

# Gender and the Role of Emotional Regulation in Intercultural Communication

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This article addresses the question as to why female migrants are more negatively affected than male migrants when confronted with unfamiliar traits in communication in the host country, but they are nevertheless more willing to adapt to the foreign style of communication. To answer this question, the different management of emotional regulation (Thayer et al. 2003) by both genders was investigated. A broad survey conducted among Spanish migrants in Germany led to the conclusion that the female migrants actually perceive the investigated traits more frequently and are also more negatively affected by them. But, in comparison to the males, they have an increased ability to recognize and understand their emotions although they also display an increased tendency to ruminate. However, most of the women counteracted this tendency with a heightened ability to regulate their emotions through antirumination emotional repair strategies. According to the data, this ability seems to lead to a greater willingness to understand the views of the natives and thus possibly to being more disposed to integrate into the host society.

**Keywords:** Emotional regulation, migration, intercultural adjustment, politeness, Germany.

*El género y el papel de la regulación emocional en la comunicación intercultural.* El artículo analiza las causas por las que las mujeres migrantes se ven más negativamente afectadas que los hombres cuando en el país de acogida se enfrentan a formas de comunicación desconocidas. Asimismo estudia las razones por las que, a pesar de ello, están más dispuestas a adaptarse al estilo de comunicación extranjero. Para responder a estas preguntas, se analizaron las diferentes formas en las que ambos sexos gestionan su regulación emocional (Thayer *et al.* 2003). Una amplia encuesta realizada entre migrantes españoles en Alemania llevó a la conclusión de que las mujeres perciben los rasgos investigados con más frecuencia y también se ven más negativamente afectadas por ellos. Sin embargo, en comparación

con los hombres, mostraron una mayor capacidad para reconocer y comprender sus propias emociones, aunque también manifestaron una mayor tendencia a repensarlas en exceso. No obstante, la mayoría de las mujeres contrarrestaron esta tendencia gracias a una mayor capacidad para regular sus emociones a través del uso de estrategias de reparación emocional (*antirumination repair strategies*). Los datos obtenidos sugieren que, gracias a esta capacidad, las mujeres realizan un mayor esfuerzo para comprender el punto de vista de los nativos y, por lo tanto, posiblemente también estén más dispuestas a integrarse en la sociedad de acogida.

**Palabras clave:** Regulación emocional, migración, adaptación intercultural, cortesía, Alemania.

## 1. Introduction

In a recent study among young Spanish migrants in Germany, the intercultural competence of these youngsters in two specific areas was analysed, areas that could be anticipated as problematic from a contrastive point of view, namely the traits of relative directness in German communication as opposed to Spanish, and reserved behaviour in verbal interaction (hereinafter referred to as relative ‘reservedness’) (Vilar Sánchez 2019b). Regarding relative directness, it was argued that positive politeness in the sense of Brown and Levinson (1987), which is favoured in Spain, and which is reflected in positive face work, is in contrast to a predilection for uncertainty avoidance in Germany, in the sense of Hofstede (1980) and House (2005), i.e., a preference for clarity, unambiguousness and content orientation (see also DW1 in this context). With regard to relative reservedness, the Spanish collectivism in the sense of Hofstede (1980), which leads to an inclination for commonality and closeness, is opposed by a propensity for negative politeness as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) in German, i.e., a tendency to individualism in the sense of showing respect for the personal space of the interlocutor, and regard for his or her right to self-determination. The study confirmed that the majority of the 171 informants perceive the Germans, at least sometimes, to be too direct and even more of the respondents believe them to be too reserved. In addition, almost half of those who perceive the Germans as too direct recognized that this trait sometimes affects them negatively. And again, this negative reaction is more pronounced in the case of relative reservedness. These results were not surprising, but there were some remarkable aspects that came to light, but that could not be explained in the context of the mentioned

study, namely the revelations that (a) the female participants show a slightly increased sensitivity to the perception of the investigated traits, (b) they are clearly more negatively affected by them than their male countrymen, (c) they show a greater tendency to interpret them in a negative way and despite these results, (d) they are more inclined than their male compatriots to adopt a reserved communication style themselves when dealing with Germans. But interestingly this does not apply to the adoption of a more direct way of communication (Vilar Sánchez 2019b: 486, 487).

Apart from the quantitative analysis, three focus group discussions were conducted. In these discussions, young Spanish migrants in Germany discussed the general differences between Spanish and German culture. In the course of these debates, some informants made it clear that there is one German trait that upsets them particularly, namely that of direct criticism in social interaction, which is perceived as inappropriate patronising and unacceptable control. (Vilar Sánchez 2019b: 474) (From now on, this trait will be referred to as social sanction). Interestingly, and in spite of being a sensitive issue, social sanction is also mentioned on the official site of the *Deutsche Welle*, a German public international broadcaster, that includes a section dedicated to providing material to promote and assist German as a foreign language (DW2)<sup>1</sup>, where it is stated quite frankly that “Anyone who has spent time in Germany must have noticed that Germans will not hold back and educate you for your wrongdoings in public — whether with words or with deeds.”. From the perspective of politeness theory this trait must be attributed to directness, because it means saying things open and clearly. But this directness does not stop at the pain threshold, i.e. the response of the addressee is not taken into account. And when that happens it may turn into an attack against self-determination and a violation of personal space. In effect, we are dealing with a trait that combines in itself the *do*'s and *don't*s of politeness, on one hand being clear and on the other a failure to respect the personal space of others. As will be seen in the next chapter, directness is more characteristic of communication among men and also of German communication in general. At the same time, a violation of personal space is usually rejected in both contexts. In the case of female communication and in communication in a Spanish environment, the situation is exactly the other way around. This double and even contradictory assignment of social sanction promises interesting results and insights. Therefore, social sanction was included in the present study so that a total of three traits were analysed: relative directness, social sanction and relative reservedness. In the following section, the findings from different scientific areas on gender or sex differences which are relevant to this study are briefly discussed.

