

Immigrant Youth in Transition: Ways of Acculturating and Adaptive Success

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1. Introduction

- This presentation examines the background context from which radical youth may emerge.
- The context explored is the one that is experienced by first and second generation immigrants.
- It accepts that all behaviour is multidetermined, and cannot be explained by any one factor or set of circumstances.

Berry, John W., Jean S. Phinney, David L. Sam and Paul Vedder (2006) "Immigrant Youth: Acculturation, Identity, and Adaption" in *Applied Psychology: An International Journal*, 55(3): 303-332.

2. Acculturation: Definition

- Acculturation is the process of cultural and psychological **change** following contact between cultural groups and their individual members.
- It takes place in **both** groups, although one group is usually dominant.
- It is a **process** that takes place over time, and probably never ends.

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2. Acculturation: Domains

- Cultural level = original features of both cultures in contact, the nature of their contact relationships, and the cultural changes that result in both groups.
- Psychological level= changed features of individuals, including behavioural shifts, stress reactions, and long term adaptations.

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2. Acculturation Strategies

- Groups and individuals in both groups hold differing views about how to relate to each other and how to change.
- Two underlying issues:
 - Cultural maintenance
 - Participation with other groups.
- Intersection produces 4 acculturation strategies, in both groups in contact.

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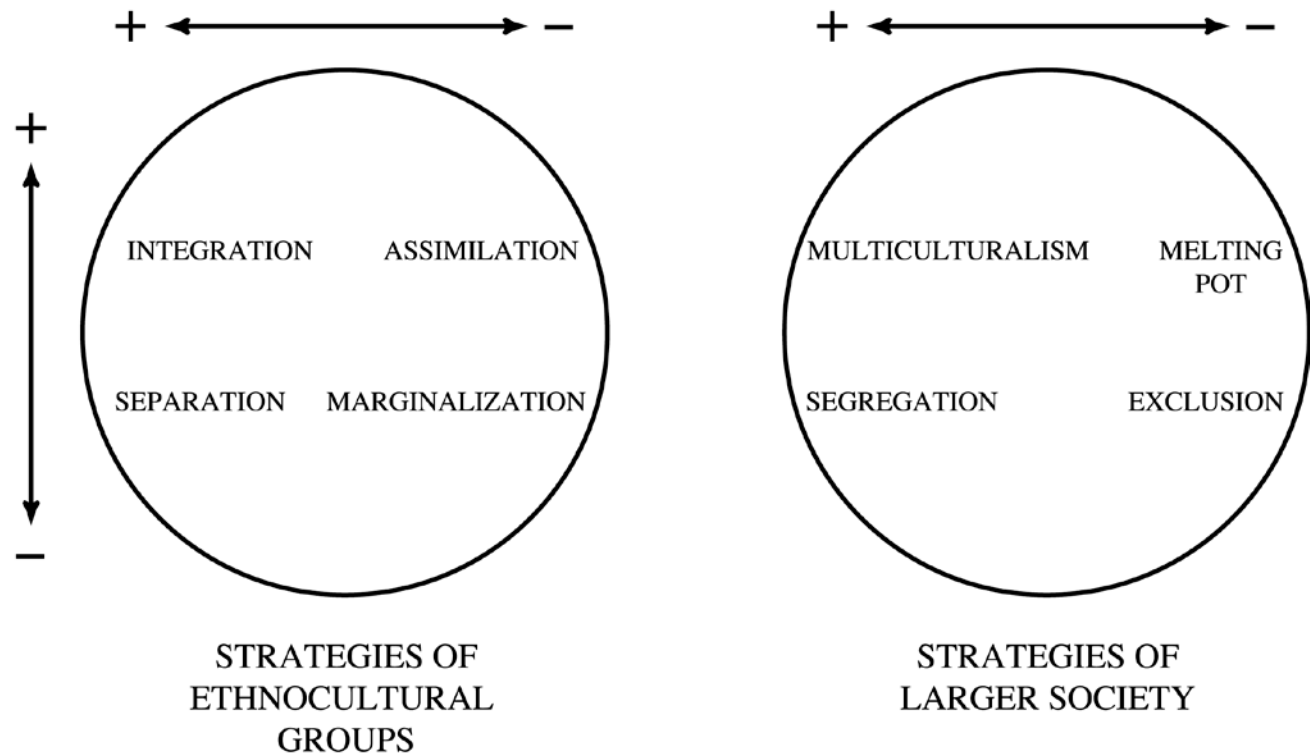
2. Acculturation Strategies Framework

ISSUE 1:

MAINTENANCE OF HERITAGE CULTURE AND IDENTITY

ISSUE 2:

RELATIONSHIPS
SOUGHT
AMONG
GROUPS



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3. Youth Acculturation: Transitions Issues

Transitions from:

- Childhood to adulthood (not just immigrants)
- Heritage culture to national culture.
- Parental and youth differential acculturation across generations.

All these transitions pose risks to successful development.

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4. International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth (ICSEY)

Three Questions:

1. *How* do youth acculturate?
2. *How well* do youth adapt?
3. What is *relationship* between how they acculturate and how well they adapt?

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4. ICSEY Samples

- 13 SOCIETIES OF SETTLEMENT:
(5 Settler, 4 Colonial, 3 Recent)
- 32 IMMIGRANT GROUPS
- Immigrant youth N = 5366
- Immigrant parents N = 2302
- National youth N = 2631
- National parents N = 863

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Four Acculturation Strategies; Variables Included

1. Integration: Preference for, identification with, and actual involvement in both cultures.
2. Separation:.....with cultural group of origin
3. Assimilation:.....with national society.
4. Marginalisation:... With neither group.

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4. ICSEY Question 1. How do immigrant youth acculturate?

Using 13 intercultural variables, four clusters were found:

- Integration: 36.4% (USA: 53.5 %)
- Separation: 22.5 % (USA: 12.8 %)
- Assimilation: 18.7 % (USA: 16.9 %)
- Marginalisation: 22.4% (USA:16.7 %)

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Acculturation Strategies: Relationships with Other Variables

- Length of Residence: Integration up; Marginalisation down; Assimilation up a little; Separation remains same.
- Neighbourhood Composition: Integration highest in ethnically mixed.
- Discrimination: Lowest for Integration, then for Assimilation, then Separation; highest for Marginalisation.
- Mastery: Highest for Integration; lowest for Marginalisation.

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4. ICSEY Question 2.

How Well do Immigrant Youth Adapt?

Two forms of adaptation were found:

1. *Psychological*: Lack of Psychological Problems (anxiety, depression, psychosomatic symptoms), Self-esteem, Well-being.
2. *Sociocultural*: School Adjustment, lack of Behaviour Problems (truancy, petty theft).

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4. ICSEY Question 3

Are There Relationships Between How Youth Acculturate, and How well They Adapt Psychologically and Socioculturally? Yes.

Psychological Adaptation: Integration highest; followed by Separation, Assimilation; Marginalisation lowest.

Sociocultural Adaptation: Integration highest; followed by Assimilation Separation; Marginalisation lowest.

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5. Multiculturalism Policy

In 1971, the Canadian Federal government announced a policy of Multiculturalism, whose goal was “to break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies”. This goal of prejudice prevention and reduction was to be achieved in part by supporting ethnocultural communities in their wish to maintain their heritage cultures. This goal was based on what we have termed “the multicultural hypothesis “

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5. MC: Security and Prejudice

In the words of the policy, freedom from discrimination “must be founded on confidence in one’s own individual identity”. The basic notion is that only when people are secure in their identities will they be in a position to accept those who differ from them; that is, when people feel threatened, they will develop prejudice and engage in discrimination.

5. MC: Social Psychological Links

- *Multiculturalism Hypothesis*: only when people are secure in their own identity will they be in a position to accept those who differ from them (i.e., no threat to their identity).
- *Contact Hypothesis*: intercultural contact under equitable conditions will increase mutual acceptance.

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5. MC: Main Policy Initiatives

- Main policy goal: the mutual acceptance of all groups by all groups.
- Three simultaneous routes to this goal:
 - *cultural*: promote cultural maintenance
 - *social*: promote equitable participation
 - *language*: promote learning of official languages to support participation by individuals and groups in the life of the larger society.

6. Conclusions and Implications

1. There are individual and group differences in *how* youth acculturate: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation.
2. There are two distinct ways in *how well* people adapt to acculturate:
psychological and *sociocultural*.
3. There are systematic relationships between *how* and *how well* immigrant youth adapt to acculturation.
Integration clearly serves as a favourable strategy for immigrant youth well being.
This pattern corresponds with most results from research with adult immigrants.

6. Implications: Ethnocultural Groups

2. For all ethnocultural groups, it is important to provide financial support and encouragement for BOTH their cultural maintenance AND their full and equitable participation in the life of the larger society.
 - Participation without maintenance promotes Assimilation.
 - Maintenance without participation promotes Separation.
 - Engaging in both promotes Integration, and avoids Marginalisation.

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6. Implications: Schools

3. For *schools*, curriculum and other information should be developed to make it clear that a double cultural engagement is a better way to live than orienting oneself to one or the other, or neither, culture.

In particular, the dangers of being marginalised from cultural supports need to be emphasized.

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6. Implications: Families

4. For *families*, public information and community resources are needed to make it clear that involvement in, and support from both cultures, enhance the well being of immigrant youth.

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6. Implications: Individuals

5. For *individuals*, general dissemination of information and personal counselling are important in order for youth to understand the benefits of engaging both cultures in a balanced way.

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