

ACCULTURATION AND MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY IN BOLIVIA

Acculturation Strategies and Multicultural Identity in Bolivia: Influences of a Plural Society

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ABSTRACT

A plural society is a suitable scenario for the encounter between human groups ethnic or culturally differentiated. It is in the context of these encounters that acculturation occurs as one of many strategies of cultural exchange. This article shares the Berry's notion of acculturation, stressing four forms of relationship derived depending on whether individuals prefer or not to preserve their cultural values, and on whether promote or not inter ethnic contacts with other ethnic groups. We assume that plural society should develop in their members, multiple cultural identities as a product of shared diversity. This study postulates a differential influence of the acculturation strategy on the multicultural identity formation. The results indicate that certain forms of acculturation determine with more strength, the multicultural identity, especially those in which prevails the inter-ethnic contact intent. These results revitalize approaches that explain the identity from the social and interactive perspective.

KEY WORDS: plural society, acculturation, multicultural identity

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RESUMEN

Una sociedad plural es el escenario adecuado para el encuentro entre diferentes grupos étnicos o culturalmente diferenciados. Es en dicho contexto que la aculturación se presenta como una de muchas estrategias de intercambio cultural. Este artículo comparte la noción de aculturación de Berry, destacando cuatro formas de relación derivadas dependiendo de si los individuos prefieren o no a preservar sus valores culturales y de si buscan promover o no contactos interétnicos. Asumimos que la sociedad plural desarrolla en sus miembros, múltiples identidades culturales como producto de la diversidad compartida. Este estudio postula una influencia diferencial de la estrategia de aculturación en la formación de la identidad multicultural. Los resultados indican que ciertas formas de aculturación determinan con más fuerza, la identidad multicultural, especialmente aquellos en los que prevalece la intención de contacto interétnico. Estos resultados revitalizan los enfoques que explican la identidad desde la perspectiva social e interactiva.

PALABRAS CLAVE: sociedad plural, aculturación, identidad multicultural.

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Bolivian society constitutes today a highly complex ethno-cultural scenario as a result of the links and exchange of numerous cultures that inhabit its national geographic space. Bolivian identities are the result of an intercultural encounter that took place after the conquest of its territory by Spain during the 16th century, as well as of the social, economic and political processes confronted during the colonization period in the 17th and 18th centuries, as was described by Mesa-Gisbert (2013). Who we are, how do we think and behave and how we perceive each other --that is how we express our national, ethnic and individual identity-- is intimately linked to that traumatic historical, sociocultural and political episode. Since then and to our present days, we have abandoned a unique conception of the world, incorporating to our perspective, other visions, so many as ethno-cultural elements coexist in the common space. This plural society contains practices and expressions of each of its members and is enriched with a symbiosis with each other, generating new cultural forms through coexistence and exchange between them. In this way, socio-cultural plurality builds new references that allow us to recognize or differentiate from each other.

Moreover, given that plural societies have more than one ethno-cultural reference, they are able to develop multiple identities that govern our behavior, committing ourselves to practices of the various groups with which we interact. Plural societies are therefore, the root of multicultural ideology, as it was described by Berry (1974) and others (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005), from a psychological perspective.

In Bolivia`s social organization, in which coexist more than thirty original nations, it is not unusual to appropriate certain customs, practices or rituals of other ethnic groups, just for having lived among them. Such is the case of aimara people that adopted European practices and merged them with their own cultural lifestyle; likewise the Quechua people who migrated to the east of the country, adopted food habits of the lowland inhabitants. On

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the other hand, native inhabitants born in the lowlands that are living now in the west, are made actively part of the Andean feast. And, the most interesting, all consider themselves genuinely Bolivians. García-Linera called this phenomenon the “composite national identity” (García Linera, 2014, p.68).

As discussed in a previous paper (Roth & Villegas, 2014), identity is a process that gives meaning to social relations and therefore its evolution depends on the socialization of the individual and on the quality and quantity of their interactions with the socio-cultural environment. Tajfel (1978), have explained the identity notion through the idea of comparability, pointing out that social identity is built up when the person perceives himself/herself, as a member of a social group (affiliation). Even more, the comparison with his/her group of affiliation –whose attributes they identify with others which exhibit different patterns, is also essential. It is a fact that a person shapes an idea with respect to himself and to his own beliefs, opinions, cultural expressions, etc., when he/she can contrast themselves with a different criterion.

It is not possible to understand the development of identity if we don't consider the social and cultural component of our society. The notion of identity takes a particular dimension when the socio-cultural context is earmarked by pluralism, understood as the coexistence of human conglomerates that exhibit dissimilar cultural characteristics and share, more or less, common geographical, social and political contexts (Brooks, 2002). Although it is currently not possible to think in homogeneous societies, because there are no societies conformed by individuals that belong to just one culture, one language in the strict sense or a single identity (Berry, 2006), it is possible to find some collectives that present greater or lesser diversity. With no doubt, this is the case of Bolivia, whose pluralism is not

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only discussed in several articles of the Political Constitution of the State, but recognized on the very name of the nation: “Plurinational State of Bolivia”¹.

