Acculturation

Cross-cultural psychology

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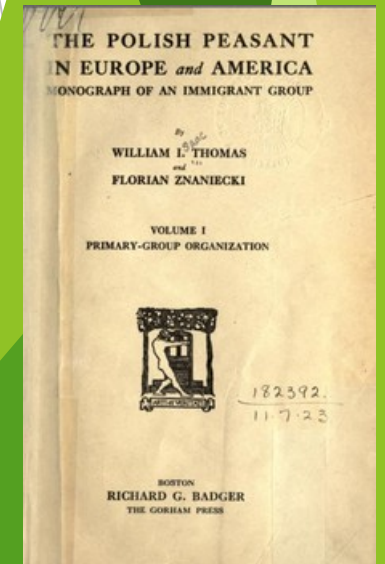
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Acculturation – what is it

- explains the process of cultural change and psychological change that results following meeting between cultures

- the process of adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of another group

- *„Those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous firs-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural 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, 1936)*

History

▶ The earliest recorded thoughts towards acculturation in Sumerian inscriptions and Plato manuscripts

▶ 1880 J.W. Powell

▶ studied scientifically since 1918 - Thomas, Znaniecki *Polish Peasant in Europe* - The first psychological theory of acculturation

  ▶ Bohemian (adopting the host culture and abandoning their culture of origin)

  ▶ Philistine (preserving their culture of origin but failing to adopt the host culture)

  ▶ creative type (able to adapt to the host culture while preserving their culture of origin).

▶ 50.l. 20.st. Kim + Gudykunst

▶ 60.l. 20.st. Gordon

▶ Contemporary research has primarily focused on different strategies of acculturation and how variations in acculturation affect how well individuals adapt in their society

THE POLISH PEASANT IN EUROPE and AMERICA
MONOGRAPH OF AN IMMIGRANT GROUP
By
WILLIAM I. THOMAS
and
FLORIAN ZNANIECKI
VOLUME I
PRIMARY-GROUP ORGANIZATION
BOSTON
RICHARD G. BADGER
THE GORHAM PRESS

Acculturation

- Group (sociology) x individual (psychology) level
- Unidimenzional x bidimenzional process
- One way – two way proces

