

Acculturation: When Individuals and Groups of Different Cultural Backgrounds Meet

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Abstract

In cross-cultural psychology, one of the major sources of the development and display of human behavior is the contact between cultural populations. Such intercultural contact results in both cultural and psychological changes. At the cultural level, collective activities and social institutions become altered, and at the psychological level, there are changes in an individual's daily behavioral repertoire and sometimes in experienced stress. The two most common research findings at the individual level are that there are large variations in how people acculturate and in how well they adapt to this process. Variations in ways of acculturating have become known by the terms *integration*, *assimilation*, *separation*, and *marginalization*. Two variations in adaptation have been identified, involving psychological well-being and sociocultural competence. One important finding is that there are relationships between how individuals acculturate and how well they adapt: Often those who integrate (defined as being engaged in both their heritage culture and in the larger society) are better adapted than those who acculturate by orienting themselves to one or the other culture (by way of assimilation or separation) or to neither culture (marginalization). Implications of these findings for policy and program development and for future research are presented.

Keywords

acculturation, acculturation strategies, acculturative stress, cultural learning, development, psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation

What happens to people when they move from the culture in which they have been born and raised to a new and unfamiliar culture? Arguably, when peoples of different cultural backgrounds come into contact with each other, they may (or may not) adopt each other's behaviors, languages, beliefs, values, social institutions, and technologies. However, precisely how and to what extent this takes place is not straightforward. Also, the consequences of this process for the well-being of individuals are not straightforward. In this article, we address how, and how well, groups and individuals manage the change when they come into contact with another cultural group and determine if there is a relationship between the manner in which people manage the change and how well they adapt as individuals.

The issues stemming from these questions have collectively been referred to as *acculturation*, which refers to the process of cultural and psychological change that results following meeting between cultures. Closely linked to acculturation is *adaptation*, which is used in this article to refer to individual psychological well-being and how individuals manage

socioculturally. Adaptation is thus considered a consequence of acculturation. In addressing the questions posed above, we will first discuss the concept of acculturation and then present a general framework for understanding acculturation. There are three features to this framework: what changes take place during acculturation, how people acculturate, and how well they adapt following acculturation. As part of what changes during acculturation, we will look at affective, behavioral, and cognitive aspects of acculturation, as well as personality issues. With respect to how people acculturate, our emphasis will be on acculturation strategies. Finally, we will focus on research findings from children and youth in regard to how well people adapt. This is not only because they constitute the fastest growing sector of the population in many Western societies (see Hernandez,

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Denton, & Macartney, 2008), but more because they are undergoing another form of change—ontogenetic development—that oftentimes confounds acculturation changes. We believe that focusing on the acculturation of children and youth will help exemplify the complexities of the processes and outcomes of acculturation.

This paper takes a universalist approach that emphasizes commonalities in acculturation processes (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002). The universalist approach considers that there are likely to be shared psychological processes underlying any human behavior (including acculturation) and that these processes are shaped by cultural factors during the course of development and are further guided by cultural factors during their expression in daily life.

Although nearly every person living in a culturally plural society can be said to be experiencing some form of acculturation, acculturation research has focused largely on refugees, asylum seekers, sojourners, immigrants, expatriates, and indigenous and so-called ethnic minorities. Research accruing from all these different acculturating groups is enormous. Synthesizing research on these diverse groups is not an easy feat, as they constitute different bodies of research (Ward, 2001). Accordingly, no attempt is made here to synthesize all these research efforts. However, an overview of much of this literature can be found in Sam and Berry (2006).

The Concept of Acculturation

The most widely used definition of acculturation is “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. . . . under this definition acculturation is to be distinguished from . . . assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation” (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, pp. 149–152). Although this definition of acculturation identifies assimilation to be only a phase of acculturation, the two terms are sometimes used synonymously (see Gordon, 1964). In recent years following increased global migration, there has also been a proliferation of new terms such as *biculturalism*, *multiculturalism*, *integration*, and *globalization*, and these terms have either been used interchangeably with acculturation or as alternative concepts. Although no attempt is made here to clarify the distinctions between all these terms (see Sam & Berry, 2006, for discussion), we want to emphasize that of the two most widely used terms within this area—assimilation and acculturation—we consider acculturation to be the most generic and, hence, preferable.