But probably the problem has little to do with holding this false distinction between singular and plural societies. Rather, it rests on the way we describe the dynamics that govern the relations between the constituent elements of plural societies. In this sense, according to Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen (2002), there are at least two ways to approach the understanding of intra-social relationships. The first one assumes that plural societies are conformed by dominant and subordinate groups. In this way, it is expected that subordinate group will end up being completely absorbed by the dominant group until they disappear in a sort of fatal acculturation, giving place to a condition of ideal State, which is summarized in the illusion of just one nation with a single language, one religion and one culture.

This vision that proves to be a denial of the subordinate people’s rights, is clearly reminiscent from the “Destiny Doctrine Manifest”, raised by the United States of America during the 19th century, delving into the colonial penetration and the preeminence of certain human groups over the others, in the name of “humanization of the savages”. For a further clarification concerning the arguments offered against the alleged cultural standardization, consult García-Linera (2014). An alternative notion is *multiculturalism*. This notion understands a plural society as an ethno-cultural melting pot, in which each group (more or less) retains its identity and its cultural specificities, and contributes to social coexistence in equal rights and social, economic and political conditions, under a common normative framework. The multicultural view postulated by Berry (1984), adjusts to the interests and needs of the ethno-cultural groups in the context of the national interest. Hence, the exercise of power and its specific weight in society, should allow all individuals to live their lives in

¹ Constitución Política del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia.

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an interdependent way, getting a worthy location in the society and assuring the fulfillment of all rights acquired through negotiations and mutual commitments, in the framework of tolerance and respect.

Therefore, the term multicultural describes people who live in more than one country, such as immigrants, refugees, international students, and, people who were raised in the context of another culture different from their own, for example children of immigrants, or those who are engaged in activities involving more than one culture (Padilla, 2006). The term multicultural is also applied, as in the case of Bolivia, to describe the emerging relations derived by the presence of native groups in colonized territorial spaces.

Psychologically, there is no commonly agreed definition of multiculturalism. It can be defined as the experience of have been exposed to, and having internalized two or more cultures (Hong et al., 2000; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007).

LaFromboise et al., (1993), have described multicultural individuals as those who display a multicultural *competence* –i.e., cultural behaviors such as language use, choice of friends, media preferences, value systems, etc. that are representative of two or more cultures. Other authors define multicultural processes as a condition of being attach with and having loyalties towards different cultures (Benet-Martinez Haritatos, 2005). Moreover, it is also identified as a condition that involves following norms in more than one culture (Jetten, Postmes Mcaulñiffe, 2002), with greater impact on behavioral intentions than in personal attitudes (Terry,Hogg White, 1999).

Complementarily, Benet-Martínez et al. (2002) proposed the theoretical construct of bicultural identity. Bicultural Identity (with high and low values) means “the degree in which the bi-cultural perceives their mainstream and ethnic identity as compatible and integrated” (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002, p. 9). Bicultural individuals identify themselves

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with both, mainstream and ethnic cultures but differ in their ability to create a synergic and integrated cultural identity.

The permanent contact or coexistence of two or more independent cultural entities leads, somehow, to a reciprocal cultural adjustment, producing important changes in behavior at an individual level. This phenomenon is known as psychological acculturation (Graves, 1967). As such, acculturation must be understood as an active exchange or transfer of cultural patterns that usually lead to qualitative changes in cultural behavior. Such variations should not be necessarily perceived as cultural losses (but they can result in that), seeking homogenization; on the contrary, they can lead to a creative profit, enrichment and mutual diversification (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, Dasen, 2002).

At the psychological level, the nature, characteristics and results of the acculturation process, will depend on the strategies of relationship between the parties. Such strategies are expressed as attitudes and behaviors that take place in everyday encounters and that are summarized in what individuals look for or want and in what they are able to do with respect to the other group (Berry, 1974, 1980). The nature of such strategies depends on the direction of the intercultural relation initiatives. When such impulses and motivations are directed from subordinated groups toward power groups, these are called acculturation strategies and generate in the dominant groups, acculturation expectations (Berry, 2011). On the contrary, when the power groups seek to change and to adjust themselves to the various other groups of society, the strategy is called multicultural ideology (Berry, Kalin Taylor, 1977).

These strategies, in the vision of Berry, are based on two underlying aspects: on one hand, there are those who would like to preserve, in a greater or lesser degree, the culture values and the customs of their in-group. On the other, at the same time, the person may also prefer, in a greater or lesser degree, to establish permanent contacts with other groups

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that are part of a plural society (Berry, 1984). The personal position with respect to these variables (the intention to maintain the values of culture, as well as the intention to sustain links with other cultures), determines their life expectations in society through the acculturation strategies.

Figure 1 about here

Thus, in the context of non-dominant groups, someone might feel inclined to maintain their own cultural heritage and at the same time be convinced of the need to establish close links with the members of other cultural groups. In such a case, the result would be a strategy aimed at *integration*. If he/she would feel persuaded to maintaining the integrity of his/her culture, and at the same time, feeling reluctant to become an intercultural person (being in contact with other cultural groups), the strategy would take the name of *separation*. It may also occur that someone rejects the idea to preserve the values of his/her culture, and at the same time would be interested in maintaining or improve his/her contact with people from other cultures. That attitude defines the strategy of *assimilation*. Finally, it can be also possible that someone rejects his/her cultural heritage as well as the opportunity to relate to other cultures, pointing out at the strategy of *marginalization*. See Figure 1 (Berry, 2011).

It is important to note that the feasibility of acculturation strategies expressed by the subordinate groups is usually subject to, or conditioned by the attitudes and preferences of the dominant groups. For example, we can expect that non-dominant groups exercise integration if those who hold power show favorable attitudes towards cultural diversity. This interdependence defines the very process of acculturation described by Redfield, Linton & Herskovits (1936), introducing into debate both strategies at the same time. That means one segment of society must adopt the values of other segment to make compatible their respective expectations. The means to achieve this can be diverse, depending on the

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nature of the groups: from persuasion and negotiation to organized pressure, but always within the democratic framework. The assimilation strategy identified by Berry (1974) in the case of subordinated groups corresponds, in the case of dominant groups, to *melting pot*. When separation is forced by dominant groups, the result is *segregation*. Likewise, when dominant groups impose marginalization, the result is exclusion. Finally, in the case of integration, when the perspective of the whole society, including dominant and subordinate groups is cultural diverse, we can talk of *multiculturalism* (Berry, 2011). On this conceptual basis, Lafromboise, Coleman & Gerton (1993), identified five models explaining how individuals face life on a multicultural environment. First, the model of assimilation that attempts to explain how people are absorbed by the dominant culture, which leads to the loss of a large part of their cultural heritage. Second, the model of acculturation through which individuals seek to maintain membership to their original group, although losing some elements of their own culture. The third model, *alternation*, assumes that individuals acquire the ability to know and understand the essence of the multicultural context where they live, showing flexibility to adjust their behavior to the different cultural contexts. In fourth place is the *multicultural* model. In this model, the members of the ethnic groups maintain their distinctive cultural elements, with which they interact freely and harmoniously in the construction of a common social context that integrates them. Finally the fifth model emphasizes a *merger*, which would happen when different cultures meet in a geographical space sharing economic, social and political purposes, making it practically a new culture.

In the present research, we are interested in the study of the nature and characteristics of the relationships or links between the intercultural strategies of plural societies as they were defined by Berry (2011), and the expressions of multicultural identities in two culturally distinct groups (multicultural or bicultural identities). Therefore,

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we will try to answer questions related to the characteristics of identity expressions when they are exposed to differential values of cultural conservation, as well as to extreme values of contact intentions with other cultural groups of a plural society, different to own. Consequently, we will seek to answer the following question: would it be possible to find differences in the expression of ethnic identity (or multicultural identity) on two different cultural groups, depending on the type of intercultural strategy adopted in their everyday relations? More specifically: in what extent the expression of identity is dependent on the strategy of acculturation adopted by each ethnic group?

To answer this question, we will need to identify strategic trends adopted by the research sample, arising from the interplay of attitudinal dimensions, summarizing the high and low values of the cultural heritage, and willingness to be in contact with culturally different groups: assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization.

As tentative answers, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H*₁: The multicultural identity values of the in-group increases significantly when the person or group assumes an integration-assimilation strategy of acculturation.

*H*₂: The multicultural identity values of the in-group shows significant alteration when the person or group assumes a separation-marginalization strategy of acculturation.

*H*₃: There is a clear influence of intergroup contact intention over multicultural identity.

*H*₄: There is a clear influence of heritage conservation intention over multicultural identity.

*H*₅: There is a joint influence (interaction effect) of cultural value conservation intention and intergroup relationship intention over multicultural identity.

*H*₆: The ethnicity (ethnic background) of members of the sample, influences over their multicultural identity.

METHOD

Sample and Participants

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A convenience sample of 400 young students (17 to 25 years old) was recruited from two different sociocultural contexts: from an urban middle class local university and from a rural educational *campesino* institution, located near to La Paz city. The sampling was carried out in two sociocultural and geographic contexts, allowing us to identify participants into two clearly distinct ethnic groups: an aimara group (42%) and a group with European roots (58%). 274 were female (68.5%) and 126 male (31.5%), with an age mean of 20.33 and standard deviation of 1.831. All participants were informed about the nature and purposes of the study and expressed their voluntary consent before the data gathering process. Additional consent was obtained from authorities of both educational institutions. The socioeconomic family background of the urban participants can be characterized as middle class; as for the rural families, they were characterized by a low income, related to agricultural production economy.

Variables.

In the present research, the considered variables were:

Socio-demographics: age, gender, ethnicity and residence.

Acculturation Strategies: Separation, Integration, Assimilation and Marginalization. These variables were derived by a combination of the following two factors: cultural heritage conservation intent, and intention to keep relation with other cultures, according to Berry's acculturation model.

Identity expressions: Ethnic and multicultural identities. Socio-demographic and acculturation variables were treated as independent variables, and identity expressions were measured as dependent variables.

Measures.

The survey was conducted through the application of two scales, which took approximately a half hour to complete. Both scales were administered in Spanish during a

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regular class period. All participants offered also socio-demographic and personal information. The measures applied in the present research were the Universal Ethnic Identity Scale (UEIS) (Rooney et al, 2012) and Multicultural Identity Scale (MIS) (Berry and Kalin 1995).

Universal Ethnic Identity Scale (UEIS). The Universal Ethnic Identity Scale (UEIS) was developed to measure individual's ethnic identity in a specific cultural context. The UEIS was built on the background of Tajfel and Turner's (1986) conceptual proposal and its validation was carried out with a sample of 1007 participants, members of different ethnic groups. The original UEIS evaluated ethnic identity through 22 items of five-point Likert type scale, measuring three factors. Each item was worded as a statement with which the respondent could either completely disagree (1) or completely agree (5). The three components, "pride of background and language", "degree of appreciation of traditional and social activities of my ethnic group" and "sense of belonging to this country", explained together 30 per cent of the total variance, while reliability analysis offered a Cronbach's Alfa of 0.77. However, the confirmatory factor analysis, recommended a two-factor solution as the best fit of the data: "Ethnic Identity" and "Belonging". Three of the four fit indices reported by the authors suggested a very good fitted model (CFI = 0.926 > 0.9; SRMR = 0.068 < 0.1). However, the RMSEA fell slightly short of the recommended < 0.08 cut-off (RMSEA = 0.088) (Rooney et al, 2011).

Multicultural Identity Scale (MIS). The Multicultural Identity Scale (MIS) was developed by Berry and his colleagues to measure attitudes toward multiculturalism in order to inform Canadian policies regarding cultural diversity (Berry, 1984; Berry, Kalin, & Taylor, 1977). The initial Multicultural Ideology Scale, consisted of ten Likert statements (five negatively keyed), addressing different aspects of multiculturalism. The scale showed a good reliability in a representative sample of Canadian citizens (Alpha = 0.80; Berry &

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Kalin, 1995), and in the Netherlands invariably yielded single-factor solutions and high reliability coefficients (Alpha = 0.82) (Van de Vijver et al, 2008). The Multicultural Ideology Scale provides a short and reliable measure of attitudes toward multiculturalism.

Both scales, the UEIS and the MIS were translated and adapted to Bolivian socio-cultural context with a sample of 400 young adults conformed by two different ethnic groups of respondents: aimara people (24.7%) and non-aimara mestizo or European descendants (75.3%). The data obtained by both scales was explored in order to understand their descriptive characteristics. In both cases, although the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test recommends the rejection of normality, the other indicators (M Estimators, asymmetry, kurtosis, the location of the median with respect to the mean), indicate relatively normal distributions. Therefore, while our measurements were performed through ordinal scales, following the recommendations of other authors (Barbaranelli, 2003, Babakus, Ferguson & Joreskog, 1987 y Muthèn & Kaplan, 1985), the researchers of the present study analyzed the data through parametrical techniques.

The factorial validity and reliability of both scales obtained with the Bolivian sample was analyzed with IBM-SPSS statistical program. Reliability information of UEIS reported a Cronbach's Alfa = .746 ($n = 400$), and the construct validity through Exploratory Factor Analysis (extraction method of Principal Components with Varimax) revealed good conditions for factorial analysis (KMO = .836; and Bartlett's test $\chi^2 = 2641.3 = p < .000$). The Factorial Analysis recommended a two-factor scale structure (multi-cultural preference with 15 items, and mono-cultural preference with 8 items), explaining the 34.19 per cent of the variance, with saturation indexes above .395.

The present research used MIS scale to differentiate those respondents whose multicultural ideology is more influenced by attitudes of preserving cultural values, from

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those who need to establish more intense contacts with different groups of the plural society.

The reliability information of MIS reported an Alpha lower than expected (Cronbach's Alpha .635), but the construct validity obtained through Exploratory Factor Analysis (extraction method of Principal Components with Varimax), revealed acceptable KMO and Bartlett's values (.806; and $\chi^2 = 1020.9 = p < .000$). The Factorial Analysis recommended a scale with two-component: a) "maintaining contact with other cultural groups" (7 items), and b) "maintaining cultural values" (6 items), explaining 40.133 per cent of the variance, with saturation indexes above .392. Hence, MIS recovered the ten original items and included another four reflecting the local cultural context. Finally, we discarded one item due to saturation difficulties. The adjusted scale adopted a Likert-type structure with 5 response options (1 = absolutely disagree and 5 = absolutely agree).

RESULTS

The present study supports the assumption of a causal relationship between Berry's acculturation strategies on plural societies (marginalization, separation, assimilation and integration), and the expression of multicultural identity. The hypothesis assumes that the adoption of a multicultural identity relies substantially on people's cultural preferences with respect to their own culture, as well as with respect to other cultural forms. The reasons for this statement reside in that coexistence strategies that emphasize the importance of keeping the values of the culture itself, looking at the same time to strengthen intercultural relations, improving the multicultural identity. In contrast, those who spurn their heritage looking for relationships with other different cultures probably identified with a single culture.

Therefore, this study compared the multicultural identity from variations in the four patterns of acculturation resulting from high and low values of the cultural conservation

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variable, related with high and low values of intercultural relations. Table 1 presents the results of one-factor ANOVA comparing the four acculturation strategies.

Table 1 about here

Table 1, shows an n different for each group, which could affect the homoscedasticity or equivalence of their variances. In spite of this, the Levene test of variance homogeneity yielded a value of $p > .05$, avoiding the null hypothesis rejection of homogeneity of variances. Moreover, the data was also analyzed through the Welch test, obtaining an acceptable result ($t = 23.425, p < .000$).

Table 2 about here

Therefore, the ANOVA's $F = 33,625$ ($p < .001$) allowed to reject the null hypothesis of equivalence of all compared groups (see Table 2). The results lead us to assume that the variances of each of the four compared groups are different and that we have, indeed, a clear effect. Table 3 provides the emerging values of the multiple comparisons by using post hoc Scheffé test.

Table 3 about here

From Table 3, we note that the acculturation strategies such as marginalization and separation exhibit an average means of multicultural identity significantly lower than those of assimilation and integration strategies. The first two are associated with low values of intercultural contact intent, while the latter two correspond to strategies that depend on high values of the same variable.

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Comparing dependent variables of each acculturation strategy, marginalization clearly differs from assimilation and integration but not from separation. Besides, assimilation varies substantially from separation but not from integration.

From these results we can assume that acculturation strategies such as marginalization and separation generate forms of multicultural identity different from those developed by integration or assimilation. Since the first are closer to isolation and intercultural rejection than the latter, it is likely that the relevant variable to explain differences in multicultural identity should be the insufficient intercultural contact.

Figure 2 about here

In this sense, Figure 2 shows that those who embrace marginalization as acculturation strategy express a significantly lower multicultural identity. On the other hand, the acculturation strategy associated the more with greater multicultural identity corresponds to integration. Those who present a separation and an assimilation strategy, occupy intermediate positions not far away from each other but with value means showing clear differences between them. In conclusion, multicultural identity can be determined by the individual acculturation strategy adopted.

From the above, we can assume a causal relationship between acculturation strategies and the expression of multicultural identity. However, due to the multifactorial nature of acculturation, each one of the strategies is determined by an interrelated influence of two variables: the intent of conservation of the own cultural values, and intent to maintain relations or links with other cultural groups different from the own. Therefore, it is pertinent to ask which of these variables are more influential in the determination of multicultural identity and if both interact to produce the expected effect.

To answer these questions, a calculation of the two-way ANOVA was carried out, to verify the effect of both variables - each with two values- upon multi-cultural identity. That

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allowed comparing four groups, each of which corresponded to one of the strategies suggested by Berry. Due to the apparent disparity of samples, comparative analysis proceeded with estimated marginal means. Table 4 shows the results of these comparisons.

Table 4 about here

Note that the intent of intercultural contact showed a causal influence on multicultural identity ($F_{\text{Contact}} = 118.175, p < .000$), but this was not the case of the intent for cultural value conservation ($F_{\text{Conservation}} = 1.437, p > .05$). The ANOVA showed no relevant results on the interaction between both factors ($F_{\text{Contact*Conservation}} = 1.038, p > .05$). Figure 3 provides visual access to these results.

Figure 3 about here

As shown in Figure 3, the differences in multicultural identity when comparing high and low values of intercultural contact are evident and statistically significant. However, comparisons between high and low conservation of cultural values showed irrelevant outcomes in multicultural identity. Therefore, the results indicate that multicultural identity is determined more by the intent of intercultural contact than by the personal conviction of the importance of cultural values and heritage preservation. These findings are in line with the initial postulates of Tajfel (1978), Berry (1974, 1980) and others (Schwartz & Unger, 2010) which highlight the influence of immediate socio-cultural context when explaining identity-building.

Ethnicity and Multicultural Identity. In order to test the hypothesis of the influence of ethnicity on multicultural identity, this variable was compared between two ethnically distinct groups: one with aimara origin and the second with mestizo and European roots. It was argued that the aimara ethnic group would express greater multicultural identity that the

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mestizo/European group. Such an assumption was backed up on the idea that being part of the aimara ethnic group provides greater opportunities for intercultural contact than the non-aimara individuals. Moreover, it was assumed that the aimara people, in addition to their usual contacts with their own ethnic group, would also have greater opportunities to interact with members of the out-group, given the plural context and history of social relations in Bolivia.

Table 5 about here

Since the comparative samples were different, the Levene test of homogeneity was applied to evaluate the feasibility of the factor analysis. The statistical results (2.024, $p = .156$) recommended to apply the one way ANOVA as a good method for data analysis.