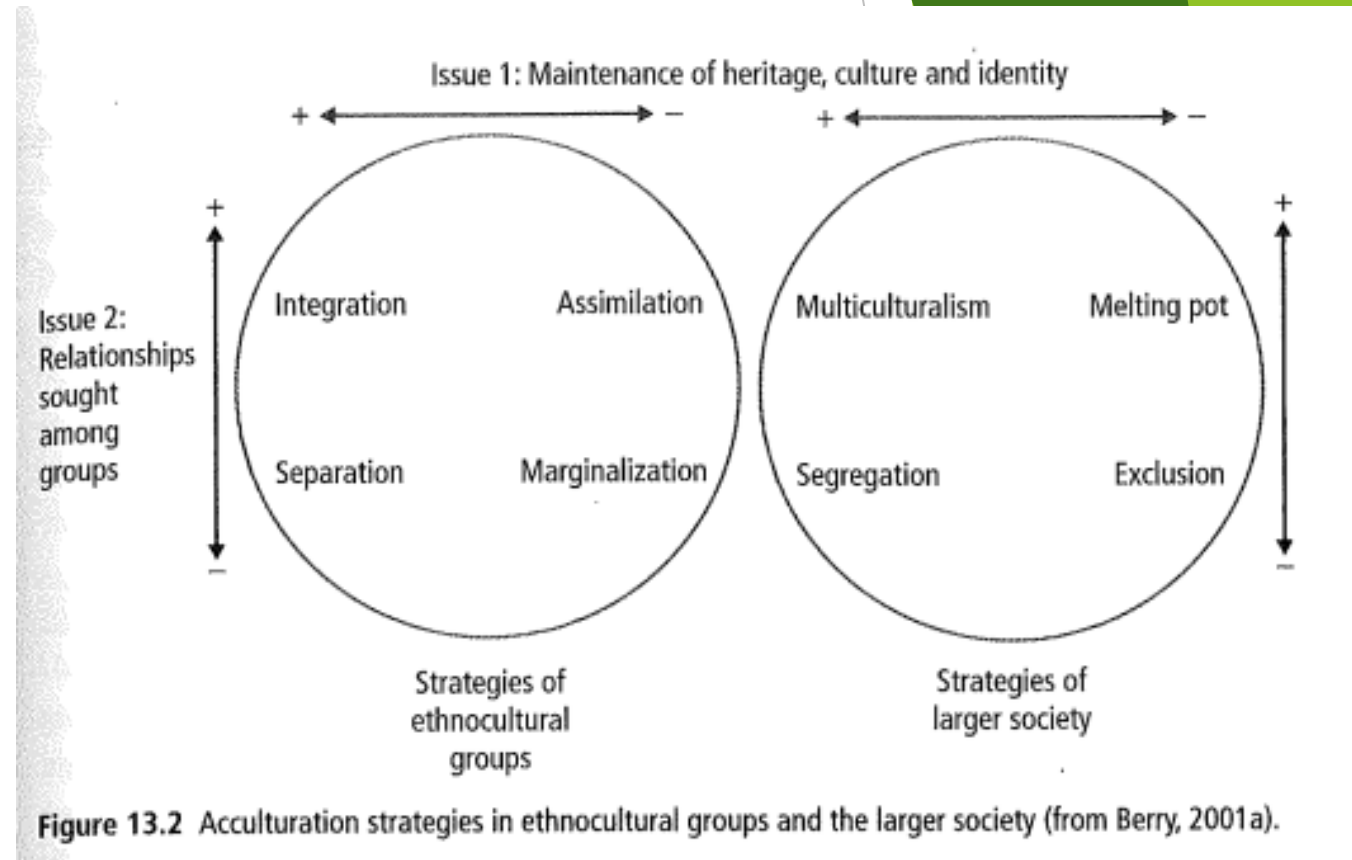- immigrants, sojourners, refugees and asylum seekers, indigenous people.

Theories of acculturation

- 50.l. 20.st. Kim + Gudykunst

  - unilinear proces, the sojourner must conform to the majority group culture in order to be "communicatively competent

- Kramer – Cultural Fusion Theory

  - identity depends on difference

  - If everyone assimilates into a monoculture that would mean that identity, meaning, and communication would cease to be

- Berry – Fourfold model – acculturation preferencies

  - retention or rejection of an individual's minority or native culture

  - adoption or rejection of the dominant group or host culture.

- Benet – Martinez

  - Biculturalism and bicultural identity integration (BII)

Berry´s acculturative strategies

- Assimilation

- Separation

- Integration

- Marginalization

- Dimension od maintenance x refusion of original culture

- Dimension adoption x refusion of new culture

Figure 13.2 Acculturation strategies in ethnocultural groups and the larger society (from Berry, 2001a).

Assimilation

▶ individuals adopt the cultural norms of a dominant or host culture, over their original culture

Separation

▶ individuals reject the dominant culture in favour of preserving their culture of origin

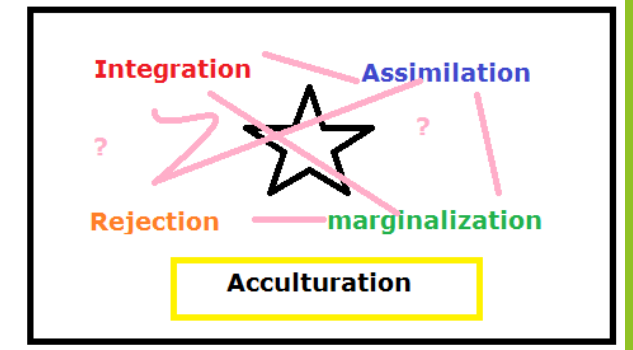▶ Separation is often facilitated by immigration to ethnic enclaves

Integration

- individuals are able to adopt the cultural norms of the dominant or host culture while maintaining their culture of origin

- Integration leads to, and is often synonymous with biculturalism.