One reason for preferring the term acculturation over assimilation is that it acknowledges the reciprocity of the influences that cultural groups have on each other during acculturation. A second reason is that acculturation entails a variety of processes and outcomes; groups and individuals within groups adopt different ways to deal with the acculturation experience, only one of which might be assimilation. Moreover, these different ways of acculturating may result in different adaptation

outcomes. Because situational factors can alter the experience and course of acculturation, people may also have different outcomes in response to their changing experiences.

Whereas acculturation as a concept was originally proposed by anthropologists as a group-level phenomenon (Redfield et al., 1936), early discussions around the concept also recognized it as an individual-level phenomenon (Thurnwald, 1932). Psychology’s strong interest in the individual has contributed towards the formal use of the term *psychological acculturation* (coined by Graves, 1967) and making the distinction between individual-level changes arising from acculturation and those taking place at the group level. As our working position is that individual human behavior interacts with the ecological and cultural contexts within which it occurs, there is a need to keep the group and individual levels distinct. This distinction is essential because the kinds of changes that take place at the two levels (i.e., group and individual) are often different (Berry, 1997). Not every group or individual enters into, participates in, or changes in the same way during their acculturation. Vast individual differences in psychological acculturation exist, even among individuals who have the same cultural origin and who live in the same acculturative arena (Nauck, 2008).

Framework for Understanding Acculturation

Berry (2003) has proposed a framework for understanding acculturation. This framework outlines and links group and individual level acculturation and identifies the two (or more) groups in contact (see Fig. 1). To fully comprehend acculturation, one must understand and take into consideration key features of the two original cultural groups (depicted as Culture A and Culture B in Fig. 1) prior to coming into contact with each other. Acculturating individuals and groups bring cultural and psychological qualities with them to the new society, and the new society also has a variety of such qualities. The compatibility (or incompatibility) in cultural values, norms, attitudes, and personality between the two cultural communities in contact needs to be examined as a basis for understanding the acculturation process that is set in motion. It is also important to understand the nature of their contact relationships: Is it one based on domination of one group over the other or on mutual respect or hostility? There is also the need to understand the resulting cultural changes in both groups that emerge during acculturation. No cultural group remains unchanged following culture contact; acculturation is a two-way interaction, resulting in actions and reactions to the contact situation.

At the individual level, there is the need to consider the psychological changes that individuals in all groups undergo and their eventual adaptation to their new situations. Identifying these changes requires sampling a population and studying individuals who are variably involved in the process of acculturation. These changes range from simple behavioral shifts (e.g., in ways of speaking, dressing, and eating) to more problematic, producing *acculturative stress* (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987) as manifested by uncertainty, anxiety,

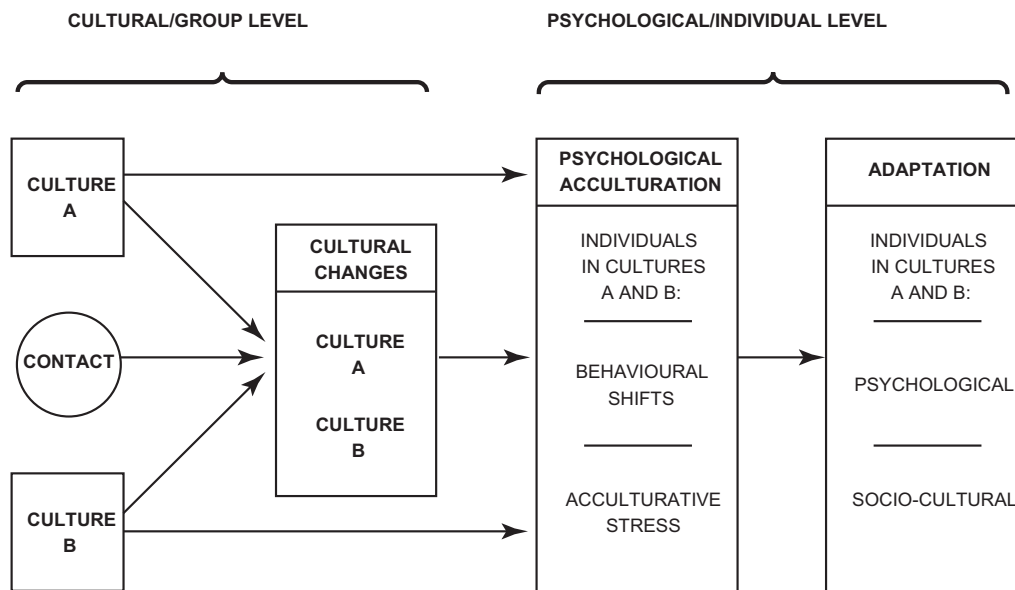


Figure 1. Framework for conceptualizing and studying acculturation.

