study." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 40:22–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.11.007>.
- Mula, A., and Leandro Navas. 2011. *Las Actitudes Ante La Inmigración En Los Adolescentes y En Los Jóvenes* [Attitudes to Immigration in Adolescents and Young People]. San Vicente: Club Universitario.
- OLeary, Anna Ochoa, Sofía Gómez, and Erika Montoya. 2014. "Stress and Fear in Immigrant Communities: Implications for Health and Human Development." *Internacionales: Revista En Ciencias Sociales Del Pacífico Mexicano* [International: Journal of Social Sciences of the Mexican Pacific] 1 (1): 150–72.
- Paluck, Elizabeth Levy. 2009. "Reducing Intergroup Prejudice and Conflict Using the Media: A Field Experiment in Rwanda." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96 (3): 574–87. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0011989>.
- Pecho, Kerry. 2017. "Cognitive Maps of Educators' Attitudes toward Unauthorized Immigrants: A Multidimensional Scaling Perspective." PhD diss., Illinois State University.
- Pettigrew, Thomas F., and Linda R. Tropp. 2008. "How Does Intergroup Contact Reduce Prejudice? Meta-Analytic Tests of Three Mediators." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 38 (6): 922–34. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.504>.
- Pettigrew, Thomas F., Linda R. Tropp, Ulrich Wagner, and Oliver Christ. 2011. "Recent Advances in Intergroup Contact Theory." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 35 (3): 271–80. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.03.001>.
- Riek, Blake M., Eric W. Mania, and Samuel L. Gaertner. 2013. "Reverse Subtyping: The Effects of Prejudice Level on the Subtyping of Counterstereotypic Outgroup Members." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 35 (5): 409–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01973533.2013.823616>.
- Rinken, Sebastian. 2016. "Crisis Económica y Sentimiento Antinmigrante: El Caso de Andalucía" [Economic Crisis and Anti-Immigrant Sentiment: The Case of Andalusia]. *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas* [Spanish Journal of Sociological Research] <https://doi.org/10.5477/cis/reis.156.77>.
- Rocha Gomez, Jose Luis. 2006. *Análisis de Percepciones y Aportes para una Política de Migraciones Internacionales en Nicaragua* [Analysis of Perceptions and Contributions for an International Migration Policy in Nicaragua]. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL : CELADE.
- Rojas, Antonio J., Marisol Navas-Luque, Pedro J. Pérez-Moreno, Ma Isabel Cuadrado-Guirado, and Oscar M. Lozano-Rojas. 2012. "Test de Actitud Prejuiciosa (TAP): Estudios de Fiabilidad y Evidencias de Validez Basadas en la Estructura Interna en Autóctonos e Inmigrantes" [Prejudice Attitude Test (PAT): Reliability Studies and Evidence of Validity Based on the Internal Structure in Native and Immigrants]. *Anales de Psicología* [Annals of Psychology] 28 (3): 921–27. <https://doi.org/10.6018/analesps.28.3.156161>.
- Sánchez-Montijano, Elena, and Jonathan Zaragoza. 2013. "The Migratory Crisis in Melilla: Tools for Political Negotiation." *Notes Internacionales CIDOB* 71:1–5.
- Santa Ana, Otto. 2013. *Juan in a Hundred: The Representation of Latinos on Network News*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Schneider, Silke L. 2007. "Anti-Immigrant Attitudes in Europe: Outgroup Size and Perceived Ethnic Threat." *European Sociological Review* 24 (1): 53–67. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcm034>.

- Schlueter, Elmar, and Peer Scheepers. 2010. "The Relationship Between Outgroup Size and Anti-Outgroup Attitudes: A Theoretical Synthesis and Empirical Test of Group Threat- and Intergroup Contact Theory." *Social Science Research* 39 (2): 285–95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2009.07.006>.
- Segura-Robles, Adrián, Inmaculada Alemany-Arrebola, and Miguel Ángel Gallardo-Vigil. 2016. "Prejudiced Attitudes in University Students toward Irregular Immigrants: An Exploratory Study." *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology* 14 (2): 393–416. <https://doi.org/10.14204/ejrep.39.15069>.
- Smith-Castro, Vanessa. 2011. "La Psicología Social de Las Relaciones Intergrupales: Modelos e Hipótesis" [The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations: Models and Hypotheses]. *Actualidades en Psicología* [News in Psychology] 20 (107): 45. <https://doi.org/10.15517/ap.v20i107.37>.
- Soddu, Pietro. 2002. *Inmigración Extra-Comunitaria En Europa: El Caso de Ceuta y Melilla*. [Extra-Community Immigration in Europe: The Case of Ceuta and Melilla] Ceuta: Ciudad Autónoma de Ceuta, Archivo Central.
- Suárez, Belén Fernández. 2015. "El Discurso Politico de Integración de Los Inmigrantes En El Nivel Regional En España: La Division Entre Políticas de Identidad y Políticas Sociales" [The Political Speech of Integration of Immigrants at the Regional Level in Spain: The Division Between Identity Policies and Social Policies]. *Revista TOMO* [TOMO Journal]. <https://doi.org/10.21669/tomo.v0i0.4402>.
- Zapata-Barrero, Ricard, and Teun A. van Dijk, eds. 2007. *Discursos Sobre la Inmigración en España: Los Medios de Comunicación, Los Parlamentos y Las Administraciones* [Speeches on Immigration in Spain: The Media, Parliaments and Administrations]. Barcelona: Fundació CIDOB–Edicions Bellaterra.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Adrián Segura-Robles: Lecturer, Department of Educational Research Methods and Analysis, Faculty of Education, Economics and Technology in Ceuta, Universidad de Granada in Ceuta, Spain

María Angustias Sánchez Ojeda: Lecturer, Department of Nursing Care, Faculty of Life Sciences, Universidad de Granada in Melilla, Spain

Miguel Ángel Gallardo Vigil: Lecturer, Department of Educational Research methods and Analysis, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Sport in Melilla, Universidad de Granada in Melilla, Spain

Inmaculada Alemany Arrebola: Lecturer, Department of Evolutionary Psychology and Education, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Sport in Melilla, Universidad de Granada in Melilla, Spain

The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social and Community Studies is one of six thematically focused journals that support the Interdisciplinary Social Sciences Research Network. The Research Network is comprised of a journal collection, book imprint, conference, and online community.

The journal presents studies that exemplify the disciplinary and interdisciplinary practices of the social sciences. As well as articles of a traditional scholarly type, this journal invites case studies that take the form of presentations of practice—including documentation of socially engaged practices and exegeses analyzing the effects of those practices.

The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social and Community Studies is a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal.