

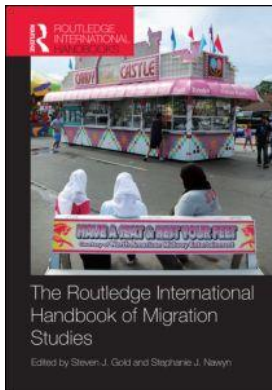
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Psychological acculturation

Perspectives, principles, processes, and prospects

Marc Bornstein

Introduction

Acculturation traditionally includes “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*” (Redfield *et al.* 1936: 149–50, emphasis added). Since this formative definition was first advanced, the sociological and anthropological origins of acculturation theory and research have engendered continuing and appropriate focus on group-level acculturation. However, it is well to recall that *individuals* do the actual migration and adjustment. More than 200 million people today are said to live outside their country of origin. That number tallies to 1 in ~30 individuals living on earth.

For the vast majority of international migrants, leaving their native country to settle in a new country engenders daunting alternatives between allegiance to and association with one way of life that includes family, social, and economic connections against usually contrasting economic, philosophical, religious, and political conditions or investments. When considered in this way, migration and acculturation constitute thoroughly transforming forces on individual people. On this argument, we contend that a more encompassing approach to acculturation must embrace dual processes of group cultural and individual psychological adjustment that result from contact between two or more groups and their individual members.

This brief chapter outlines some prominent principles, processes, and prospects of this perspective on individual-level *psychological acculturation*. We first review relevant general theory about migration and acculturation. We then differentiate individual-level from group-level acculturation. Individual-level acculturation is not a uniform process as implied by a group-level approach. Next, we distinguish and discuss *variability* of different sorts that constitutes the heart of individual psychological acculturation. For brevity’s sake, we provide selected, rather than exhaustive, illustrations. Psychological acculturation raises methodological, disciplinary, and policy considerations, and we overview those also. Finally, we point to some profitable future directions of theory development and empirical inquiry in the area of psychological acculturation. Migration signifies physical relocation between geographic locales; acculturation signifies

psychological adjustment. Acculturation is certainly a group phenomenon, and some aspects of acculturation submit to group-level analysis; acculturation is also an individual phenomenon, and other aspects are better understood at an individual level. This chapter focuses on the latter.

Acculturation: a group *and* individual phenomenon

Acculturation

When an individual from one culture emigrates to a new one, that individual conveys his or her original culture. Acculturation is the study of how people with one culture negotiate adjustment as they settle and adapt in a new culture. Twentieth-century theory and research on acculturating groups and individuals was initially characterized by unidimensional and unidirectional models of change where immigrants were seen to relinquish their culture of origin as they acquired a new culture of destination. In short, acculturation equated to assimilation (Gordon 1964). Accumulating evidence eventually suggested that most acculturating individuals adopt cognitions and practices of the new culture while simultaneously retaining those of their old (e.g., celebrating holidays of the culture of destination as well as holidays of the culture of origin). That is, individual immigrants have (varying degrees of) competence in two cultures.

Group and individual

Acculturation takes place on both group and individual planes. Group-level processes and effects provide a deeper understanding of global acculturation experiences and help to identify social forces (e.g., attitudes toward immigrants, immigration policies) and aggregate acculturation trajectories. However, just as different immigrant groups retain and adopt culture-specific cognitions and practices differently, so too do different individual immigrants in a group. Indian migrants to the United Kingdom may be considered to have acculturated because a large proportion of Indians have, for example, learned to speak English. However, individuals within the migrant Indian community vary widely in the ways they have adapted and differ considerably in their level of acculturation, as for example in their English-language proficiency.

From the example just given, it is plain that the two planes of acculturation do not necessarily change in lockstep, and there are good reasons for adopting a multi-level perspective of individuals nested within groups—and therefore of acculturation transpiring at the two levels. Furthermore, each level certainly informs and influences the other. Compare the acculturation histories of newer Mexican immigrants in New York City with more established Dominicans. Mexicans are scattered across neighborhoods with low co-ethnic concentration, compared to Dominicans many of whom have lived in a predominant urban enclave for over 50 years (Yoshikawa 2011). Mexicans arrived in a period without a pathway to citizenship; in contrast, many Dominicans experienced amnesty in the late 1980s following the Immigration Reform and Control Act. Recent migrants from the Dominican Republic are much more likely to have family members in the United States with residency or citizenship and accompanying language and systems navigation skills than recent migrants from Mexico. Mexican parents and their young children have lower availability of supports for child care and finances as well as fewer multi-generational family networks. For children, this means that grandparents and other older family members with English-language skills are far more likely to be present in Dominican households than in Mexican households. In this way, individual acculturation patterns are influenced by group histories of migration. Individual immigrants from the former Soviet

Union (FSU) to Israel in the 1990s experienced reduced migration-related trauma because their exodus comprised whole families.