## 2. Gender differences in conversational style, in societies and in emotional regulation

Gender differences described in socio psychological and socio linguistic research are remarkably in line with the widespread and continued stereotypes about women and men. In this context, however, one should bear in mind that stereotypes are essentially generalizations, but in themselves they are neither good nor bad (Schneider 2004). In many cases as in the case of gender stereotypes, they are socially constructed. Research about trait stereotype dimensions about women and men is consistent in that women tend to be associated with soft traits such as being affectionate, emotional, sensitive, expressive and so on, while men are more associated with hard traits like being dominant, competent, competitive, aggressive, and so forth (Grossmann & Wood 1993; Feingold 1994; Feldman Barrett et al. 2000; Schneider 2004; Eckes 2008; Merchant 2012; Schneider & Bos 2014). The linguist Deborah Tannen (1990) and the relationship counsellor John Gray (1992), both of whose publications were bestsellers, outlined the differences in conversational or communication style between women and men and they both attributed these differences to the separate socialization of girls and boys, which are usually focused on distinct roles. According to Tannen, men tend to focus on relative status inside the group, which means that they mainly seek to be respected by others. Accordingly, in communication with others they mainly talk about impersonal information. In contrast, women tend to focus on relative connection with other group members and seek to be liked by others. As a result, in communication with others they prioritize personal issues and primarily talk about personal information. While the connection with others is in the foreground for the women, the men value more their independence. To this day, it is not clear if these differences described by this author are biological or culturally shaped. However, this aspect is not relevant for this study. The important point is that Tannen's observations might offer a plausible explanation for the results obtained by Vilar Sánchez (2019b), namely that Spanish women are more negatively affected by the German traits of being relatively direct and relatively reserved than men. Based on the findings of Tannen it must be concluded that the German traits of relative directness and relative reservedness are more in accordance with the masculine view of communication than with the feminine one as, according to this author, "men's conversational style is more focused on the message level of talk, while the woman's is focused on the relationship or metamessage level" (Tannen 2007: 142)<sup>2</sup>. This allows us to infer

that men tend to be more direct in communication. On the other hand, the masculine desire for independence and the feminine need for connection with others, as observed by Tannen, also suggest that the trait of being reserved is more of a masculine quality. Thus, to some extent, the same differences observed between the two sexes also exist between German and Spanish culture. This association between gender and culture has already been established by Tannen: “boys and girls grow up in what are essentially different cultures, so talk between women and men is cross-cultural communication”.

It was exactly this issue, i.e., the existence of more or less masculine or feminine cultures, that was one of the topics that Hofstede (1998) dealt with. This author postulated the cultural dimension of masculinity versus femininity, among others. According to this author, more masculine societies “exhibit a preference for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success. These societies at large are more competitive”. On the contrary, more feminine societies are “more consensus-oriented and exhibit a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak, and quality of life” (Hofstede Insights. Dimensions). As reported by Hofstede (Insights. Country), Spain scores 42 in masculinity while Germany scores 66. These numbers indicate that German society is based more on masculine values than the Spanish one. In our specific case, this leads to the conclusion that Spanish women particularly are at a disadvantage in Germany, because their conversational style rather contradicts the style which is customary in this country, while the style of the men corresponds more to it. It is therefore not surprising that these specific German traits are even stranger to women than to men.

The gender differences found in psychological, linguistic and anthropological research are, among others, also described in emotion and psychopathological literature about sex differences in personality traits across different cultures (Costa et al. 2001; Thayer et al. 2003; Schmitt et al. 2008). In this context, Costa et al. (2001: 322) pointed out that “Women reported themselves to be higher in Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Warmth and Openness to Feelings, whereas men were higher in Assertiveness and Openness to Ideas”. The aspect of neuroticism, not mentioned so far, which refers to a high level of sensitivity to distressing emotions like anxiety, anger, depression and shame, is of particular interest for this work as it could help to explain the fact that Spanish women are more negatively affected than men by the German traits of relative directness and relative reservedness. Because if women tend to experience more distressing emotions and / or anxiety in general, it may be assumed that they also do so in connection with the traits that they perceive as unfamiliar. One of the factors that was found to

potentiate depressive symptoms is rumination, a coping style that has been observed more often in women than in men (Nolen-Hoeksema et al. 1999).

A concept which is crucial in the aforementioned psychopathological studies is that of emotional regulation. Based on Thayer et al. (2003: 350) emotional regulation is understood “as a process of attending to one’s emotions, being clear about them, and then implementing strategies to repair negative emotional states”. In their research, these authors investigate the role that the managing of emotional repair strategies has in both women and men in dealing with depression. These strategies are largely repair strategies and they refer to the ability to moderate one’s emotional responses and to repair negative mood states, and thereby inhibiting the tendency to think perseveratively about one’s distress (also see on this subject Nolen-Hoeksema & Aldao 2011: 705). This definition is adopted in the present work.

Thayer et al. (2003) provided evidence that women, in general, use antirumination repair strategies more than men, but women who develop depression exhibit more impaired emotional repair strategies than men, and to a greater extent than women who do not experience depression. Depression is, of course, not the subject of this work, but different ways of dealing with emotional regulation could be the key to the fact that the two sexes deal with the German traits examined in the present study differently. For this reason, in this study, emotional regulation will play a central role, specifically rumination and antirumination emotional repair strategies (referred to from now on as AERS).

In order to assess emotional regulation via self-report the Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS) (Salovey et al. 1995) was found to be very useful. Basically, this scale is employed for the assessment of emotional intelligence, a concept that was developed by Peter Salovey and John Mayer in 1990 (Salovey & Mayer 1990) and which describes the ability to identify, assess and manage one’s own emotions and those of others. Martínez-Pons (1997–1998) found that the three dimensions of TMMS, i.e., attention to one’s emotions, clarity of emotions, and emotional repair strategies appear to represent the successive stages in emotional regulation and, based on this observation, Thayer et al. (2003) successfully used this test tool to assess emotional regulation as a factor that can explain gender difference in depression.

In the present study, the same approach was applied to determine whether gender differences in emotional regulation are related to the gender differences in dealing with the German traits and whether they can therefore possibly explain them. In the Spanish version of TMMS, the so-called TMMS-24 (Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera Pacheco 2005), eight personal affirmations are assigned to each of the three basic

categories and the test subjects are asked to indicate whether and to what extent these statements apply to them. In order to achieve the goals of this study it was not necessary to include all of these affirmations, as this would have made the questionnaire too extensive. Instead, only a few representative key statements were selected.

### 3. Empirical study

The aforementioned considerations formed the basis for the design of an empirical quantitative study among Spanish migrants in Germany.

The following research questions were formulated:

- (a) Are there gender differences in Spanish migrants in the perception of the German traits of relative directness, social sanction and relative reservedness?
- (b) Are there gender differences in the negative emotional response to these German traits (referred to from now on as negative emotional affectedness)?
- (c) Are there gender differences in the use of emotional repair strategies that can explain the eventual differences in (a) and (b)?

With the aim of answering these research questions, a questionnaire was designed in which gender constituted the main independent variable. Further independent variables were personal factors such as the Spanish region of origin, age, education, German language skills, length of stay in Germany, and kind of professional activity in Germany. The dependent variables, which were supposed to render information about how the two genders manage emotional regulation when faced with the unfamiliar German traits were:

1. Perception of the German traits, negative emotional affectedness in connection with this perception, and rumination in connection with these traits. The three items belong to the first dimension of TMMS-24, attention to one's emotions.
2. Feelings when confronted with the traits. This item belongs to the dimension clarity of emotions.
3. The use of emotional repair strategies. This last item belongs to the dimension emotional repair strategies.

