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Does Migration Lead to Acculturation of Gender-Related Attitudes? Gender Stereotypes, Perceived Gender Inequality, and Support for Collective Actions Toward Gender Equality

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ABSTRACT

This study examines whether residing in a more gender-equal country (Spain) influences Romanian immigrants' gender-related attitudes. Participants ($N=572$; 202 Romanian immigrants, 187 Spaniards, 183 Romanians) completed an online questionnaire. Results show that, compared to Romanians, immigrants perceived: a) agentic roles in the household as less traditional and, in turn, attributed men more immorality; b) communal roles in the household as less traditional and, consequently, attributed men less immorality and women less sociability; c) manifested higher support for gender equality collective actions when gender inequality was perceived as low. Implications of the acculturation process of gender-related attitudes are discussed.


KEYWORDS

Romanian immigrants in Spain; acculturation; gender stereotypes; perceived gender inequality; collective actions toward gender equality; non-traditional agentic and communal roles

Migration is a global phenomenon that gives rise to pluralistic societies in which individuals and groups with different cultural backgrounds coexist. Consequently, individuals experience acculturation, a challenging process which fosters change at cognitive, affective and behavioural levels. In this process, immigrants gain knowledge about cultural values and the skills necessary for proper social functioning in the settlement country (see Ward & Szabó, 2019). Furthermore, empirical evidence suggests that immigrants undergo shifts in their social and cultural attitudes, including their views on gender roles and gender equality (e.g., Friberg & Jahanlu, 2024; van Klingeren & Spierings, 2020) and attitudes towards homosexuality (e.g., Röder & Lubbers, 2016). Findings from this line of work indicate that, over time, immigrants' social attitudes acculturate and become more similar to those of the host majority and less similar to those of their counterparts from the country of origin. This line of inquiry has made a valuable contribution regarding gender-related attitudes, focusing primarily on gender role attitudes. However, the gender belief system of individuals is more complex and includes different components in addition to gender role attitudes, such as gender stereotypes and conceptions of femininity and masculinity (Deaux, 1985; Kite & Deaux, 1987). Moreover, in accordance with research indicating that stereotypes are dynamic, context-dependent constructs (e.g., Bosak et al., 2018; Wilde & Diekman, 2005), evidence regarding immigrants' socio-cognitive adaptation (e.g., Stanciu & Vauclair, 2018) indicates that immigrants' stereotype of relevant social groups may also acculturate, becoming more similar to those held by natives from the host country.

This paper builds on previous research and aims to examine whether and how living in a more gender-equal social context influences immigrants' attribution of stereotype content traits (e.g., morality, competence) assigned to both men and women. In particular, the study will focus

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on whether the gender stereotype content of Romanian immigrants residing in Spain, a country with higher gender-equality levels compared to Romania, differs from those of Spaniards and those of Romanians from Romania. In addition, the study extends its examination to the influence of this context on perceived gender inequality, and intentions to advocate for gender equality through participation in collective actions. Furthermore, considering social role theory (Koenig & Eagly, 2014)—which links gender stereotypes to the societal division of labor—this study investigates perceived gender role non-traditionalism (i.e., estimated percentages of men/women in counter-stereotypical roles) in public (occupational) and private (domestic) domains as a potential mechanism underlying intergroup differences.

The acculturation of immigrants' stereotypes

The model of stereotype accommodation (Stanciu & Vauclair, 2018) posits that one of the distinct possible outcomes of immigrants' process of acculturation and cultural adaptation to the host society is stereotype accommodation. The authors propose that immigrants learn new information about distinct social groups relevant in their host culture and modify their pre-existing mental schemes about these social groups to the extent that they are motivated to change and the new information challenges their pre-existing stereotypes. Empirical studies regarding immigrants' stereotype accommodation are rather scarce and have mainly focused on ethnic relations (e.g., Cuadrado et al., 2016; Lönnqvist et al., 2013). As far as we know only one study (Stanciu et al., 2019) has found proof of immigrants' stereotype accommodation regarding a different social group, namely politicians. The findings revealed that immigrants' stereotypes of politicians resembled the mainstream host locals' stereotypes more than to the mainstream locals from the immigrants' country of origin the longer their stay in the host country and the more they preferred to adopt the host culture. We aim to contribute to this line of research by examining the socio-cognitive accommodation of immigrants' gender stereotype content.

Gender equality level and gender stereotypes

Ambivalent evaluations of women as warm but incompetent and of men as cold but competent present similar cross-cultural patterns (see Fiske, 2017). However, gender stereotypes are a dynamic context-dependent construct (e.g., Wilde & Diekmann, 2005) that can change due to social changes taking place in a particular social context. The progress made over the past decades in achieving gender equality, although at a slow pace and unevenly across countries, constitutes one such major social change with important consequences for men's and women's roles in societies. Eagly et al. (2020) longitudinal meta-analysis based on data from different US public surveys conducted over the past 50 years provides evidence in this regard. Their findings revealed that the attribution of communion to women more than to men has increased over time for those who perceive gender differences. Moreover, women's perceived competence has also increased, with women being considered even more competent and intelligent than men by those who perceive gender differences.