Table 5 show the mean values of the dependent variable measured in both ethnic groups. As can be seen, the aimara people evidenced higher mean values than the non-aimara group. Such difference received an $F = 11,092$, statistically significant ($p < .001$). So, it is preliminarily concluded that the aimara group shows, in fact, higher levels of multicultural identity than the non-aimara group. The t test also revealed a similar relationship ($t = 3,422$, $p < .001$) (see Figure 4). Therefore, being multi-ethnic means to internalize more than one culture at the same time. It implies accepting the own heritage and cultural values, showing at the same time engagement and attachment to the essence and nature of other cultures. This position gives the aimara group greater flexibility to interact with different groups within the framework of a plural society. They behave as aimara sharing with aimara people, but they can also express their identity with the out-group, accepting and internalizing their core cultural values.

DISCUSSION

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This research showed multi-cultural identity is favored by the preservation of cultural values while at the same time intercultural relations are strengthened. The relationships between both factors that give rise to acculturation strategies also affect multi-cultural identity.

The empirical evidence points out that of the four attitudes or strategies postulated at the individual level, the most commonly used by immigrant and cultural minorities is integration, followed by separation, assimilation and marginalization (Berry et al., 2006). In the same direction, our results showed that each strategy of acculturation is capable of determining a differential value of multicultural identity. However, it was found, that integration and assimilation strategies showed higher scores in multicultural identity than those of separation and integration. The first two are primarily influenced by the search of intercultural contact, while the second two are mainly associated with the conservation of the cultural heritage. Therefore, those who embrace an acculturation strategy in which predominates a conception based on the rapprochement between ethnic groups over those who favor the preservation of their cultural heritage will express a stronger multicultural identity. Apparently, the coexistence of people from different cultures within the plural society and the daily interactions experienced between them make easier the exchange of cultural practices that are gradually and inexorably incorporated in their lives, becoming guiding values. Thus, in the first place, cultural expressions are observed on nearby groups. Then they are understood and practiced as their own and finally, they become part of their roots. As a result, they are gradually appreciated, producing psychological attachment, and adopted according to their standards. Only then, individuals appropriate them and produce a social discourse to explain the assimilation process. Perhaps for this reason in the present study, the strategies related to the conservation factor seems to be less influential than those linked to the intercultural contact factor in the explanation of multicultural identity:

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assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization, in that order, present a different grade of influence, from the highest to the lowest.

Therefore, the null hypothesis which held the lack of influence of Integration and Assimilation strategies over the multi-cultural identity was rejected. Nevertheless, the influence of both Separation and Marginalization dimensions on the dependent variable could not be rejected. On the other hand, the third null hypothesis, which questioned the importance of the impact of intercultural contact over the multi-cultural identity had to be dismissed. But the null hypothesis that denied the influence of the conservation of heritage and cultural values over the multicultural identity had to be accepted. Finally, the null hypothesis that postulated the joint effect or interaction between cultural conservation and intercultural contact upon the multi-cultural identity was also accepted. Since the Assimilation-integration strategies are clearly associated with the higher values of intercultural contact and Separation-marginalization to the lowest values of the same variable, it seems evident that the multicultural identity is a multifactorial phenomenon, rooted in cross-cultural social relations.

A last underlying assumption postulated in this research held that multicultural identity could be influenced by ethnicity. The findings pointed out very clearly at the aimara group as the one with greater capacity to express multicultural identity, in comparison with the non-aimara group. This result leads to speculate about the reason for such a difference. The answer lies perhaps in the nature and characteristics of the inter-ethnic relationships that prevailed in Bolivia along its history, from the conquest and colonization period to the present day. Those links, being based on domination relations, forced the socio-economic dependence of the aimara group, reducing their culture expressions to a secondary level. Aimara people were forced to learn the dominant language and to become familiar with the multiple expressions of colonizing culture and to live intimately with them. On the other

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hand, the interaction of the latter with the aimara ethnic group did not have the same quality or need and therefore its detailed knowledge could be postponed without consequences for the dominant group. Accordingly, if we assume that multi-cultural identity is a function of the degree of the intercultural relation intent, then we should not be surprised that the aimara sample exhibit higher levels of multicultural identity than mestizos or Europeans. Hence, the present research, confirmed the close causal relationship between ethnicity (ethnic background) of sample members with their multicultural identity.

Apparently, the most outstanding feature of the multicultural individuals is their ability to switch between cultures and to practice their rites and customs with genuine attachment to both in response to simple cultural cues (Verkuyten Pouliasi, 2006). From a psychological point of view, this property mainly depends, as we have seen, on the influence of contextual factors (interpersonal) as, for example, the pursuit of inter-group contacts. However, it is not possible to rule out the importance of other determinants of intrapersonal nature as those that have to do with cognitive variables. It has been found that individuals with more extensive multicultural experiences, have greater cognitive complexity (Benet-Martínez et al., 2006), integrative complexity (Tadmor, Tetlock, & Peng, 2009), and creativity (Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008). These findings compel to incorporate consideration of cognitive variables in future studies.