The questionnaire comprised a total of 26 questions. The survey was aimed at young Spanish migrants living in Germany. It was conducted online with the online survey tool LimeSurvey via Facebook, posting

invitations to participate on dozens of Facebook pages of all possible groups of young Spaniards in Germany, mainly groups on a professional or regional basis. The survey was carried out over a period of two weeks in May and June 2020<sup>3</sup>. In all, 231 of the 428 responses were completed and thus could be evaluated. 31,60% of the respondents were male, 67,97% female and 0,42% of another sex. As to the ages, 2,16% were less than 21 years old, 23,81% between 21 and 30 years, 38,53% between 31 and 40 years, and 33,33% over 40 years. The informants came from nearly all the regions of Spain, but mainly from Andalusia (22,94%) and Madrid (14,72%). Regarding their education, most of the respondents had a high level of education: bachelor's degree (34,63%), master degree (30,74%), PhD (6,93). A smaller percentage had middle level education: compulsory basic education (3,03%), high school (6,49%), medium grade vocational training (4,33%), higher level vocational training (11,26%). The length of stay in Germany was 1-2 years (10,39%), 3-5 years (8,66%), 6-10 years (26,84%), more than 5 years, but less than 10 years (33,77%), and more than 10 years (18,61%). In respect to their current activity in Germany, 54,55% of the informants indicated that they did a job that corresponds to their level of education, 24,24% did a job that does not correspond to their level of education, 2,16% were unemployed, 10,82% were studying and 6,06% said they were engaged in other activities. Lastly, in regard to their German language skills, 3,90% of the informants indicated they had no knowledge of the German language, 11,26% were beginners, 43,72% were intermediate learners, 33,33% were advanced, and 6,92 declared to have a native speaker level.

## 4. Results

Next, the results are presented following the three main components of TMMS-24:

1. attention to one's emotions, 2. clarity of emotions, and 3. emotional repair strategies.

For statistical calculations, the SPSS software is applied in two stages: In order to verify the internal consistency of the questionnaire used in this study, in the first stage Cronbach's alpha is applied for the sample of subjects analyzed. In the second stage, the kolmogorov-smirnov test led to a rejection of the normality of variables, which gave resulted in the use of Spearman correlations to estimate the associations between the three dimensions. For the verification of statistical reliability, the Cronbachs alpha obtained is 0.84. According to George and Mallery 2003, this value is admissible to accept the reliability of the scale.



## 4.1. Attention to one's emotions

The first and the second research questions are related to the first category of emotional regulation, i.e., attention to one's emotions. In the following section, the different elements that make up this attention are examined separately for both genders and then compared. In order to confirm the results obtained by Vilar Sánchez (2019b), the participants were asked first about their perception of the German traits to be examined here.

With regard to directness, the results indicate that this trait is perceived by the vast majority of women and men (see table 1). The only difference that can be observed is that men rank more in the middle range while women distribute somewhat more to the extremes, which suggests a slightly more moderate perception of directness among men.

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, I don't think so</i>	2	2,74%	7	4,46%
<i>Rarely</i>	2	2,74%	12	7,64%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	33	45,21%	43	27,39%
<i>Yes, often</i>	30	41,10%	72	45,86%
<i>Yes, always</i>	5	6,85%	18	11,46%
<i>No answer</i>	1	1,37%	5	3,18%
<b>Total(gross)</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1. "Do you feel that the Germans are direct?"

As was suspected at the outset, the supposed trait of social sanction was not only contradictory in itself from the perspective of politeness theory, it also turned out to be a particularly delicate question. The mere presence of this question led the Association of Spanish Scientists in the Federal Republic of Germany (*CERFA, Científicos Españoles en la República Federal de Alemania*) to refuse to publish the survey on their Facebook page even though they had collaborated readily with a previous study. In their opinion, there was a risk of being blamed for supporting the spread of negative stereotypes about Germans.

The intention to avoid stereotypes might also have led the relatively large number of respondents (almost a third in both genders) to answer the question about the Germans liking to control others negatively (see table 2) and it may possibly have prevented many from completing the questionnaire at all. After all, a total of 197 informants who started the questionnaire decided not to finish it. But those who did finish it were probably not prejudiced. Otherwise, they would not have finished answering the questionnaire since it is unlikely that an individual would

voluntarily embark on answering questions that he or she fears would make him / her look like a person who defends stereotypes. However, about a third of the informants of both sexes who finished the questionnaire declared that they feel that the Germans like to control others, either often or always, and the difference between the sexes is small.

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, I don't think so</i>	23	31,51%	48	30,57%
<i>Rarely</i>	8	10,96%	22	14,01%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	16	21,92%	31	19,75%
<i>Yes, often</i>	14	19,18%	38	24,20%
<i>Yes, always</i>	12	16,44%	12	7,64%
No answer	0	0%	6	3,82%
Total(gross)	73	100%	157	100%

Table 2. "Do you feel that the Germans like to control others?"

Of the three traits examined, reservedness was the one that was most intensely perceived. The vast majority indicated that they perceive it often or always, and interestingly, slightly more men than women (see table 3). Only a small minority of both sexes affirmed that they don't feel that the Germans are reserved or that they feel it rarely.

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, I don't think so</i>	4	5,48%	10	6,37%
<i>Rarely</i>	2	2,74%	6	3,82%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	12	16,44%	41	26,11%
<i>Yes, often</i>	43	58,90%	74	47,73%
<i>Yes, always</i>	10	13,70%	24	15,29%
No answer	2	2,74%	2	1,27%
Total(gross)	73	100%	157	100%

Table 3. "Do you feel that the Germans are reserved?"

Altogether, it must be noted that the differences between men and women with regard to the perception of the traits examined here turned out not to be important, a result that contradicts the prognostications based on politeness theory outlined above.

Henceforth, the second research question is examined, namely whether there are gender differences in the level to which respondents are negatively affected by the German traits. As previously hypothesised and in line with the findings of politeness theory as well as anthropological and psychopathological studies, the results indicate that the

supposed German traits analysed here tend to affect Spanish female migrants more than males. Regarding directness, it can be observed that 21% of the males affirmed to never being affected by this trait while only 8% of the females noted this (see table 4). Furthermore, 40% of the males stated they were rarely affected in contrast to only 28% of the females. Nearly half of the females replied that they suffer sometimes and sometimes not, but only a third of the males indicated this. Finally, 15% of the females said that they were affected often and 2% always, while only 4% of the males stated they were affected often and none of them always.

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, never</i>	15	21,43%	12	8,28%
<i>Rarely</i>	28	40,00%	40	27,59%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	24	34,29%	67	46,21%
<i>Yes, often</i>	3	4,29%	22	15,17%
<i>Yes, always</i>	0	0,00%	3	2,07%
<i>No answer</i>	0	0,00%	1	0,69%
<b>Total(gross)</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4. “Does it affect you when you feel that the Germans are direct?”

Although it is true that far fewer of the informants stated that the Germans like to control others than that they are direct (70 versus 50, in the case of men, and 145 versus 103, in the case of women) those who did affirm it were considerably more affected by this trait than by directness, and again, slightly more women than men (compare table 4 and 5). As was argued above, social sanction combines two aspects, on one hand being open and clear, which corresponds to directness, and on the other hand invading and thus violating the personal space. Although the vast majority of the males affirmed not to be affected by directness or only rarely affected, the numbers were significantly lower for social sanction. On the other hand, slightly more than a quarter of the males stated they were often or even always affected by social sanction. By contrast, only a very small percentage of the males recognized being often affected by German directness and nobody said they were affected always. The same tendency was observed among the female respondents. It can therefore be stated that although social sanction turned out to be generally less noticed than directness, the results suggest that if it is perceived, social sanction appears to affect Spanish migrants to a greater extent than directness.

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, never</i>	9	18,00%	11	10,68%
<i>Rarely</i>	13	26,00%	19	18,45%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	13	26,00%	27	26,21%
<i>Yes, often</i>	11	22,00%	33	32,04%
<i>Yes, always</i>	3	6,00%	7	6,80%
No answer	1	2,00%	6	5,83%
Total(gross)	50	100%	103	100%

Table 5. “Does it affect you when you feel that the Germans try to control you?”

In line with Vilar Sánchez (2019b), in the present study reservedness turned out to be the trait that affects migrants the least, probably because compared to directness it is rather a passive behaviour and thus experienced as less invasive and therefore less harmful. Nearly half of the males and one third of the females confirmed that they are never affected by this trait, and over a quarter of the males and about a third of the females noted that this only happened rarely. Hardly anyone of either sex said they were always affected and only a small percentage said often. Overall, however, the tendency is repeated in that women are marginally more affected than men, although the difference was not found to be statistically significant.

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, never</i>	32	47,76%	48	33,10%
<i>Rarely</i>	19	28,36%	47	32,41%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	10	14,93%	30	20,69%
<i>Yes, often</i>	5	7,46%	16	11,03%
<i>Yes, always</i>	1	1,49%	1	0,69%
No answer	0	0,00%	3	2,07%
Total(gross)	67	100%	145	100%

Table 6. “Does it affect you when you feel that the Germans are reserved?”

Another aspect that seemed promising in terms of yielding information about the dimension “attention to one’s emotions” is rumination. For this reason, the informants were asked whether they think a lot about it when they experience negative feelings due to the German traits. Once again, the results are in line with the findings of psychopathology insofar as the women show an increased tendency to ruminate when they are affected by the German traits, most clearly in

the case of directness, whereas more than half of the men rarely or never ruminate and only a small percentage does it often or always. Among the women, in comparison, only slightly more than a third ruminate rarely or never, while a quarter does it often or always (see table 7). Regarding social control, the tendency is similar, although in this case the differences between the sexes are not statistically significant. In this case, more than one third of the males ruminate rarely or never and barely a quarter ruminate often or always. In the case of the females, only one quarter indicated to ruminate rarely or never and one third indicated doing it often or always (see table 8). In relation to reservedness, the gender differences are less striking (see table 9). Considering these results and the fact that reservedness also turned out to be the trait that the smallest number of informants were affected by, reservedness appears to be the German trait that generates the least reaction among the Spanish migrants investigated.

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, never</i>	5	9,09%	10	7,58%
<i>Rarely</i>	25	45,45%	41	31,06%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	16	29,09%	48	36,36%
<i>Yes, often</i>	7	12,73%	32	24,24%
<i>Yes, always</i>	2	3,64%	1	0,76%
No answer	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
Total(gross)	55	100%	132	100%

Table 7. “*When the direct way of the Germans affects you, do you think about it a lot?*”

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, never</i>	2	5,00%	5	5,81%
<i>Rarely</i>	13	32,50%	7	19,77%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	16	40,00%	32	37,21%
<i>Yes, often</i>	6	15,00%	23	29,07%
<i>Yes, always</i>	3	7,50%	3	3,49%
No answer	0	0,00%	4	4,65%
Total(gross)	40	100%	86	100%

Table 8. “*When you are affected because you feel that the Germans want to control you, do you think about it a lot?*”

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, never</i>	6	17,14%	15	15,96%
<i>Rarely</i>	18	51,43%	40	42,55%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	9	25,71%	26	27,66%
<i>Yes, often</i>	1	2,86%	9	9,57%
<i>Yes, always</i>	1	2,86%	1	1,06%
No answer	0	0,00%	3	3,19%
Total(gross)	35	100%	94	100%

Table 9. “*When the reserved way of the Germans affects you, do you think about it a lot?*”

## 4.2. Clarity of emotions

In order to analyse the clarity in the discrimination of feelings, the actual feelings of the informants regarding the different traits will be evaluated and compared. In this regard, it first became clear that slightly more women than men feel indignation when they feel that the Germans are direct, as well as when they feel that the Germans try to control them (see tables 10 and 11). In the case of social sanction, as well as when they feel that the Germans are reserved, slightly more females reported a feeling of sadness (see tables 11 and 12). As to the feeling of humiliation, the differences are less noticeable. Solely in the case of directness is the percentage of females who do experience this feeling somewhat increased.