Recent cross-cultural studies also analysed the effect of objectively measured country-level gender equality (e.g., GGGI) on women's and men's self-views (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2022) and prescriptive and proscriptive gender stereotypes (Bosson et al., 2022). Specifically, Kosakowska-Berezecka et al. (2022) found that in more compared to less gender-egalitarian countries men view themselves as less agentic and communal while the higher level of gender equality only diminished women's self-view of communion. In less egalitarian countries, the prescriptive expectations regarding men's agency are stronger than the prescriptive expectations about women's communion (Bosson et al., 2022). As the authors highlight, "people in less gender-equal countries want men to be competent, determined, and independent more strongly than they want women to be compassionate, understanding, and warm."

These studies provide compelling evidence of the relationship between the level of gender equality and the perceived gender stereotype content, showing that variation in gender equality levels across time in the same cultural context or across nations in the same temporal moment may influence gender stereotypes. The present work aims to further contribute to this line by examining if and how the transition between contexts with different levels of gender equality influences gender stereotypes. Put simply: does migrating to a more gender-egalitarian country change immigrants' gender stereotypes?

Perceived gender-roles and gender stereotypes: a proposed mechanism

According to social role theory (Koenig & Eagly, 2014), people infer women's and men's attributes from observations of their social roles. As the social roles of men and women change, so does the perception of the characteristics possessed by men and women given that they need to possess the traits necessary to adequately develop the new role. Several studies (e.g., Bosak et al., 2018; Diekmann et al., 2005; Gustafsson Sendén et al., 2019; Wilde & Diekmann, 2005) support the relation of people's perception of gender roles with gender stereotypes. Likewise, a study carried out by Gustafsson Sendén et al. (2019) in Sweden, the most egalitarian country in Europe, found that perceived changes over time in gender roles, due to the implementation and adoption of gender-egalitarian norms, were related with an increase in masculine characteristics associated with women. Interestingly, men did not gain in communal characteristics; instead, their perceived agency decreased due to the perceived change in women's social roles. Based on the revised literature, we expect that the differences in perception of gender role distribution in the residence country will influence gender stereotypes. Most previous studies assessing gender stereotype content have focused on the two general dimensions of social perception: agency/competence and communion/warmth. However, theoretical and empirical advancements (e.g., Abele et al., 2016, see also, Stanciu et al., 2017) have challenged the traditional-dual framework and have demonstrated that these dimensions are multi-faceted. In this line, recent work aiming to integrate the insights of five models of social perception (e.g., Abele et al., 2021) has shown that each focal dimension comprises two distinct facets: competence/ability and assertiveness (agency/competence, redefined as the vertical dimension), and morality and sociability/friendliness (communion/warmth, redefined as the horizontal dimension). Furthermore, the usefulness of a multi-dimensional framework for assessing gender stereotypes has been empirically tested (e.g., Hentschel et al., 2019). To obtain a comprehensive image of the descriptive stereotype content attributed to men and women, we will consider the dimensions of morality, sociability, competence, and assertiveness as they capture key traits relevant to gender stereotypes. Additionally, we will evaluate the dimension of immorality as research has shown that negative information in the moral domain is more diagnostic than positive information in shaping social evaluations (see, Brambilla & Leach, 2014). This multidimensional approach encompassing positive and negative aspects of evaluation provides a more nuanced perspective on how men and women are stereotyped.

Context of the present study

Stanciu and Vauclair (2018) suggest that for immigrants' stereotype of a certain social group to accommodate, a certain degree of similarity between the destination and the host countries should exist but, at the same time, the knowledge of the social group should be different between the two countries. We will focus on Romania as the immigrant-sending country and Spain as the destination country, thus, we will examine Romanian immigrants' process of gender stereotype accommodation. Romanians are the second-largest immigrant group in Spain and the largest from the EU (Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), 2022). While both countries share Latin and Christian roots, they differ culturally. As an East-Central European country, Romania is high in embeddedness (i.e., emphasizes maintaining the status quo and restraining actions that might disrupt in-group solidarity or the traditional order) and hierarchy (i.e., relies on hierarchical systems of ascribed roles; the

unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources is defined as legitimate and even desirable) whereas Spain, a West European country, is oriented towards egalitarianism (i.e., emphasizes the recognition of others as moral equals who share basic interests as human beings) and harmony (i.e., emphasize fitting into the social and natural world, accepting, preserving, and appreciating the way things are) and de-emphasizes embeddedness, mastery and hierarchy (Schwartz, 2014).