and depression. Adaptations can be psychological (e.g., sense of well-being or self-esteem) or sociocultural (e.g., acquiring a new language; Ward, 1996). This latter point is further discussed in the subsection on how well people adapt. It is important to point out that although a distinction is made between acculturation at the individual and group level, the rest of the article will focus on the individual level of acculturation.

What Changes During Acculturation?

The definition put forward by Redfield and colleagues (1936) states that acculturation encompasses all forms of changes, and Berry (1980) indicated that these changes could be biological, social, physical, and so on. With reference to psychological acculturation, Ward (Ward, 2001; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001) has identified three main areas of human life that change during acculturation, and referred to these as the “ABCs of Acculturation,” with the “ABCs” referring respectively to affective, behavioral, and cognitive aspects of the acculturation process. The ABCs are in turn respectively linked to different theoretical perspectives dominating the field: a stress and coping theoretical framework, a culture learning approach, and a social-identification orientation to acculturation. In recent years, concerns have been raised about the limited attention given to ontogenetic development in acculturation theories (Sam, 2006b). Although these concerns have not resulted in a clear theoretical perspective (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, Chrysoschoou, Sam, & Phinney, in press), some of the issues pertaining to developmental aspects of acculturation will be attended to here. Similarly, this subsection will briefly look at personality and individual factors involved in acculturation,

even though they do not constitute a clear theoretical perspective.

Affective Perspectives: Stress and Coping Framework of Acculturation

The work of Berry on acculturative stress highlights the affective perspective (reviewed by Berry, 2006b). This perspective emphasizes the emotional aspects of acculturation and focuses on such issues as psychological well-being and life satisfaction. This approach corresponds to the acculturative stress component of Figure 1. The working hypothesis is that acculturation can be likened to a set of major life events that pose challenges to the individual. These life events may qualify as stressors and provoke stress reactions in an individual, particularly if the appropriate coping strategies and social supports are lacking. Drawing upon Lazarus and Folkman’s stress model (1984), Berry (2006b; Berry et al., 1987) proposed the acculturative stress model. The core idea is that when serious challenges are experienced and are appraised to be problematic because one is not able to deal with them easily by simply adjusting to them by changing one’s behavior (see the next section), then acculturative stress results. In essence, acculturative stress is a stress reaction in response to life events that are rooted in the experience of acculturation. In line with Lazarus’s stress model, not all acculturation changes result in acculturative stress because there are a number of moderating and mediating factors (both before and during the acculturation) such as personal characteristics including age and gender and social support that may influence the perception and interpretation of the acculturation experience. For instance, more acculturative stress has been found among

older immigrants, females, and those lacking social support (for detailed discussion of this, see Berry 1997, 2006b).

Behavioral Perspectives: Culture Learning Approach

Stemming from social psychology, and with major influence from Argyle's (1969) work on social skills and interpersonal behavior, the working hypothesis of the cultural learning approach is that people in cultural transitions may lack the necessary skills needed to engage the new culture (reviewed by Masgoret & Ward, 2006). This may result in difficulties managing the everyday social encounters. To overcome these difficulties, individuals are expected to learn or acquire the culture-specific behavioral skills (such as the language) that are necessary to negotiate this new cultural milieu (Bochner, 1972). Specifically, the cultural learning approach entails gaining an understanding in intercultural communication styles, including its verbal and nonverbal components, as well as rules, conventions, and norms and their influences on intercultural effectiveness. This approach corresponds to the behavioral shifts component of Figure 1. The cultural learning approach has evolved in two directions: (a) an inquiry into sociopsychological aspects of intercultural encounters with a focus on communication styles and communication competence (see Gallois, Franklyn-Stokes, Giles, & Coupland, 1988) and (b) an inquiry into cultural differences in communication styles, norms, and values in an effort to predict sociocultural adaptation (see Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1999). Masgoret and Ward (2006) point out that second language proficiency and communication competence are the core of all cultural learning approaches and ultimately sociocultural adaptation. Language skills are relevant both for the performance of daily tasks in the new cultural society and in establishing interpersonal relationships in the society. Cultural learning approaches assume a direct relationship between language fluency and sociocultural adaptation. Good language proficiency is argued to be associated with increased interaction with members of the new culture, and a decrease in sociocultural maladaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1999).

The cultural learning approach is more applied than theoretical in its emphasis on social skills and social interaction (Masgoret & Ward, 2006; Ward et al., 2001). As an applied area, the starting point is to identify cross-cultural differences in communication (both verbal and nonverbal), rules, conventions, norms, and practices that contribute to intercultural misunderstandings. It then sets out to suggest ways in which confusing and dissatisfying encounters can be minimized.

Cognitive Perspectives: Social Identification Theories

Whereas the affective and behavioral approaches to acculturation are respectively concerned with stress and emotional feelings, and with skills in dealing with everyday encounters and behavioral changes, the cognitive position is concerned with

how people perceive and think about themselves and others in the face of intercultural encounters. The cognitive aspect is present during the appraisal process noted in the discussion of acculturative stress. However, cognitive aspects mostly refer to how people process information about their own group (ingroup) and about other groups (outgroups), including how people categorize one another and how people identify with these categories. The social identity theory of Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986) is seen as the start of this perspective.

When individuals and groups enter into an acculturation situation, they are faced with the questions "Who am I? To which group do I belong?" (Berry, 1997). These two questions form the basis of one of the influential theoretical positions within the cognitive approaches: social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979, 1986). The theory is largely concerned with why and how individuals identify with and behave as part of social groups. Tajfel and Turner (1986) argued that individuals need to belong to a group in order to secure a firm sense of well-being. In addition, humans have the tendency to put others and themselves into categories, and this helps us to associate (i.e., identify) with certain groups and not others. Moreover, humans compare the group they belong to with others, and there is a tendency to have a favorable bias toward seeing positive qualities of the group to which we belong, thereby boosting our self image.

Within the context of acculturation, social identity theory is concerned with how groups and individuals define their identity in relations to the members of their own ethnic group (i.e., ethnic identity), on the one hand, and the larger society within which they are acculturating (i.e., national identity; Phinney, 1990), on the other.

One new line of research in this theoretical perspective is the Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) spearheaded by Benet-Martínez. BII is a framework for investigating individual differences in bicultural identity organization, in which the focus is on bicultural individuals' subjective perceptions of how much their dual cultural identities intersect or overlap (Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002). Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) point out that "individuals high on BII tend to see themselves as part of a 'hyphenated culture' (or even part of a combined, 'third' emerging culture) and find it easy to integrate both cultures in their everyday lives" (p. 1019).

Developmental Perspectives: Ontogenetic Changes

Developmental perspectives on acculturation to date lack clear theoretical positions and are currently just strands of ideas highlighting the importance of including developmental issues into our approaches to acculturation. Both acculturation and development entail some form of change, and it is difficult to disentangle the two changes from each other. Some developmentalists hold the view that acculturation, in particular acculturation by young people, is by and large developmental (Oppedal, 2006). Children and youth from immigrant families

undergo major developmental changes at the same time as they are undergoing acculturation, such that acculturation and developmental changes confound each other (Phinney, 2006).

Rather than propose a developmental theory of acculturation, researchers (e.g., Fuligni, 1998; Sam, 1995) have identified developmental issues such as cultural identity (Phinney, 1990), development of self (Kagitcibasi, 2007; Kwak, 2003), and family relationships (Fuligni, Yip, & Tseng, 2002) that may become complicated by acculturation experiences during normal developmental changes. The recurring question from this line of research is whether acculturating children and youth should be viewed as “normal” children, similar to their national peers when it comes to how they deal with developmental tasks, or whether they are special in that their acculturation experiences may have special impact on how they resolve developmental tasks. One exception to this trend is the work of Phinney (1990), who has proposed a developmental theory of how immigrant youth develop ethnic and national identities as part of their acculturation.