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>Indignation</i>	4	6,78%	20	13,70%
<i>Humiliation</i>	5	8,47%	20	13,70%
<i>Sadness</i>	4	6,78%	10	6,85%
<i>I am not very clear about it</i>	28	47,46%	59	40,41%
Other	18	30,51%	37	25,34%
Other	59	100%	146	100%

Table 10. “*When the Germans are direct, I feel ...*”

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>Indignation</i>	16	34,78%	41	42,71%
<i>Humiliation</i>	6	13,04%	12	12,5%
<i>Sadness</i>	3	6,52%	12	12,5%
<i>I am not very clear about it</i>	15	32,61%	17	17,71%
Other	6	13,04%	14	14,58%
Other	46	100%	96	100%

Table 11. “*When I feel that the Germans try to control me, I feel ...*”

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>Indignation</i>	3	8,33%	2	2,08%
<i>Humiliation</i>	0	%	1	1,04%
<i>Sadness</i>	9	25%	30	31,25%
<i>I am not very clear about it</i>	15	41,67%	31	32,29%
<i>Other</i>	9	25%	32	33,33%
<i>Other</i>	36	100%	96	100%

Table 12. “*When I feel that the Germans are reserved, I feel ...*”

In the last answer option to the question about the concrete feelings, the informants were given the opportunity to state other feelings that they perceive when they are affected by the German traits that had not been mentioned before. In this open-ended question the inclination of the females to perceive negative feelings more than the males was confirmed. In all cases, the females enumerated negative feelings more frequently than the males. Altogether, negative feelings were brought up fourteen times. Relating to directness these feelings were disappointment, anger, discomfort, offense and nervousness, in relation to social sanction it was unease and dislike, and with regard to reservedness it was impotence, mistrust and rejection. The males only named two clearly negative feelings, oppression with social sanction and disenchantment with reservedness. In relation to directness, not a single negative feeling was mentioned among the males. This of course supports the theory of Tannen (1990), outlined above. As expected, positive feelings were enumerated significantly less frequently overall, only once by the men, namely happiness relative to directness. The women listed positive feelings on five occasions, four in relation with directness, namely appreciation, affection and happiness. Happiness was also mentioned once in reference to social control. The rest of the “other feelings” enumerated by both sexes were simply evaluations of the Germans or the life in Germany that do not relate directly to their feelings. Finally, it is striking that when all three traits are considered a greater percentage of men than women reported not to be very clear about their feelings, this tendency being strongest with social sanction. Once again, these results are in line with those of the psychopathological studies.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the results of this study support the tendency described in the psychopathological studies, i.e., that women are more inclined to perceive negative feelings than men. In addition, they provide evidence that the perception of emotions is more differentiated and clearer among women than among men.

### 4.3. Emotional repair strategies

As commented above, in their investigations about depression Thayer et al. (2003) focused on the use of antirumination strategies and they provided strong support for women to attend to their emotions more than men and to be clearer about their feelings. In the case of depression, women also exhibit more impaired antirumination repair strategies. As far as attention to emotions and clearness of emotions are concerned, the findings of the present study seem to confirm those results. Yet, in the case of AERS, the female informants of the present study did not exhibit a higher level in impaired AERS than men but, on the contrary, they showed a higher level in successful ones.

As can be observed in table 13 in relation to directness, more female respondents reported trying not to think about it or thinking about something else when the direct way of the Germans affects them (27% vs. 13%). On the other hand, slightly more males recognized doing it only rarely (25% vs. 17%). Admittedly, the differences are relatively small.

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, never</i>	7	12,73%	15	11,36%
<i>Rarely</i>	14	25,45%	23	17,42%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	18	32,73%	37	28,03%
<i>Yes, often</i>	7	12,73%	35	26,52%
<i>Yes, always</i>	5	9,09%	12	9,09%
No answer	4	7,27%	10	7,58%
Total(gross)	55	100%	132	100%

Table 13. “*When the direct way of the Germans affects you, do you try not to think about it or think about something else?*”

In the area of social control no significant gender differences have been found in the use of AERS.

The results concerning reservedness are consistent with those obtained with directness in the sense that more females declared that they try not to think about it, or think about something else, when the reserved way of the Germans affects them (32% vs. 17%), and more males said that they do this only rarely (31% vs. 22%) (see table 14).



	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, never</i>	3	8,57%	11	11,70%
<i>Rarely</i>	11	31,43%	21	22,34%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	12	34,29%	17	18,09%
<i>Yes, often</i>	6	17,14%	30	31,91%
<i>Yes, always</i>	2	5,71%	8	8,51%
No answer	1	2,86%	7	7,45%
Total(gross)	35	100%	94	100%

Table 14. “*When the reserved way of the Germans affects you, do you try not to think about it or think about something else?*”

The last closed-ended question, that is whether the respondents try to understand why the Germans are direct, reserved and exert social control, required the informants’ conscious effort to overcome their own understanding of appropriate behaviour, with the aim of understanding that of the Germans. In this sense, the question went in two different directions, because on one hand it asked for information about the use of AERS and on the other about the possible consequences of these strategies for intercultural understanding.

The same tendency that was observed in connection with AERS could be seen here (see table 15-17). With regard to all traits, there were more men who indicated not trying to understand the trait in question or doing it rarely, and in all three cases more women tended to try to understand it often or always. In all cases, however, we can only point to slight tendencies.

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, never</i>	14	20,00%	20	13,79%
<i>Rarely</i>	11	15,71%	19	13,10%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	15	21,43%	30	20,69%
<i>Yes, often</i>	20	28,57%	49	33,79%
<i>Yes, always</i>	6	8,57%	23	15,86%
No answer	4	5,71%	4	2,76%
Total(gross)	70	100%	145	100%

Table 15. “*Do you try to understand why they are direct?*”

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, never</i>	9	18,00%	8	7,77%
<i>Rarely</i>	9	18,00%	15	14,56%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	11	22,00%	30	29,13%
<i>Yes, often</i>	13	26,00%	29	28,16%
<i>Yes, always</i>	5	10,00%	13	12,62%
No answer	3	6,00%	8	7,77%
Total(gross)	50	100%	103	100%

Table 16. “When you feel that they try to control you, do you try to understand why they are like this?”

	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
<i>No, never</i>	18	26,87%	26	17,93%
<i>Rarely</i>	15	22,39%	29	20,00%
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	13	19,40%	34	23,45%
<i>Yes, often</i>	12	17,91%	35	24,14%
<i>Yes, always</i>	7	10,45%	16	11,03%
No answer	2	2,99%	5	3,45%
Total(gross)	67	100%	145	100%

Table 17. “Do you try to understand why they are reserved?”

In summary, these results provide strong support for the claim that women pay more attention to their emotions and perceive them clearer and in a more differentiated manner. Unlike what was observed in the psychopathological studies, the female informants of this study complemented the negative thoughts that arise from rumination by the use of AERS.

## 5. The influence of other independent variables

While gender has been shown to have an influence on the majority of the dependent variables examined, i.e., on most the aspects of emotional regulation, especially in relation with directness, no influence was observed by the independent variable of Spanish region of origin. However, in relation to the education of informants, a significant influence was detected in connection with German directness. Comparing the respondents with a high level of education with those with a middle level of education, it appeared that the respondents belonging to the first group exhibited a somewhat stronger sensibility in connection with directness. Specifically in the areas of negative emotional affectedness

and rumination, the informants with high level training consistently rated higher than those with middle level training, i.e., they presented less negative and more positive answers to the corresponding questions (see table 18).