Romania is a relatively feminine country (i.e., social gender roles overlap; both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life) with a very high power distance (i.e., the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions -like the family- accept and expect that power is distributed unequally; Hofstede et al., 2010; see also, Gavreliuc & Gavreliuc, 2018), high scores in traditional and survival values (The Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map, 2023), and is characterized by a combination of different classes of gender ideologies such as neo-traditionalism, familialistic, and choice egalitarianism (Begall et al., 2023). In contrast, Spain is characterized as an egalitarian country with moderate scores for power distance (Hofstede et al., 2010) in which secular-rational and self-expression values are emphasized (The Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map, 2023) and the predominant gender ideology is egalitarian (Begall et al., 2023). In countries in which embeddedness is an important cultural value, gender role attitudes are traditional, whereas in countries that emphasize egalitarian values progressive gender roles are more prevalent (Lomazzi & Seddig, 2020). The differences in cultural values between the two countries suggest that there should be sufficient cross-cultural variation in gender stereotypes to facilitate immigrants' stereotypes to change.

Regarding overall gender equality levels, Romania ranks 26th in the ranking of the Gender Equality Index (European Institute of Gender Equality, EIGE, 2022) being 14.9 percentage points below the European average, while Spain ranks the sixth, 5.7 points above. A closer look at the specific domains of the index reveals important cross-country differences in power, knowledge and health domains while differences in work, money, and time domains are smaller. Relevant to our study are the power domain and the care subdomain. The power domain reflects women's presence in leadership and decision-making roles at a national level, roles traditionally considered "a man's job." The care subdomain quantifies women's and men's participation in domestic care-related tasks which traditionally have been considered "a woman's job." The data for the power domain reveals that while in Spain women participate in decision-making almost to the same degree as men (women: 42%, men: 58%) in Romania women's participation is very low (women: 20%, men: 80%). Regarding the care subdomain, the gender gap in domestic care-related tasks favors women by 34 percentage points in Romania and 42 percentage points in Spain.

Overview

Bearing in mind that gender is one of the main axes shaping social relations (Ridgeway, 2006) and organizing social structure with direct consequences at intra and interpersonal levels and at macro/contextual levels (Risman, 2018), the present work aimed to extend and contribute to the strand of research on acculturation of gender-related attitudes among immigrants by focusing on gender stereotypes. Relatedly, instead of the two traditional dimensions of gender stereotypes content, we considered a multidimensional perspective assessing morality, sociability, immorality competence and assertiveness content. In line with social role theory (e.g., Koenig & Eagly, 2014), we expected the perceived gender role non-traditionalism in public and private settings to act as a mechanism driving intergroup differences in gender stereotypes. Additionally, we examined whether the influence of a more egalitarian context extended beyond gender stereotypes to also affect immigrants' perceived gender inequality and support for collective actions towards gender equality. Evidence suggests that social representations of gender differences in different life spheres (e.g., family, work) influence the subjective perception of gender inequality (Gurieva et al., 2022) and, by extension, how people respond to the perceived inequality (e.g., support for collective actions; Schwartz-Salazar et al., 2024). Therefore, we expected intergroup differences in the perceived non-traditionalism of gender roles in public and private settings to be associated with the

perceived level of gender inequality and intentions to support collective actions towards gender equality. Finally, given that perception of inequality and injustice is a well-established antecedent of collective actions (see van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013), we examined whether intergroup differences in support for collective actions are contingent on the perceived level of gender inequality. On the one hand, immigrants' exposure to a more egalitarian context could falsely signal the attainment of gender equality, thereby dampening their advocacy for gender equality compared to their counterparts from their country of origin. On the other hand, if immigrants have indeed internalised to some extent the more gender egalitarian views prevalent in the host country, they would be more sensitive to gender disparities and amplify their advocacy for gender equality more than their counterparts from their country of origin.

Method

Participants

An a priori analysis carried out with G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) indicated a minimum sample size of 495 participants to detect a small-medium effect size ($f=0.14$) with a one-way ANOVA for three groups or a two-way ANOVA for 6 groups with $\alpha=0.05$ and power = .80. Given the high attrition rate of web surveys, we aimed for a minimum sample size of 600 participants with complete data. A total of 855 initiated the questionnaire, however, only 643 participants (241 Romanian immigrants in Spain; 202 Romanians, and 200 Spaniards) completed it. Another 71 participants were further excluded due to not having their current residence in Spain (for Spaniards and immigrants) and in Romania (for Romanians), due to their ethnic/national origin or for failing attention checks. The final sample size consisted of 572 participants (202 Romanian immigrants living in Spain, 183 Romanians, and 187 Spaniards). For sociodemographic data of each group please see [Supplementary Information \(SI\), Table S1](#).