Personality and Individual Factors in Acculturation

Despite the recognition that individuals may differ in the extent to which they engage in the acculturation process, there is relatively little research and no clear theory linking personality with acculturation (Kosic, 2006). Existing research has largely examined different aspects of personal characteristics of the individual (broadly defined as personality) and how these characteristics may influence how acculturation takes place, as well as whether they enhance or hinder adaptation. One goal of this line of research has been to identify an “overseas type” who could readily adjust to a new cultural environment by focusing on how certain characteristics of the individual (e.g., ethnocentric tendencies) affected adjustment (see Church, 1982). Research on acculturation and personality has usually examined a single or a number of personality characteristics or abilities to see their effect on stress reduction in the adaptation process. As such, these studies seem to be aligned with the affective perspective on acculturation. These studies have used a number of factors, such as attachment styles (Bakker, Van Oudenhoven, & Van der Zee, 2004), the Big Five (Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004), coping strategies (Schmitz, 2004), cultural intelligence (Ang & Van Dyne, 2005; Earley & Ang, 2003), extraversion (Ones & Viswesvaran, 1999), locus of control (Ward, Chang, & Lopez-Nerney, 1999), motivation (Kosic, Kruglanski, Pierro, & Mannetti, 2004), self-esteem (Valentine, 2001), and social axioms (Safdar, Lewis, & Daneshpour, 2006). These studies have yielded mixed results, and the explained variance of personality factors has been generally low.

One reason for the lack of unequivocal support for personality’s role in cross-cultural adaptation is a problem with measurement and the prediction of adaptation. Cross-cultural adaptation has been examined in different ways ranging from mental health indicators, interactions with members of the

national society, feelings of acceptance, school achievement, job performance, and satisfaction with life, making it difficult to establish the predictive ability of personality (Ward & Chang, 1997). This is a situation that calls for a meta-analytic examination. The other side of the problem is determining precisely what constitutes a personality trait. And equally problematic in establishing the contribution of personality to cross-cultural adaptation is the general lack of research on person–situation interaction.

Acculturation Strategies: How Do People Acculturate?

In a framework that outlines the various ways that individuals and groups acculturate (Berry, 1974, 1980), two issues are identified. The first is the degree to which people wish to maintain their heritage cultures and identities; the second is the degree to which people wish to have contact with those who are outside their group and participate with them in the daily life of the larger society. Preferences with respect to these two issues lead to the adoption of four different acculturation strategies that Berry terms assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. These strategies depend on the extent to which the individual balances the two issues of culture maintenance and contact (see Fig. 2).

Assimilation is the strategy used when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek close interaction with other cultures (or in some cases adopt the cultural values, norms, and traditions of the new society). The separation strategy is defined by individuals who place a high value on holding on to their original culture and avoid interaction with members of the new society. The integration strategy is used by individuals with an interest in maintaining one’s original culture while having daily interactions with other groups—there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time they seek, as a member of an ethnocultural group, to participate as an integral part of the larger social network. The marginalization strategy is defined by little possibility or lack of interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss) and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination). The four strategies are neither static, nor are they end outcomes in themselves. They can change depending on situational factors (e.g., in the wake of the 9/11 attack in the U.S., Muslims had to renegotiate their identities; see Sirin & Fine, 2007). These strategies are illustrated in the left hand side of Figure 2. The right hand side of Figure 2 illustrates the parallel concepts that are often employed when describing the public attitudes and public policies in the larger society (see Berry, 2003, for a full discussion).

Using cluster analysis, Berry and his colleagues (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006), found four acculturation profiles, reflecting the different ways in which young people orient themselves to five intercultural issues: their acculturation strategies, cultural identities, language use and proficiency, peer relationships, and family relationship values. The sample for