In brief, acculturation involves complex processes that occur in individuals and in groups. On the group plane, acculturation involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices. On the individual plane, acculturation involves changes in a person's cognitions and practices broadly construed. At the group level, acculturation encompasses social change in demographic, health, and economic systems in society and affects civic, educational, social service, and legal systems. At the individual level, migrants often think, feel, and behave differently from the native-born in a culture of destination and they also differ from one another on indices of health, well-being, education, and so forth.

Psychological acculturation

International migration is not a single, discrete event involving movement from one geographically and socially bounded locality to another. Rather, international migration entails dynamic exchanges, multiple domains, diverse resources, and imperative needs that are simultaneously unique and indigenous to multiple settings. Migration and acculturation are inherently individual experiences that precipitate thoroughgoing changes of social identity and self. Immigrants must negotiate new cultures and learn to navigate new systems. Just to communicate effectively in their culture of settlement requires of immigrants new competencies in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Such transformations entail gaining new knowledge as well as adjusting ingrained life scripts. Immigrants face multiple challenges in acculturating to a new society—including deciding which cognitions or practices to retain from their culture of origin and which to adopt from their culture of destination.

Not every individual enters into, participates in, or accommodates in acculturation in the same way; one individual in a group may follow a course toward fuller assimilation, whereas another in the same group may strive for a bicultural equilibrium. Individual differences are the hallmark of psychological acculturation, and there is great variability in the ways individuals go about acculturating as well as in the levels and types of acculturation they achieve. Here, we discuss several kinds of variability that principally define psychological acculturation. Migration transcends identity in the sense of who am I, and raises considerations of where do I fit and what are my present and future roles within my new society. Individual level analyses focus on images of self within place or context.

Along the way, considerations of variability elicit methodological, disciplinary, and policy questions. For example, most studies measure acculturation at a single point in time and generally employ a cross-sectional research design. This methodological orientation leads to an artificially cropped “snapshot” of acculturation and invariably to portrayals of acculturation status as static. In reality, however, acculturation in individuals is dynamic and nonlinear, as acculturating individuals retain some cognitions or practices of their culture of origin and undergo periods of stabilization as well as change. Immigrants' modes of acculturation may vary over time as a function of ongoing experiences in their new culture, or new developments in the original culture. Examinations of acculturation true to its process nature call for microgenetic and longitudinal designs, preferably with multiple waves.

Within-group variability

Migrants vary in many general individual-difference characteristics that likely affect acculturation (e.g., age, gender, personality) as well as specific acculturation-related characteristics (e.g., motives

for migration, commitment to the adopted homeland, length of settlement). Psychological acculturation is concerned with both, and how immigrants acculturate is a product of combinations of individual-difference and acculturation-related factors. Within-group variability is as likely in relevant resources as in acculturation strategies or options.

Here we explore some main sources of variability that likely shape psychological acculturation. Learning new cultural norms and values, adjusting behaviors according to those norms and values in social interactions, and building competencies based on multiple, perhaps even conflicting, standards, are common individual tasks of immigrants. Individual adjustment generally is an ongoing dynamic process in which personal characteristics and learning experiences interact to contribute to mental and socioemotional functioning. Moreover, people are not passive registrants of their experiences (*read* new culture), but rather play active roles in self-socialization (Bornstein *et al.* 2011). The constructive and agentic parts immigrants play in their acculturation (*read* resocialization) are reflected in their in maintaining or jettisoning past culture, adapting or rejecting the surrounding culture, and constructing a new culture. What are some of the principal individual characteristics that channel the course of immigrant acculturation?