Procedure

Participants were recruited *via* social media and direct contact. Social media posts included a questionnaire link and recruitment call shared in interest-based groups (e.g., Romanian immigrants in Spain). In direct recruitment, a researcher approached group members in various venues; participants completed the questionnaire on-site or later *via* QR code. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and conducted through a Qualtrics-based questionnaire. Spaniards and Romanians received it in their native language; Romanian immigrants chose Romanian or Spanish. Participants were randomly assigned to evaluate either men or women, provided consent, and completed the measures. They were then thanked and debriefed. The study was approved by the University Ethics Committee (Approval Number: 32021).

Variables and measures¹

The measures were displayed in the order they are next presented. For multi-item measures, the order of presentation of the items was randomized. The descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients of the measures are presented in SI, [Table S2](#) and [Table S3](#).

Perceived non-traditionalism in agentic and communal roles

To assess agentic role non-traditionalism, participants estimated the percentage of women in male-dominated occupations (mechanic, judge, politician, military, lawyer, police officer, CEO) and in domestic tasks typically performed by men (car repairs, paying household bills, changing light bulbs, solving technology problems, and doing home repairs). For communal role non-traditionalism, they estimated the percentage of men in female-dominated occupations (housekeeper, geriatric aide,

psychologist, nurse, secretary) and in traditionally female domestic tasks (cooking, house cleaning, doing the laundry, caring for the children, caring for elderly or disabled relatives). Occupational items were drawn from Froehlich et al. (2020); domestic tasks from Gustafsson Sendén et al. (2019). The item *caring for elderly or disabled relatives* was based on the Care Activities subdomain of the Gender Equality Index (Barbieri et al., 2017). Estimates were made on a 0–100 scale.

Stereotype dimensions

Participants rated either men or women (depending on the assigned target group) on a five-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *a lot*) for perceived morality, sociability, competence, immorality, and assertiveness. Morality (*sincere, honest, trustworthy*), sociability (*likeable, friendly, warm*), and competence (*intelligent, skilful, competent*) were assessed using nine items from López-Rodríguez et al. (2013). Assertiveness (*self-confident, assertive, never give up easily, able to stand up well under pressure, have leadership qualities*) was measured with five items from Abele et al. (2016), and immorality (*treacherous, false, malicious*) with three items from Sayans-Jiménez et al. (2017).

Perception of gender inequality

The participants indicated their agreement from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) with the following item extracted from the scale of perceived legitimacy of gender hierarchy developed by Glick and Whitehead (2010): *Overall, in the Spanish/Romanian society currently women are treated less fairly than men*

Support for collective actions toward gender equality

The 6-items scale developed by Besta et al. (2024) was used to measure the participants' willingness to engage in a series of collective actions toward gender equality from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*a lot*).

Attention check

One item was hidden among the others, and participants were asked to mark a specific number.

Sociodemographic variables

Participants were asked to provide information regarding their sex, age, level of education, main occupation, country of birth, country of birth of the parents, nationality, country of residence, year of arrival to the country of residence, and migration history.

Data analysis

Cross-group differences were examined with univariate and multivariate analysis of covariance. To examine the role of the perceived role non-traditionalism in public and private settings in the process of immigrants' stereotypes accommodation, two second-stage moderated mediation analyses were conducted for each stereotype dimension using model 14 from the macro PROCESS for SPSS (Hayes, 2022). Additionally, using model 4 of the same macro, we examined how cross-group differences in the perceived role non-traditionalism in public and private settings were associated with gender role attitudes, perceived gender inequality in the residence country and support for collective actions toward gender equality. Finally, a moderation analysis was conducted using model 1 to examine whether the level of perceived gender inequality in the residence country modulated intergroup differences in support for collective actions toward gender inequality. Romanian immigrants were considered as the reference group. To conduct inferences about the effects, 95% percentile confidence intervals were estimated based on 5000 bootstrap samples. The effects are significant when 95% CI does not include zero. All the analyses included the participants' sex and level of education as covariates.

Results

Effect of the origin group on perceived non-traditionalism in agentic and communal roles in private and public settings

The effect of the origin group on perceived role non-traditionalism was significant, Pillai's Trace = 0.078, $F(8, 1130) = 5.75$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = .04$. Univariate analyses revealed significant effects on agentic occupational non-traditionalism, $F(2, 567) = 3.38$, $p = 0.035$, $\eta^2 = 0.012$, agentic task non-traditionalism, $F(2, 567) = 12.71$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.043$, communal occupational non-traditionalism, $F(2, 567) = 10.14$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.035$, and communal task non-traditionalism, $F(2, 567) = 8.50$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = .029$. Post-hoc Bonferroni comparisons showed that immigrants scored higher in agentic occupational non-traditionalism than Romanians ($p < 0.001$) while no significant differences were found with Spaniards ($p = 0.377$) or between Romanians and Spaniards ($p = 0.590$, see SI, Table S2). Immigrants and Spaniards scored higher than Romanians did in agentic task non-traditionalism ($p = 0.017$; $p < 0.001$), communal occupational non-traditionalism ($p = 0.002$; $p < 0.001$) and communal task non-traditionalism ($p < 0.001$; $p = 0.004$) while no differences were found between immigrants and Spaniards for these dimensions of role non-traditionalism ($p > 0.129$, see SI, Table S2). In sum, Romanian immigrants' perception of gender roles in both public and private settings mimics the Spaniards' perception and is less traditional compared to the perception of their autochthonous counterparts.