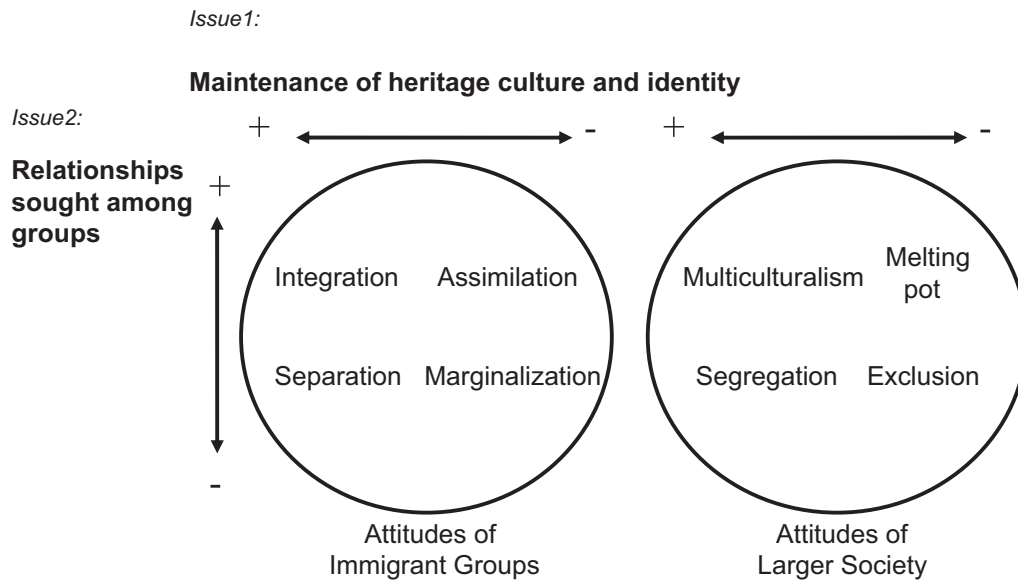


Figure 2. Acculturation strategies in ethnocultural groups and the larger society.

this analysis included over 4,000 immigrant youth in 13 different countries and involved over 30 different ethnic groups. The profiles give support to the original four acculturation strategies: the national, ethnic, integration, and diffuse profiles generally correspond to the assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization strategies. However, the profiles go beyond preferences for the different ways of acculturating and include acculturation attitudes, cultural identities, language knowledge and use, social relationships, and values.

Much research has also been devoted to the relative preference for the different acculturation strategies (Van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998) and how acculturation strategies may impact on adaptation outcome (Catro, 2003). To determine preferences for acculturation strategies, researchers have undertaken numerous studies in different countries and with different kinds of acculturating groups. With some few exceptions, integration is the most preferred strategy and marginalization is the least (Berry, 2003). Relative preference for assimilation and separation seem to vary with respect to the ethnic group and the society of settlement, as well as situational domains. In the Berry et al. (2006) study, the researchers found that among all the immigrants combined, integration was the most preferred strategy. However, separation appeared to be the most preferred strategy (40.3%) for the combined Turkish samples ($n = 714$). In contrast, those in the Vietnamese sample ($n = 718$) seemed to prefer assimilation (25.6%) nearly as much as integration (33.1%), and these preferences were related to whether the Vietnamese resided in a “settler society” (i.e., a society that has a long history of settling people, such as Australia, Canada, or the United States) or one with more restrictive immigration laws (e.g., Finland and Norway).

Acculturation strategies as presented above assume that acculturating individuals and groups have the freedom to

choose how they want to engage in intercultural relations. This, of course, is not always the case (Berry, 1974). The kinds of attitudes members of the larger society have toward immigrants and/or the kinds of settlement policies the larger society has toward acculturating groups can influence the adopted strategy. Society’s expectation of how an acculturating group should acculturate (i.e., acculturation expectations) has been the basis of theoretical models such as the interactive acculturation model (IAM) of Bourhis and his colleagues (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997). Extending IAM and arguing that differences exist between what immigrants or acculturating groups do in terms of chosen acculturation strategies (the real plane) and the strategies they prefer (the ideal plane), Navas and her colleagues have developed the relative acculturation expanded model (RAEM; Navas et al., 2005). Navas and her colleagues also point to the fact that preferred strategies (on the ideal plane) and the actual chosen strategy (on the real plane) vary with respect to the sphere of life (e.g., work, family, and religious beliefs). The REAM has been extended to incorporate acculturation expectations of members of the larger society (see Bourhis et al., 1997) to predict areas of agreement and disagreement in the acculturation of Maghrebians and Spaniards in Spain (Navas, Rojas, García, & Pumares, 2007).

Adaptation: How Well Do People Acculturate?