Finally, as described in Benet-Martínez (2012), multiculturalism is typically used to describe individuals, but it can also be used to describe nations and states. Ward & Masgoret (2008), have pointed out that countries with public policies oriented to promote assimilation, would develop melting-pot societies; however, those who promote separation, would be considered as segregationist. In addition, countries which seek acculturation throughout the marginalization strategy are identified as excluders; while those who hold the integration as a model of acculturation are considered multicultural. Certainly, there are

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no countries considered as entirely multicultural or fundamentally excluders. The adopted acculturation strategies depend on the position of its members with respect to their preferences on favor or against to the preservation of cultural values, or for the intercultural alternation. However, it is undeniable that public policy can pave the way in either direction. Apparently, Bolivia during the last few years has moved effectively towards multiculturalism. This seems evident from the trends of acculturation observed in the present study.

Multiculturalism is not only desirable for its inclusive effects in the plural societies; recent studies have shown that countries that promote it can be more successful (Schwartz, Montgomery & Briones, 2006) and their young people can improve their academic achievement (Régner & Loose, 2006). Given the possible positive implications of multiculturalism, the psychological study of ethnic and multi-ethnic identity should deserve greater attention from specialists. It will be necessary for future studies to shed additional light on the influence of other contextual variables relating to strategies of interacting with different others, as well as on its influence on personal life satisfaction, pro-social behavior and collective well-being.

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		Maintaining heritage and cultural values	
		Yes	No
Ethno-cultural group strategies	Maintaining contacts with other cultural groups	Yes	Integration
		No	Assimilation
		Separation	Marginalization
		Yes	No
Dominant Group strategies	Maintaining contacts with other cultural groups	Yes	Multi-culturalism
		No	Melting Pot
		Segregation	Exclusion

Figure 1. Acculturation strategies developed by Berry from preferences for maintaining cultural values and preferences for having intercultural contact.

Table 1. Descriptive information comparing multi-cultural identity values of four different acculturation strategies

Descriptives								
UEIS								
					95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Marginalization		48,8889	9,61303	1,85003	45,0861	52,6917	29,00	71,00
Asimilation	8	62,1573	7,41033	,55543	61,0612	63,2534	38,00	80,00
Separation		52,3548	10,34585	1,85817	48,5600	56,1497	28,00	73,00
Integration	4	62,0366	8,01294	,62571	60,8011	63,2721	20,00	77,00
Total	0	60,4525	9,00725	,45036	59,5671	61,3379	20,00	80,00

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Table 2. Summary of variance analysis for multi-cultural identity scores

ANOVA					
UEIS					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6571,958	3	2190,653	33,625	,000
Within Groups	25799,139	396	65,149		
Total	32371,098	399			

Table 3. Multiple comparisons of the dependent variable obtained from acculturation strategies

Dependent Variable: UEIS					Multiple Comparisons	
Scheffé					95% Confidence Interval	
(I) Aculturation	(J) Aculturation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Marginalization	Asimilation	-13,26841*	1,66702	,000	-17,9486	-8,5882
	Separation	-3,46595	2,12474	,448	-9,4313	2,4994
	Integration	-13,14770*	1,67636	,000	-17,8542	-8,4412
Asimilation	Marginalization	13,26841*	1,66702	,000	8,5882	17,9486
	Separation	9,80246*	1,57086	,000	5,3922	14,2127
	Integration	,12072	,87365	,999	-2,3321	2,5735
Separation	Marginalization	3,46595	2,12474	,448	-2,4994	9,4313
	Asimilation	-9,80246*	1,57086	,000	-14,2127	-5,3922
	Integration	-9,68175*	1,58077	,000	-14,1198	-5,2437
Integration	Marginalization	13,14770*	1,67636	,000	8,4412	17,8542
	Asimilation	-,12072	,87365	,999	-2,5735	2,3321
	Separation	9,68175*	1,58077	,000	5,2437	14,1198