Effect of the origin group on the stereotype content assigned to men and women

Significant multivariate main effects on stereotype dimensions were found for the origin group, Pillai's Trace = 0.053, $F(10, 1122) = 3.06$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.027$, and the target sex, Pillai's Trace = 0.252, $F(5, 560) = 37.73$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = .252$. However, the multivariate interaction effect was not significant, Pillai's Trace = 0.022, $F(10, 1122) = 1.26$, $p = 0.247$, $\eta_p^2 = .011$. The main univariate effect of origin was significant for morality, $F(2, 564) = 3.37$, $p = 0.035$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.012$, sociability, $F(2, 564) = 7.52$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.026$, competence, $F(2, 564) = 6.31$, $p = 0.002$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.022$, and assertiveness, $F(2, 564) = 8.48$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.029$, but not for immorality, $F(2, 564) = 2.76$, $p = 0.064$, $\eta_p^2 = .010$. Post-hoc Bonferroni comparisons showed that regardless of the sex of the target, immigrants considered the target as less competent compared to Spaniards ($p = 0.030$) and as more assertive compared to Romanians ($p = 0.027$). Moreover, Romanians compared to Spaniards considered the target as less moral ($p = 0.038$), sociable ($p < 0.001$), competent ($p = 0.003$) and assertive ($p < 0.001$) regardless of its sex. No other comparisons were significant ($p > 0.056$). See SI, Table S3.

The univariate main effect of the target's sex was also significant for morality, $F(1, 564) = 81.58$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.126$, sociability, $F(1, 564) = 84.21$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.130$, competence, $F(1, 564) = 177.66$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.240$, assertiveness, $F(1, 566) = 44.02$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.072$, but not for immorality ($p = 0.177$). Post-hoc Bonferroni comparisons (see SI, Table S3) showed that across origin group, women compared to men were perceived as more moral ($p < 0.001$), sociable ($p < 0.001$), competent ($p < 0.001$) and assertive ($p < 0.001$).

Effect of the origin group on perceived gender inequality and support for collective actions toward gender equality

The main effect of origin was significant for perceived gender inequality, $F(2, 567) = 36.08$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.113$, and support for collective actions, $F(2, 567) = 6.38$, $p = 0.002$, $\eta_p^2 = .022$. Post-hoc comparisons revealed that the perceived gender inequality was lower for immigrants compared to Romanians ($p < 0.001$) and to Spaniards ($p < 0.001$), and similar for Romanians and Spaniards ($p = 0.960$). Support for collective actions toward gender inequality was manifested to a greater extent by Spaniards than by immigrants ($p = 0.008$) and Romanians ($p = 0.009$) and similarly by immigrants and Romanians ($p = 1.00$). See SI, Table S2.

Gender stereotypes accommodation: conditional process analyses

The analyses revealed that when immigrants were compared to Romanians the Index of Moderated Mediation (IMM) was significant for the moderated indirect effect on the immorality dimension *via* agentic task non-traditionalism, IMM = 0.05, 95% CI (0.002, 0.10) and communal task non-traditionalism, IMM = -0.09, 95% CI (-0.20, -0.02), and on the sociability dimension *via* communal task non-traditionalism, IMM = 0.07, 95% CI (0.07, 0.15). The indirect effects (IE) on immorality were significant for men targets (*via* agentic task non-traditionalism, $b = -0.04$, 95% CI [-0.08, -0.01]; *via* communal task non-traditionalism: $b = -0.07$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.13], but not for women targets (95% CI included zero in both cases) whereas the indirect effect on sociability was significant for women target, $b = 0.04$, 95% CI [0.004, 0.10], but not for men (see SI, Table S4). As shown in Figure 1, immigrants, compared to Romanians, expressed a less traditional perception of the distribution of gender roles in the household (gender role non-traditionalism in private settings). Specifically, compared to Romanians, immigrants perceived a higher percentage of women performing typically masculine tasks at home (agentic task non-traditionalism), and a higher percentage of men performing typically feminine tasks (communal task non-traditionalism). Agentic task non-traditionalism was positively related to the attribution of immorality to men (but not to women), whereas communal task non-traditionalism was negatively related to the immorality attributed to men (but not to women), and negatively related to the perceived sociability of women (but not of men). Thus, on the one hand, perceiving that more women perform masculine household tasks was associated with immigrants' perception of men as more immoral than did Romanians. On the other hand, perceiving that more men perform communal household tasks was associated with immigrants' perception of men as less immoral and of women as less sociable than did Romanians.