	High level training			Middle level training		
	Does it affect you?	Do you think about it a lot?	Do you try to think about sth. else?	Does it affect you?	Do you think about it a lot?	Do you try to think about sth. else?
	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %
<i>No, never</i>	17/10,69	10/7,09	16/11,35	10/18,87	5/11,63	6/13,95
<i>Rarely</i>	48/30,19	47/33,33	24/17,02	19/35,85	18/41,86	12/27,91
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	69/43,40	52/36,88	44/31,21	20/37,74	10/23,26	10/23,26
<i>Yes, often</i>	21/13,21	31/21,99	34/24,11	4/7,55	8/18,60	7/16,28
<i>Yes, always</i>	3/1,89	1/0,71	13/9,22	0/0,00	2/4,65	4/9,30
<i>No answer</i>	1/0,63	0/0,00	10/7,09	0/0,00	0/0,00	4/9,30
<b>Total(gross)</b>	159/100,00	141/100,00	141/100,00	53/100,00	43/100,00	43/100,00

Table 18. *Level of training and directness*

A clear influence on negative affectedness was also observed in connection with social control. In this case, however, a definite influence on rumination and AERS was not detected (see table 19).

	High level training			Middle level training		
	Does it affect you?	Do you think about it a lot?	Do you try to think about sth. else?	Does it affect you?	Do you think about it a lot?	Do you try to think about sth. else?
	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %
<i>No, never</i>	10/9,01	5/5,26	5/5,26	9/24,32	2/7,41	2/7,41
<i>Rarely</i>	23/20,72	23/24,21	24/25,26	8/21,62	6/22,22	7/25,93
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	27/24,32	36/37,89	36/37,89	11/29,73	11/40,74	8/29,63
<i>Yes, often</i>	37/33,33	22/23,16	19/20,00	6/16,22	7/25,93	8/29,63
<i>Yes, always</i>	8/7,21	5/5,26	6/6,32	2/5,41	1/3,70	1/3,70
<i>No answer</i>	6/5,41	4/4,21	5/5,26	1/2,70	0/0,00	1/3,70
<b>Total(gross)</b>	111/100,00	95/100,00	95/100,00	37/100,00	27/100,00	27/100,00

Table 19. *Level of training and social control*

As to reservedness, an evident influence of the level of education of informants was found in the perception of this trait, in the sense that the informants with a middle level of education turned out to be more perceptive to it than those with a high level educational training. However, in contrast to the other two traits, no influence of education on the emotional affectedness, rumination and AERS was found (see table 20). Once again, reservedness, although clearly perceived, does not seem to affect the informants as much as directness and social control.

	High level training				Middle level training			
	Do you feel that the Germans are reserved? n / %	Does it affect you? n / %	Do you think about it a lot? n / %	Do you try to think about sth. else? n / %	Do you feel that the Germans are reserved? n / %	Does it affect you? n / %	Do you think about it a lot? n / %	Do you try to think about sth. else? n / %
<i>No, never</i>	11/6,59	54/35,53	16/16,67	10/10,42	2/3,45	24/42,86	5/16,13	4/12,90
<i>Rarely</i>	5/2,99	50/32,89	43/44,79	28/29,17	3/5,17	16/28,57	15/48,39	4/12,90
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	44/26,35	31/20,39	28/29,17	20/20,83	9/15,52	8/14,29	6/19,35	9/29,03
<i>Yes, often</i>	86/51,50	14/9,2	6/6,25	25/26,04	29/50,00	6/10,71	3/9,68	9/29,03
<i>Yes, always</i>	17/10,18	1/0,66	1/1,04	7/7,29	15/25,86	1/1,79	1/3,23	3/9,68
<i>No answer</i>	4/2,40	2/1,32	2/2,08	6/6,25	0/0,00	1/1,79	1/3,23	2/6,45
<b>Total(gross)</b>	167/100	152/100	96/100	96/100	58/100	56/100,00	31/100,00	31/100,00

Table 20. *Level of training and reservedness*

	<i>Do you try to understand why the Germans are direct?</i>				
	Less than one year n / %	More than one year, but less than two years n / %	More than two years but less than five years n / %	More than five years, but less than ten years n / %	More than ten years n / %
<i>No, never</i>	0/0,00	5/26,32	10/16,67	11/14,86	7/17,95
<i>Rarely</i>	1/4,55	3/15,79	10/16,67	9/12,16	8/20,51
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	4/18,18	5/26,32	12/20,00	14/18,92	9/23,08
<i>Yes, often</i>	10/45,45	1/5,26	19/31,67	27/36,49	12/30,77
<i>Yes, always</i>	7/31,82	5/26,32	7/11,67	8/10,81	2/5,13
<i>No answer</i>	0/0,00	0/0,00	2/3,33	5/6,76	1/2,56
<b>Total(gross)</b>	22/100,00	19/100,00	60/100,00	74/100,00	39/100,00

Table 21. *Length of stay in Germany and willingness to understand directness*

A particularly interesting phenomenon is the negative impact that the informants' length of stay in Germany has on tolerance towards the German traits. In the case of directness and reservedness, the willingness to understand these traits decreases over the years (see tables 21 and 22). Vilar Sánchez (2019b: 482) also observed the negative influence of

the length of stay, namely in the acceptance of directness. The reasons for this relationship, which might be related to the migrants' expectations of a rapid integration not being fulfilled shall be addressed more closely in a future study.

<i>Do you try to understand why the Germans are reserved?</i>					
	Less than one year	More than one year, but less than two years	More than two years but less than five years	More than five years, but less than ten years	More than ten years
	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %
<b>No, never</b>	1/4,55	4/22,22	12/20,69	15/20,55	12/30,77
<b>Rarely</b>	4/18,18	4/22,22	15/25,86	12/16,44	9/23,08
<b>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</b>	6/27,27	5/27,78	10/17,24	16/21,92	9/23,08
<b>Yes, often</b>	6/27,27	1/5,56	13/22,41	20/27,40	6/15,38
<b>Yes, always</b>	4/18,18	3/16,67	7/12,07	7/9,59	2/5,13
<b>No answer</b>	1/4,55	1/5,56	1/1,72	3/4,11	1/2,56
<b>Total(gross)</b>	22/100,00	18/100,00	58/100,00	73/100,00	39/100,00

Table 22. *Length of stay in Germany and willingness to understand reservedness*

In the case of social control this correlation was not significant (see table 23).