- the most preferred option (Berry, 1997)

- most positive individual and group acculturations strategy

Marginalization

- individuals reject both their culture of origin and the dominant host culture.

Berry´s acculturative strategies

- Individuals' acculturation strategy can differ between their private and public live spheres
- Prefered strategy (attitude) x real strategy (behavior)
- Strategy prefered by minority x prefered by majority

- Depends on
  - Cultural distance
  - Age, gender, education
  - Personal factors
  - …

ABCs model of acculturation

- Affective perspective (emocional aspects of acculturation process)
  - Acculturative stress
- Cognitive perspective
  - *Social identity theory. Tajfel*
  - Ethnic identity, steretypes
- Bahaviour perspective
  - *Cultural learning aproach*
  - Learning culture specific competencies
  - Cultural training – cultural assimilator

Acculturative stress

▶ *„Acculturative stress refers to the psychological, somatic, and social difficulties that may accompany acculturation processes, often manifesting in anxiety, depression and other forms of mental and physical maladaptation."* (Berry, 1970)

▶ a response by people to life events that are rooted in intercultural contact

▶ a reduction in health status (including psychological, somatic, and social aspects) of individuals who are undergoing acculturation

▶ Symptoms: heightened levels of depression (linked to the experience of cultural loss) and of anxiety (linked to uncertainty about how one should live in new society).

▶ negative predictor of well-being

▶ Measurement of acculturative stres – Riverside acculturation scale (RASI, Benet-Martinez, 2005)

The measurement of acculturation

- To measure
  - Acculturative outcomes x accul. conditions
  - Accu. Strategies x preferencies
  - Acculturation attitudes
  - Accu. Behavior
- Uni- x bi-diensionals scales
  - bipolar, single dimension scales x bidemensional scales x four scales with statements capturing favourable attitudes toward every strategy
- Specific scales (for example mexican americans)

The measurement of acculturation

- Examples:

- General ethnicity questionaire (GEQ, Tsai et al, 2000)

- Stephenson multigroup acculturation scale (SMAS, Stephenson, 2000)

- Vancouver index of acculturation (VIA, Ryder, 2000)

- Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ, Van der Zee, Van Oudenhovenven, 2000)

- Riverside Acculturation Stress Inventory (RASI; Benet-Martınez, Haritatos, 2005)

Acculturation outcomes

▶ Refer to consequences of the acculturation process which can be psychological (internal adjustment, well-being) and behavioral (external adjustment, doing well).

▶ Depends on acculturation strategy, personality,..