The moderated indirect effects *via* agentic and communal task non-traditionalism on the remaining stereotype dimensions were not significant. Moreover, the moderated indirect effects *via* perceived gender role non-traditionalism in public settings (agentic and communal occupations) were not significant for none of the stereotype dimensions. Likewise, when immigrants were compared to Spaniards, none of the moderated indirect effects were significant. See SI, Table S4 and S5 for detailed descriptions of the effects.

Gender role non-traditionalism and perceived gender inequality and support for collective actions toward gender equality: mediation analyses

The analysis revealed that differences in the level of perceived gender inequality between immigrants and Romanians and between immigrants and Spaniards were associated to a certain extent with the perceived gender role non-traditionalism in private and public settings (see SI, Table S6 for the all the indirect effects). On the one hand, perceiving a higher percentage of women performing masculine tasks in the household (agentic task non-traditionalism) was associated with immigrants' perception of higher gender inequality compared to Romanians (IE: $b = -0.06$, 95% CI [-0.13, -0.01]), but lower compared to Spaniards (IE: $b = 0.04$, 95% CI [0.001, 0.09]). On the other hand, perceiving a higher percentage of men who perform feminine tasks in the

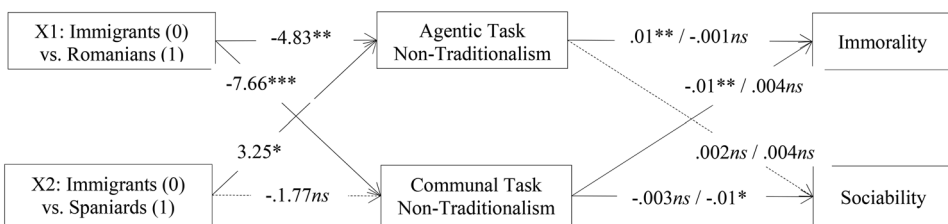


Figure 1. Relative Conditional Indirect Effect of the Origin Group on Sociability and Immorality dimensions *via* Gender Roles Non-Traditionalism (Agentic and Communal) in Private Settings.

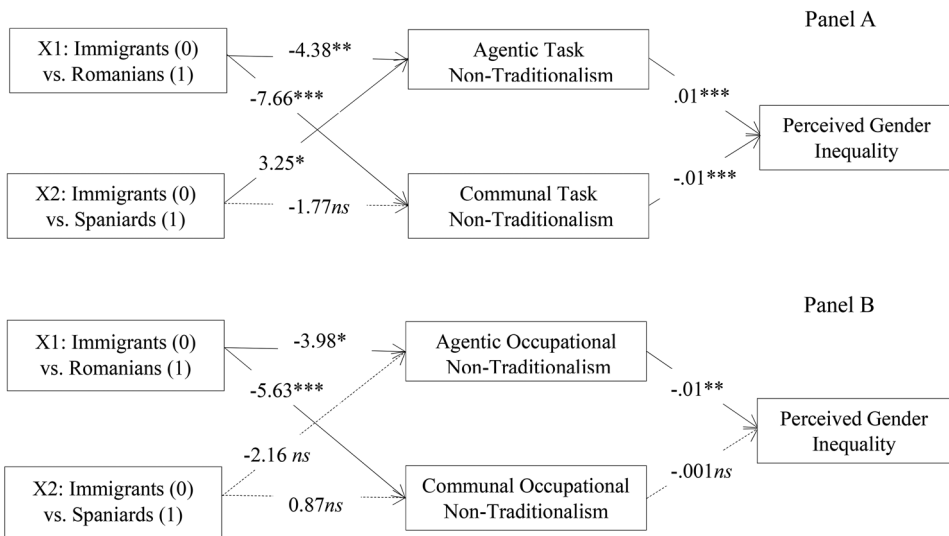


Figure 2. Relative Indirect Effects of Origin Group on the Perceived Gender Inequality in the Country of Residence via Perceived Role Non-Traditionalism in Private (Panel A) and Public (Panel B) Settings.

household (communal task non-traditionalism) or of women holding typical masculine occupations (agentic occupational non-traditionalism) was associated with immigrants’ lower perception of gender inequality compared to Romanians (IE: $b=0.10$, 95% CI [0.04, 0.18]; IE: $b=0.05$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.12]). See Figure 2.