<i>Do you try to understand why the Germans exert social control?</i>					
	Less than one year	More than one year, but less than two years	More than two years but less than five years	More than five years, but less than ten years	More than ten years
	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %
<b>No, never</b>	0/0,00	0/0,00	3/6,67	12/21,05	1/4,00
<b>Rarely</b>	2/22,22	5/38,46	9/20,00	3/5,26	5/20,00
<b>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</b>	4/44,44	2/15,38	12/26,67	12/21,05	11/44,00
<b>Yes, often</b>	3/33,33	3/23,08	13/28,89	16/28,07	4/16,00
<b>Yes, always</b>	0/0,00	2/15,38	3/6,67	9/15,79	4/16,00
<b>No answer</b>	0/0,00	1/7,69	5/11,11	5/8,77	0/0,00
<b>Total(gross)</b>	9/100,00	13/100,00	45/100,00	57/100,00	25/100,00

Table 23. *Length of stay in Germany and willingness to understand social control*

However, there is a positive correlation between the amount of time spent living in Germany and the tendency to ruminate in connection with social control (see table 24). As was already explained in the introduction, this trait causes great discomfort to many migrants because it is felt to be an invasion of their personal space. That could be the reason why it is a matter of special concern for them.

<i>When you feel that the Germans try to control you, do you think about it a lot?</i>					
	Less than one year	More than one year, but less than two years	More than two years, but less than five years	More than five years, but less than ten years	More than ten years
	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %
<i>No, never</i>	1/16,67	1/9,09	2/5,41	2/4,35	1/4,35
<i>Rarely</i>	1/16,67	3/27,27	9/24,32	11/23,91	6/26,09
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	3/50,00	6/54,55	16/43,24	13/28,26	9/39,13
<i>Yes, often</i>	0/0,00	0/0,00	8/21,62	15/32,61	6/26,09
<i>Yes, always</i>	1/16,67	0/0,00	1/2,70	3/6,52	1/4,35
<i>No answer</i>	0/0,00	1/9,09	1/2,70	2/4,35	9/0,00
<b>Total(gross)</b>	6/100,00	11/100,00	37/100,00	46/100,00	23/100,00

Table 24. *Length of stay in Germany and rumination*

<i>When you feel that the Germans try to control you, do you try not to think about it or to think about something else?</i>				
	Less than 21 years	Between 21 and 30 years	Between 31 and 40 years	More than 40 years
	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %
<i>No, never</i>	0/0,00	2/6,67	4/8,51	1/2,27
<i>Rarely</i>	0/0,00	9/30,00	14/29,79	6/13,64
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	0/0,00	12/40,00	18/38,30	15/34,09
<i>Yes, often</i>	0/0,00	2/6,67	9/19,15	17/38,64
<i>Yes, always</i>	1/100,00	2/6,67	0/0,00	4/9,09
<i>No answer</i>	0/0,00	3/10,00	2/4,26	1/2,27
<b>Total(gross)</b>	6/100,00	30/100,00	47/100,00	44/100,00

Table 25. *Age and use of AERS*

There is, however, an indication that the age of the informants could in some way counterbalance this tendency. As can be observed in table

25, the increase in age has a positive influence on the use of AERS in connection with this trait. Apart from this, no other correlation could be established between the age of the informants and the dependent variables.

An interrelation that is surprising at this point is the negative correlation that was found between language skills in German and the use of AERS in connection with directness (see table 26). A possible explanation could be that the use of AERS is no longer necessary for the migrants with good language skills, because the directness is not perceived as a negative characteristic of the Germans anymore, but as a natural part of the culturespecific communication. It is of course also possible, as in the case of the length of the stay, that they no longer even try to counteract the negative feeling caused by the directness customary in their host country.

<i>When you feel that the Germans are direct, do you try not to think about it or to think about something else?</i>					
	No language skills	Basic language skills (A1 / A2)	Intermediate language skills (B1 / B2)	Advanced language skills (C1 / C2)	Native language skills
	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %
<i>No, never</i>	0/0,00	2/9,09	12/14,63	5/7,46	3/30,00
<i>Rarely</i>	0/0,00	5/22,73	19/23,17	12/17,91	1/10,00
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	2/33,33	4/18,18	22/26,83	24/35,82	3/30,00
<i>Yes, often</i>	0/0,00	5/22,73	19/23,17	16/23,88	2/20,00
<i>Yes, always</i>	1/16,67	6/27,27	7/8,54	3/4,48	0/0,00
<i>No answer</i>	3/50,00	0/0,00	3/3,66	7/10,45	1/10,00
<b>Total(gross)</b>	<b>6/100,00</b>	<b>22/100,00</b>	<b>82/100,00</b>	<b>67/100,00</b>	<b>10/100,00</b>

Table 26. *Language skills and use of AERS*

Finally, a negative correlation between professional or other activity and rumination due to perceived social control was detected (see table 27). In this context it became clear that the individuals who have a job in Germany tend to ruminate more about social control than those who are unemployed or are in full-time education. This correlation is understandable considering that those individuals that have a job are much more exposed to social control than those who do not.

<i>When you feel that the Germans try to control you, do you think about it a lot?</i>				
	Job corresponding to training	Job not corresponding to training	Unemployed	Student
	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %
<i>No, never</i>	3/4.62	1/2.63	1/33.33	1/8.33
<i>Rarely</i>	16/24.62	8/21.05	0/0.00	4/33.33
<i>Sometimes yes, sometimes no</i>	23/35.38	17/44.74	2/66.67	4/33.33
<i>Yes, often</i>	16/24.62	11/28.95	0/0.00	1/8.33
<i>Yes, always</i>	5/7.69	1/2.63	0/0.00	0/0.00
<i>No answer</i>	2/3.080/0.00	0/0.00	0/0.00	2/16.67
<b>Total(gross)</b>	<b>65/100.00</b>	<b>38/100.00</b>	<b>3/100.00</b>	<b>12/100.00</b>

Table 27. *Professional or other activity and rumination*

Up to this point it has become clear that both, the female gender and a high level of education among Spanish migrants in Germany are influential factors in intensifying emotional regulation in many aspects, especially in connection with directness, and somewhat less in relation to social control. Interestingly, the length of stay does not have a positive effect on emotional regulation as it was found to increase rumination in connection with social control and to reduce the willingness to understand reservedness. A similar tendency was observed in connection with the activity of the informants. Those who have a job also showed an increased tendency to ruminate in relation to social control and furthermore, they were observed to have a reinforced sensibility to the perception of reservedness. It can be assumed that this negative development is due to the expectations of migrants who have been in Germany for a long time and who have managed to find a job. They probably expect social control and reservedness to decrease with the years and with their integration into professional life, but this is obviously not the case. The rest of the independent variables only had an impact on one aspect of emotional regulation at a time. Age was found to have a positive influence on the use of AERS in connection with social control and the language skills in connection with directness.