▶ Immigrant paradox

  ▶ First x second generation od immigrants

Practical aplications

- unprecedented increase in worldwide migration and globalization
- Education
  - successful and unsuccessful schooling trajectories for immigrant children
  - educational strategies that may benefit them
- immigrants in the labor market
  - salaries of immigrants
- immigration policy
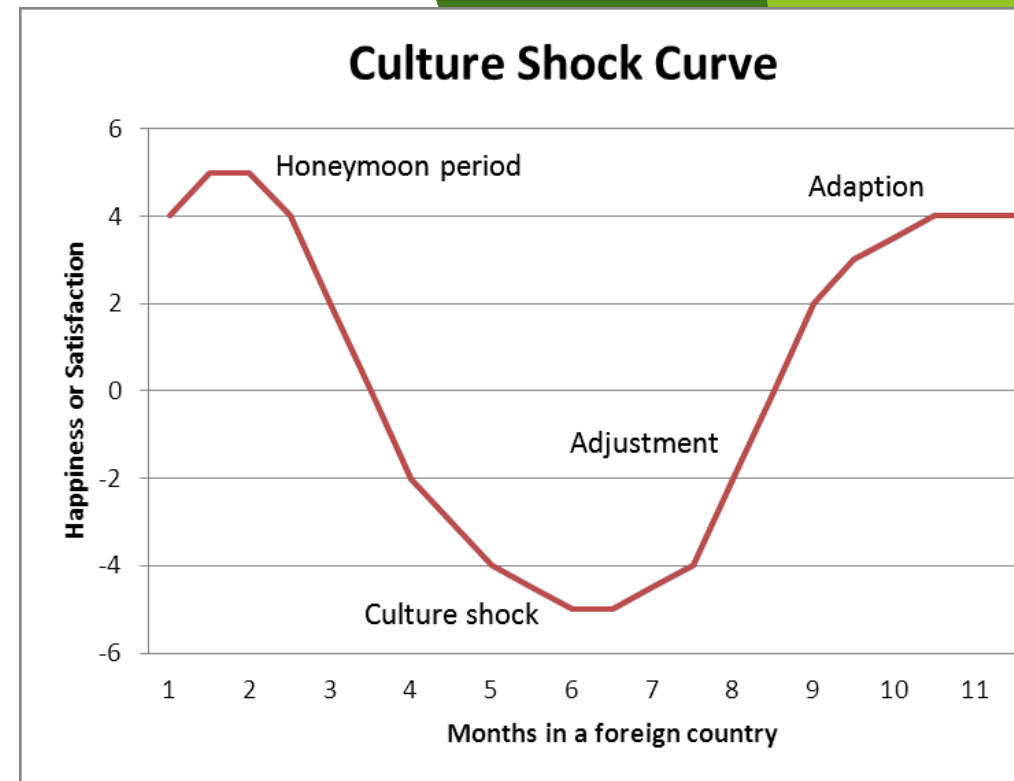
Practical aplications II

- ▶ intercultural training

  - ▶ how immigrants and sojourners can learn to deal successfully with cross-cultural transitions using intercultural training

- ▶ health system

- ▶ intercultural relations in plural societas

  - ▶ relationship between the larger society and ethno cultural groups

  - ▶ how to improve their relationship and thereby increase the chance of positive acculturation

Culture shock

▶ a state of bewilderment and distress experienced by an individual who is suddenly exposed to a new, strange, or foreign social and cultural environment (dictionary.com)

▶ Phases

   ▶ **Honeymoon phase**

   ▶ **Frustration phase**

   ▶ **Adjustment phase**

   ▶ **Mastery phase**

   ▶ **Return**

Culture Shock Curve

Happiness or Satisfaction

Honeymoon period

Adaption

Adjustment

Culture shock

Months in a foreign country

Culture shock II

▶ Symptoms : information overload, language barrier, technology gap, skill interdependence, formulation dependency, homesickness, boredom (job dependency), response ability (cultural skill set).

▶ Depends on: age, gender, purpose of visit, lenght of visit, cultural distance

Reverse culture shock

▶ results from the psychosomatic and psychological consequences of the readjustment process to the primary culture

▶ more surprising and difficult to deal with than the original culture shock

Bicultural identity Integration (BII)

▶ Correspond to integration strategy

▶ Author Veronica Benet-Martinez

▶ captures (explains) variations among bicultural individuals in the degree to which they "perceive their mainstream and ethnic cultural identities as compatible and integrated versus oppositional and difficult to integrate".

▶ focuses on bicultural individuals¨ subjective perceptions of managing dual cultural identities

▶ perception of distance (versus overlap) and perception of conflict (versus harmony)

▶ Dimensions **harmony x conflict, blendedness vs. compartment**

BII

High BIII

- cultural identities as generally compatible

- to view themselves as part of a combined or third emerging culture

- find it relatively easy to integrate both cultures into their everyday lives

Low BII

- difficulty in incorporating both cultures into a cohesive sense of identity

- perceive the two cultures as highly distinct and oppositional

- describe feeling as if they should just choose one culture over the other

- sensitive to specific tension between the two cultural orientations