Perceived gender inequality and intergroup differences on support for collective actions toward gender equality: moderation analysis

The analyses revealed that intergroup differences on support for collective actions toward gender equality depended on the level of perceived gender inequality in the country of residence, $F(2, 564) = 3.42$, $p=0.033$, for immigrants compared to Romanians ($b=0.21$, $t[564]=2.47$, 95% CI [0.04, 0.37]), but no for immigrants compared to Spaniards ($b=0.16$, $t[564]=1.84$, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.32]). Specifically, when the perceived level of gender inequality was high, no differences were found in support for collective actions toward gender equality between immigrants and Romanians ($b=0.002$, 95% CI [-0.32, 0.33]) or Spaniards ($b=0.29$, 95% CI [-0.02, 0.60]). However, when the level of perceived gender inequality was low, immigrants manifested higher support for collective actions toward gender equality compared to Romanians ($b=-0.55$, 95% CI [-0.87, -0.23]) and a similar level of support compared to Spaniards ($b=-0.12$, 95% CI [-0.47, 0.21]). See Figure 3.

Discussion

The aim of the current study was to examine whether immigrants’ gender-related views acculturate, and the factors affecting this process. Particularly, extending previous work, we focused on whether and how immigrants’ gender stereotypes, their perception of gender inequality, and their intentions to support collective actions toward gender equality were influenced by the perceived gender-role non-traditionalism in public and private settings. Furthermore, we sought to determine whether intergroup differences in support for collective actions toward gender equality were contingent on the level of perceived gender inequality.

Regarding gender stereotypes, the findings indicate that cross-group differences in gender stereotype content were affected by the perceived distribution of men and women in non-traditional gender roles. Particularly, on the one hand, we found that immigrants’ perception of agentic-roles

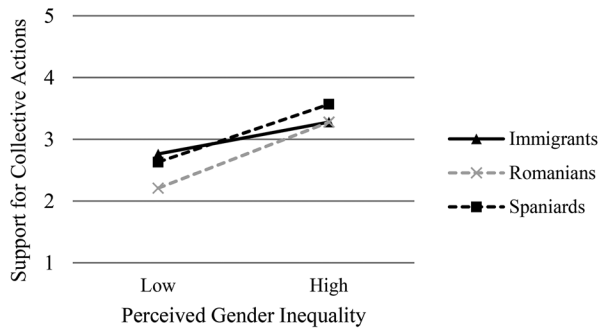


Figure 3. Intergroup Differences on Support for Collective Actions at Low and High Levels of Perceived Gender Inequality in the Country of Residence.

in the household as less traditional was related to perceiving men as more immoral compared to Romanian. On the other hand, immigrants' perception of communal roles in the household as less traditional was associated with perceiving men as less immoral and women as less sociable than Romanian did. Interestingly, only differences in the perceived distribution of gender roles in private settings (i.e., household task) but not in public settings (i.e., occupations) were associated with stereotypes. Moreover, the results indicate that immigrants, compared to their counterparts from the origin country, evaluated men more negatively when women, the opposite sex, were perceived as performing household tasks that should be "a man's work" (agentic household tasks) but at the same time, they evaluated men more positively when they incurred in household tasks traditionally considered as feminine (communal household tasks). Similarly, women were evaluated more negatively by immigrants when men, the opposite sex, were perceived to carry out household task considered to be "a woman's work" (communal household tasks). Research has shown that Romanian immigrants in Spain manifest more disposition to adopt the Spanish norms and customs in public/peripheral domains (e.g., politics, economy, employment) while maintaining the norms and customs from the country of origin in private/core domains such as family, values, and religion (Navas & Rojas, 2010). Additionally, Romania is a country where diverse ambivalent gender ideologies coexist, the main one being neo-traditionalism which combines a traditional view on men's roles in the family (e.g., criticizing involvement in carrying activities) with the acceptance of women's, including mothers, in the workforce (Begall et al., 2023), thus, it could be expected that initially Romanian immigrants gender views aligned with this ideology. The perception that gender roles in the household are more egalitarian in the Spanish context could have threatened immigrants' gender belief systems. Adhering to these norms could have been perceived as a potential loss of important values. When beliefs fundamental for individuals' identity are threatened, attempts to diminish the threat can involve a stronger endorsement of those beliefs and the penalization of those who try to disrupt them. It is possible that immigrants may have reinforced their views on gender roles even more than their counterparts from the country of origin (see SI), and may have negatively evaluated men and women who deviated from the expected roles (Rudman & Glick, 2021) as a way of preventing the potential threat to cherished values. It is somewhat surprising, however, that these negative evaluations emerged not when men and women performed atypical roles, but when they failed to enact their expected gender roles. Two aspects might have contributed in this regard. On the one hand, current egalitarian principles support men and women's engagement in gender-atypical roles. On the other hand, the more egalitarian distribution of gender roles is perceived in zero-sum terms. Consequently, a higher proportion of men assuming atypical gender roles was accompanied by a lower proportion of women fulfilling their expected roles, while a higher percentage of women performing atypical gender roles also indicated that fewer men were performing their expected gender roles. The data suggests that the observation of a decline in the proportion of men and women performing their expected roles was perceived by

immigrants as a transgression of traditional gender roles which, in turn, resulted in negative evaluations of each gender group.