Table 28 presents the Pearson correlations between the different variables. It can be observed that Gender and D2 (.237 \*\*), D4 (.161) and D5 (.146) are more strongly correlated with each other than with D1 (.02), D3 (.01) and D6 (.07). In addition, the relationship of D2 with Gender, with respect to the rest of the variables is noticeable. Regarding the formation of the sample, it presents significance with D2 (.14) and D4 (.14). Education presents an inversely proportional correlation with D6 as this coefficient is negative (-.17). The same occurs with the sub-



ject’s Language Skills in relation to D5 (-, 152) since when one variable increases the other decreases as a result (-.15). Regarding the relationship between the different dependent variables of the domain Relative Directness, the association between D1 and D2 with a coefficient of .351 \*\* (.35 \*\*) is especially significant, as well as the association between SC1 and SC2 (see table 29) with a coefficient of .745 \*\*, and the association between R1 y R2 (see table 30) with a coefficient of .368\*\*.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Gender	-									
2. Education	-.09	-								
3. Length of stay	.08	.25**	-							
4. Language skills	.26**	.22**	.46**	-						
5. D1	.02	-.03	-.06	-.01	-					
6. D2	.23**	.14*	-.01	-.10	.35**	-				
7. D3	.01	.10	.09	.00	.29**	.33**	-			
8. D4	.16*	.14*	.02	-.04	.18**	.63**	.33**	-		
9. D5	.16*	.11	-.04	-.15*	.20**	.55**	.29**	.48**	-	
10. D6	.07	.07	-.17*	-.02	.23**	.31**	.10	.31**	.25**	-

Note: D1 = Perception of Directness (D); D2 = Affectedness due to D; D3 = Feelings in connection with D; D4 = Rumination as a consequence of D; D5 = AERS in connection with D; D6 = Understanding of D  
\* indicates that the p-value is < .05; \*\* indicates that the p-value is < .01.

Table 28. Spearman correlations of the independent variables with respect to the domain Relative Directness

Table 29 shows that the Age of the sample subjects and SC5 (.16 \*) are strongly correlated. Furthermore, the Activity of the informants presents an inversely proportional level of association with SC 4 (-.14 \*). Finally, the Education shows significance with SC2 (.17 \*) and SC4 (.15 \*).

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
1. Age	-											
2. Gender	.04	-										
3. Education	.17*	-.09	-									
4. Origin	.01	-.03	.12	-								
5. Length of stay	.51*	.08	.25**	.00	-							
6. Activity	-.24*	-.04	-.26**	.07	-.41**	-						
7. SC1	.00	.04	.09	.11	.12	-.10	-					
8. SC2	.11	-.06	.17*	.08	.13	-.12	.74**	-				
9. SC3	.12	.04	.08	.11	.13	-.00	.48**	.47**	-			
10. SC4	.09	-.05	.15*	.04	.15*	-.14*	.71**	.90**	.46**	-		
11. SC5	.16*	-.02	.08	.06	.15*	-.05	.65**	.74**	.57**	.67**	-	
12. SC6	.02	-.06	.04	.01	.12	-.06	.61**	.62**	.47**	.65**	.59**	-

Note: SC1 = Perception of Social Control (SC); SC2 = Affectedness due to SC; SC3 = Feelings in connection with SC; SC4 = Rumination as a consequence of SC; SC5 = AERS in connection with SC; SC6 = Understanding of SC  
\* indicates that the p-value is < .05; \*\* indicates that the p-value is < .01.

Table 29. Spearman correlations of the independent variables with respect to the domain Social Control

Regarding table 30, the Activity of the informants presents a level of association with R1 of (.16 \*), just as training presents a high level of inversely proportional significance with R1 (-.19 \*\*).

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
1. Gender	-										
2. Education	-.09	-									
3. Origin	.03	.12	-								
4. Length of stay	.08	.25**	.00	-							
5. Activity	-.04	-.26**	.07	-.41**	-						
6. R1	.05	-.19**	.03	.00	.16*	-					
7. R2	-.07	-.03	.05	-.06	.06	.36**	-				
8. R3	-.10	.01	.04	-.04	.10	.28**	.64**	-			
9. R4	-.09	.02	.07	.03	.02	.30**	.76**	.56**	-		
10. R5	-.10	.01	.03	.00	.10	.24**	.64**	.64**	.67**	-	
11. R6	-.10	.03	.00	-.16*	.11	.25**	.38**	.38**	.46**	.39*	-

Note: R1 = Perception of Reservedness (R); R2 = Affectedness due to R; R3 = Feelings in connection with R; R4 = Rumination as a consequence of R; R5 = AERS in connection with R; R6 = Understanding of R  
\* indicates that the p-value is < .05; \*\* indicates that the p-value is less than / < .01.

Table 30. *Spearman correlations of the independent variables with respect to the domain Relative Reservedness*

## 6. Conclusions

The results of this study have confirmed the results of Vilar Sánchez (2019b), insofar as the Spanish migrant women compared to the men displayed an increased sensitivity to the analysed traits of the Germans, directness, social control and reservedness, which differ radically from those of the Spaniards. As was explained in the beginning, in the aforementioned study the women were more affected by these traits than the men. The present study offers possible reasons for this tendency because it shows that the analysed female migrants, in comparison to the males, have an increased ability to recognize and understand their emotions and above all they display an increased tendency to ruminate. Yet, most of the women counteracted this tendency with an increased ability to regulate their emotions through AERS. According to the data, this ability seems to lead to a greater willingness to understand the views of others and thus possibly to a greater willingness to integrate into the host society. The differences between the sexes are in no case dramatic, but the trends described are clearly recognizable and provide a coherent, convincing picture of the situation. It has also been shown that the level of education of individuals has a similar influence on the perception and handling of the traits described here. The other independent variables do not seem to have such an influence, or if so, only for isolated aspects.

The results of this study suggest that a well developed emotional regulation in all its aspects, i.e., attention to emotions, clarity of emotions and emotional repair, among migrants but certainly also among the members of the host society, should counteract intercultural conflicts because it enables the individual to handle distressing emotions in relation to the foreign culture. And of course that is the prerequisite for the individual to be open to the new culture and its members. However, these are basic personal psychological skills and it cannot be the task of foreign language teaching or integration courses to foster them. Rather, their development has to be initiated in early childhood education.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Another site of the *Deutsche Welle*, where the German traits are discussed: DW3, especially in the section “Meet the Germans”.
- <sup>2</sup> Tannen (2007: 307) relativizes this statement in the 2007 edition of her book by stating that “women and men tend to be direct or indirect about different topics”.
- <sup>3</sup> The questionnaire and the data that support the findings of this study are available in: <https://digibug.ugr.es/handle/10481/63245>.

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