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

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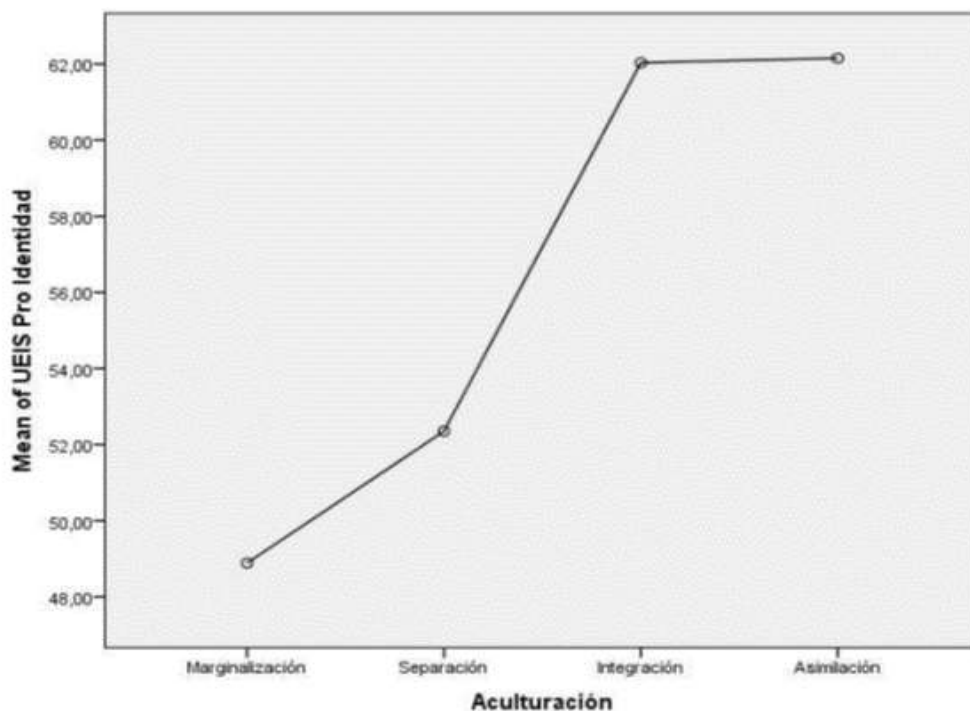


Figure 2. Mean values differences of dependent variable, obtained comparing acculturation strategies

Table 4. Two-way ANOVA summary for multi-cultural identity scores (marginal means)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: UEIS						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	7441,964 ^a	3	2480,655	39,405	,000	,230
Intercept	638443,362	1	638443,362	10141,691	,000	,962
Culture Conservation	90,459	1	90,459	1,437	,231	,004
Intercultural Contact	7439,366	1	7439,366	118,175	,000	,230
Conservation * Contact	65,350	1	65,350	1,038	,309	,003
Error	24929,133	396	62,952			
Total	1494173,000	400				
Corrected Total	32371,098	399				
a.	R Squared	=	,230	(Adjusted R Squared	=	,224)

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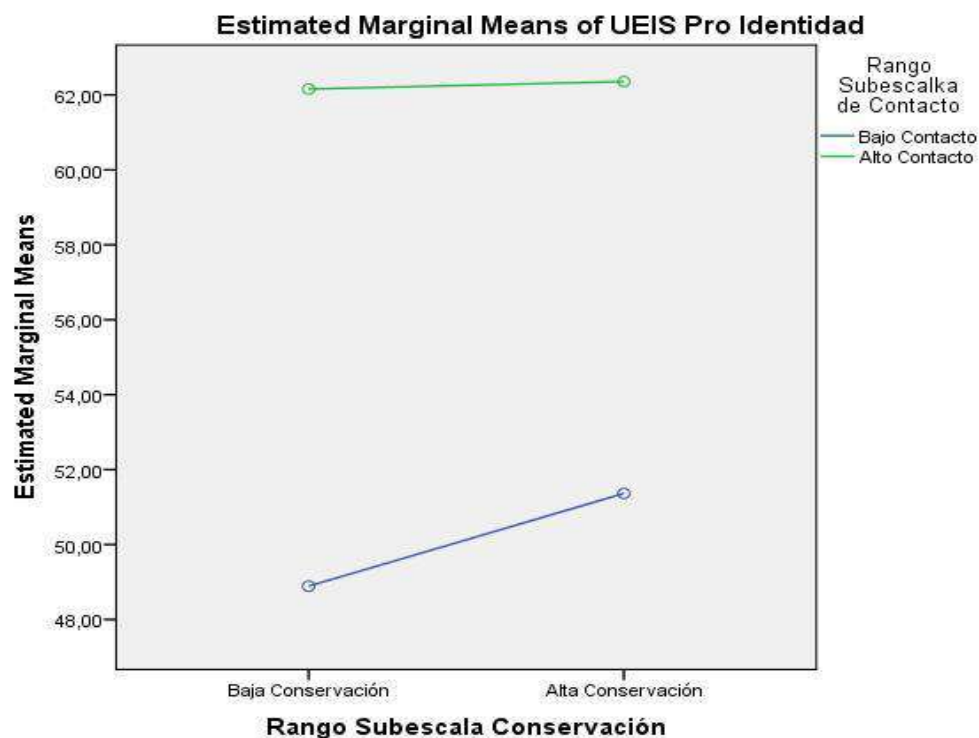


Figure 3. Graphic presentation of mean differences between high and low intercultural contact intent and high and low cultural conservation intent.

Table 5. Descriptive values of dependent variable obtained in aimara and non-aimara ethnic groups.

Descriptives								
UEIS								
					95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Non aimara	246	59,2805	9,28014	,59168	58,1151	60,4459	20,00	78,00
Aimara	154	62,3247	8,24215	,66417	61,0125	63,6368	29,00	80,00
Total	400	60,4525	9,00725	,45036	59,5671	61,3379	20,00	80,00