Regarding the perceived gender inequality and support for collective actions toward gender equality, the main findings show that differences in perceived gender-roles non-traditionalism only influenced the level of perceived inequality, but not the intentions to support collective actions toward gender equality. However, the perceived level of gender inequality modulated cross-group differences in support for collective actions towards gender equality. Concretely, the data revealed that, when gender inequality was perceived as a problem, immigrants manifested a similar level of intentions to support collective actions as Spaniards and Romanians. However, when gender inequality was not perceived as a problem, immigrants compared to the natives from their country of origin were more willing to act in solidarity and actively address gender inequality.

The results are of general interest for several reasons. First, they confirm that gender stereotypes are indeed dynamic context-dependent constructs (Diekmann et al., 2005) that can be affected not only by variations in gender equality level across time in the same cultural context or across nations in the same temporal moment, but also as a result of the transition between contexts with different levels of gender equality. Second, the fact that these differences were found only when the immigrants were compared with natives from their country of origin, but not with those from the host country, suggests that immigrants' gender stereotypes had change, at least on some of the dimensions, supporting and extending previous work on migrants socio-cognitive adaptation (e.g., Stanciu et al., 2019) by addressing gender stereotypes. We argue that the observed changes in gender stereotypes among Romanian immigrants in Spain should be viewed as part of a broader process of socio-cognitive adaptation, rather than as definitive evidence of full integration. While these shifts reflect the influence of the host-society norms, they do not imply full internalization or a complete detachment from origin-culture values. We conclude that our findings underscore the nuanced nature of acculturation and the importance of domain specificity. Stereotype adaptation may indicate movement toward integration, but constitutes a negotiated response to host culture demands rather than its completion.

Third, supporting previous work on the role of migration as a facilitator of activism (e.g., Ayoub & Bauman, 2019; Binnie and Klesse, 2013), they also suggest that migration has the potential to influence gender activism as migrants seem to have become more engaged in advocating for gender equality. Research has shown that to the extent that immigrants maintain and interact with their social networks in the country of origin, they can also act as active senders of the acquired information from the receiving back to the sending country that can challenge the cultural and the value system of the origin country and contribute to cultural change (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011). Thus, the acculturation of migrants into gender equality activism could significantly impact the potential for social change in their country of origin.

Notwithstanding these contributions, they should be considered in light of some limitations. Firstly, although we posit that exposure to a more egalitarian context is the cause of the differences found in gender-related attitudes between immigrants and natives from their country of origin, the cross-sectional nature of the study prevents us from establishing causality. To this end, future work should employ longitudinal data to shed more light on the long-term stability of gender stereotype accommodation and the underlying process. Secondly, the data was gathered from convenience samples, which may have introduced selection bias and limited the generalizability of the findings. Thirdly, the sex of the participants and the maximum level of studies achieved were imbalanced across samples. Although we included both variables in the analysis as controls, replication studies with a more representative sample would increase the findings' external validity and the robustness of the conclusions. Additionally, future studies could examine the influence of participants' sex and other relevant socio-demographic variables. Fourth, participants were not instructed to evaluate women and men from a specific culture. Thus, for immigrants, it remains unclear whether they considered individuals from the host country, their country of origin, or the general category. Future studies should explicitly

delineate whether participants should focus on general gender categories or those from a particular cultural context. This is essential to avoid ambiguity regarding the target of the response and the potential variability in the responses due to this issue. Nevertheless, the present study contributes to our understanding of the process of acculturation of the immigrants' gender system beliefs. It does so by addressing not only cognitive and behavioural outcomes, but also some of the factors involved in this process. The insights from the study can serve as a foundation for designing culturally sensitive, evidence-based policies and interventions. For instance, policies could focus on facilitating immigrants' engagement with egalitarian practices in public and private spheres through interventions and educational programmes that promote shared domestic responsibilities or equitable workplace practices. Furthermore, gender stereotype accommodation could positively affect immigrants' integration and the majority-minority intergroup dynamic by reducing potential cultural barriers. Thus, both immigrants and the host country stand to benefit from immigrants' accommodation of stereotypes and gender-related attitudes.

Note

1. For exploratory purposes, we assessed gender role attitudes in all groups, a topic previously studied; the measure and analysis are in SI. For Romanian immigrants, acculturation preferences/strategies and perceived discrimination were also measured, with details in SI.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings are available at: https://osf.io/zhwc8/?view_only=6696e7abcf3c4480b37136d2380a3a34

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