When discussing how well people adapt during acculturation, the interest is in the long-term outcome of psychological acculturation (Berry, 1997). Adaptation is not synonymous with acculturation, but it follows from the change. Adaptation in the context of acculturation has been defined variously, including health status, communication competence, self-awareness,

stress reduction, feelings of acceptance, and culturally skilled behaviors (see Ward, 1996). In this article, we use the distinction between psychological and sociocultural adaptation proposed by Ward and her colleagues (e.g., Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward, 1996, 2001). Psychological adaptation in this case refers to an individual's satisfaction and overall emotional or psychological well-being. Studies interested in psychological adaptation have oftentimes focused on mental health outcomes such as depression and anxiety. Sociocultural adaptation, on the other hand, refers to how successfully the individual acquires the appropriate sociocultural skills for living effectively in the new sociocultural milieu. The sociocultural adaptation has been operationalized in several ways including behavior problems, school achievement, and social competence. The two forms of adaptation are interrelated; both deal with problems and positive interactions with members of the host culture are likely to improve one's feelings of well-being and satisfaction. Similarly, it is easier to accomplish tasks and develop positive interpersonal relations if one is feeling good about him- or herself and accepted by others.

An important issue when discussing how well acculturating people adapt is determining the level of adaptation. A common way to do this is to compare one group with another. But should acculturating people be compared with nonacculturating members of their own ethnic group, other acculturating groups in the new society, or with members of the new and larger society? Or should they be assessed against a psychometrically and standardized instrument measuring adaptation? All three reference groups for comparison and a standardized instrument ideally should be utilized. But, quite often, information on the comparison reference groups is not available, nor is the standardized instrument culturally fair or free. Bearing this in mind, research findings in terms of how well immigrants adapt is mixed (partly because of differences in the benchmark used in reaching a decision). Some studies have found good adaptation outcomes (both psychological and sociocultural) with some acculturating groups doing either better or equally well as their national peers in the society of residence (Berry et al., 2006; Escobar, Nervi, & Gara, 2000; Motti-Stefanidi, Pavlopoulos, Obradovic, & Masten, 2008). However, other studies have found poor adaptation outcomes (Alegría et al., 2008).

Other than differences in the benchmark used in reaching a conclusion (e.g., comparing immigrants with the national group), mixed findings have arisen because of differences in operationalization of acculturation itself and the measure of adaptation outcome examined (see Koneru, Weisman de Mamania, Flynn, & Betancourt, 2007, for a review). Moreover, the outcome of the psychological adaptation is dependent on several moderating factors, including the society of settlement and the immigration policies of the society, and the manner in which they chose to acculturate. This latter issue is discussed in the next section.

Although much attention has been directed to psychological and sociocultural adaptation, research has also found links between acculturation and physical health (Schulpen, 1996), such as different forms of cancer (Abraído-Lanza, Chao, &

Gates, 2008) and cardiovascular diseases (Kliewar, 1992; Maskarinec & Noh, 2004). However, rather than acculturation resulting in poor physical health, many studies seem to suggest that immigrants have better physical health when compared with their nonmigrating peers in the society of emigration (see Kliewar, 1992). What appears to be the trend is that with increasing contact and acculturation, health status shifts towards the national norm; this has been referred to as the *convergence hypothesis* (Sam, 2006a). Closely linked to this observation is what has become known as the *immigrant paradox*. Specifically, the immigrant paradox encompasses several phenomena, but it is a counterintuitive finding that immigrants show better adaptation outcomes than their national peers; in addition, the paradox also entails the finding that first generation immigrants report better adaptation than their second generation peers (Sam, Vedder, Leibkind, Neto, & Virta, 2008). Research however is unclear why the paradox arises, but some contend that this might be related to a "healthy immigrant effect"; namely, that more healthy immigrants migrate, but with the passage of time they encounter adaptation challenges such as ethnic discrimination, making them vulnerable to health problems (Flores & Brotanek, 2005).

Relationship Between How People Acculturate and How Well They Adapt

A number of studies have found that the acculturating strategy that people adopt is related to how well they adapt. The most common finding is that the integration strategy is the most adaptive in several settings and is associated with better psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Liebkind, 2001; Sam et al., 2006). These findings have been found in a comparative study of immigrant youth in Montreal and Paris (Berry & Sabatier, in press). Similarly, the marginalization strategy has been found to be the least adaptive. One possible reason for why integration results in better adaptation outcome is that it entails a form of double competence and the availability of double resources. These competencies come from one's own ethnic and cultural group and from the new and larger society, and these resources double an individual's ability to cope with cultural transitions. In contrast, marginalization entails little competency in and lack of support from any cultural group; hence, the risks of adaptation difficulties are higher.

The large comparative study among immigrant youth (see Berry et al., 2006) also showed that determining how well immigrant youth adapt is not simply a question of how they chose to acculturate, but the nature of the society in which they reside. With respect to the nature of the society of settlement, the researchers distinguished between settler societies (i.e., a society that encourages and welcomes immigration, such as Australia, Canada, and the United States) and nonsettler societies (e.g., France, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), where immigration is regarded to be a necessity aimed at assisting less privileged people. Berry et al. (2006) found integration to be more common in settler societies than in nonsettler societies. They also found a positive relationship between the

integration strategy and successful adaptation, and this seems to hold true irrespective of whether the immigrant lives in a settler or nonsettler society. However, other forms of acculturation (e.g., ethnic profile or separation) were also found to be related to better psychological adaptation in a nonsettler society, but not for sociocultural adaptation (Sam, 2009).

In the relationship between how immigrants acculturate and how well they adapt, the role of discrimination is important. There is evidence that acculturation strategies are linked to discrimination, with those experiencing high discrimination more likely to prefer separation, whereas those experiencing less discrimination prefer integration or assimilation. This may be an example of reciprocity in mutual attitudes: If immigrants experience rejection from the society of settlement, then they are more likely to reject them in return (Berry, 2006a; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Solheim, 2009). Similarly, there is evidence that discrimination is often the most powerful predictor of poor psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry et al., 2006; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Jaakkola, & Reuter, 2006). And, as noted previously, there are relationships between acculturation strategies and adaptation. Taken together, these findings indicate a close (triangular) relationship among acculturation strategies, adaptive outcomes, and discrimination. Researchers cannot determine whether these links are causal. However, in one study (Berry et al., 2006), the structural model suggests that discrimination may be a starting point: High discrimination predicts low preference for integration and poor adaptation, whereas integration predicts positive adaptation. This pattern provides some evidence that achieving better intercultural relations and adaptation is likely to require a reduction in discrimination.

Conclusions and Future Research Directions

A major part of the field of cross-cultural psychology is now concerned with the process and outcomes of acculturation. This is evidenced by changes in the published articles in journals (Brouwers, van Hemert, Breugelman, & van de Vijver, 2004; Lonner, 2004) and in the papers presented at international congresses. The likely reason for this intense research activity is the worldwide increase in intercultural contact and mutual influence, commonly known as globalization. However, evidence reviewed in this article shows that such intercultural contact does not necessarily lead to increased homogeneity in culture and behavior: Assimilation is not the most preferred or common way of acculturating, and the adaptations tend not to be the most positive when it is pursued. As argued by Berry (2008), alternative strategies exist to counter the homogenizing influences and changes that might occur from increased globalization, including resistance to or withdrawal from contact and the development of novel or innovative ways of living together.

These various consequences of contact and acculturation need to be further explored and monitored by research over the coming years. Although we have an understanding of what the distinct types of acculturation strategies are and of their consequences, it appears that little is known about the antecedents—

that is, what predicts individuals to want to maintain their own and others' cultural identity (and adopt different types of acculturation strategies). Furthermore, there is a lack of multilevel studies that integrate society-level characteristics and individual-level characteristics in understanding acculturation. Ideally, such research should be both longitudinal and comparative. Only longitudinal research can engage the process of cultural and psychological change that lies at the core of the process of acculturation. And only comparative research can understand the global pattern of response to increased intercultural contact and the consequent acculturation. Moreover, comparative research designs require the sampling from societies where most acculturation is now taking place (but where little research has actually been done). These include the largest domestic intercultural settings of China, India, and Russia, and those involving diasporas of refugees and sojourners in various regions of Africa, the Gulf States, Pakistan, and West Asia. Only when sufficient information is available from these intercultural cauldrons will we be able to provide a comprehensive picture of the acculturation experience and its outcomes.

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