Age and developmental status

From a lifespan perspective, immigrants appear to acculturate differently depending on their age or developmental status. That is, acculturation is developmentally sensitive. When Richman *et al.* (1987) explored acculturation among migrants to Peru, they learned that age at the time of migration was associated with level of acculturation achieved. Not only do migrants enter the acculturation stream at different points in their own development, but the course of subsequent currents of both acculturation and development can also be expected to eddy differently downstream for those who start the process at different life stages. Individuals who enter into acculturation in childhood may embrace culture-of-destination cognitions and practices as a way of fitting in and lose or reject those of their culture of origin (Benet-Martínez and Haritatos 2005; Schwartz *et al.* 2010). Thus, young people immigrating to ethnic enclaves are more likely to be bicultural whereas adults are less likely to acquire the new culture (Schwartz *et al.* 2006). Few studies directly examine how processes of acculturation differ depending on the developmental status of the child, adolescent, or adult (Bernhard 2010). Indeed, the intersection of development and migration is an oddly neglected issue in light of the fact that children constitute a large proportion of migrants and often fill unique roles in mediating between cultures of origin and destination. Being more acculturated, children frequently language “broker” for adults, for instance.

Life’s developmental stages are intrinsically associated with certain developmental tasks. As children enter adolescence, for example, their improved capacity for self-reflection, coupled with the task of forming a socially acceptable identity, herald increased sensitivity to the opinions of significant others and constant re-assessment of social relationships. Formation of a socially approved identity might therefore present special challenges for migrant adolescents who are exposed to alternate visions of a healthy identity in the family and the wider society. Even younger and older adolescents respond differently to conflicting demands from cultures of origin and destination: Younger adolescents tend to navigate between cultural ecologies more fluidly than do older adolescents, perhaps because they are developmentally more flexible and open to new experiences (Berry *et al.* 2006).

Processes of acculturation also vary for people at different stages of life; parents and children do not necessarily acculturate in similar manners. Immigrant parents often have less contact with the wider society and may experience more difficulty in learning the new language than do

their children. Immigrant children are usually more frequently and intensively exposed to their new culture through peers and school, contributing to their greater acceptance of that new culture. Thus, children of immigrants typically acculturate faster and begin to function transculturally more rapidly than their parents. In brief, lifespan developmental processes inform acculturation in individuals.

Gender

Gender is often treated as a nuisance variable or covariate in acculturation research. However, research points to distinct pathways of acculturation by gender (Güngör and Bornstein 2009). First-generation women often carry the heritage culture perhaps because of their typically more limited connection to the wider mainstream society beyond the home (Ward *et al.* 2001). However, girls are more likely to be bicultural, perhaps because of their greater sensitivity and adaptability to new social networks (Berry *et al.* 2006). A study on the transmission of gender role values in Turkish German immigrant families showed that Turkish daughters are more egalitarian than their mothers and their male peers whereas sons are not more egalitarian than their fathers. Among Vietnamese Australians and Chinese Canadian university students, boys score more similarly to their parents in terms of traditionalism than girls. In brief, acculturative change is in differential evidence among girls and boys, and women and men.

Personality

Choosing to emigrate may reflect certain personality characteristics (assertiveness, ego control), and acculturating, or developing a bicultural identity through internal processes of change, may be facilitated in certain (open, extraverted) personalities more than others. As individuals, immigrants naturally possess different constellations of personality characteristics that help or hinder their acculturation. Differences in attitude, risk taking, and level of anxiety tolerance doubtlessly contribute to variability in individual acculturation.

Cognition

Before following any feasible course of acculturation, individuals with one culture need to be exposed to and incorporate information from a new culture (Padilla and Prez 2003). Many possible processes have been proposed. Social-learning theory emphasizes the roles of observation and modeling in the acquisition of new and culturally appropriate skills, for example. In all cases, individual differences in cognitive functioning must come into play. Educated immigrants adapt more proficiently, just as educated immigrant parents are better positioned to advance their children, to help with homework, and to negotiate on behalf of their children with teachers and school administrators, whereas parents (even in the same immigrant group) with limited education may lack both experience and knowledge to provide similar support. Individual differences in language proficiency further condition acculturation. Speaking the language of the culture of destination is requisite to success for children enrolled in mainstream schools and in the labor market and other settings for adults. New language use is the most important explanatory predictor of individual differences in ethnic friendship homophily (Titzmann and Silbereisen 2009). As proficiency in the new language improves, homophily bias decreases, a finding that stands independent of length of stay in the host country and opportunity structures. In brief, accounting for individual personality and cognition fleshes out a conceptual framework that improves understanding of individual acculturation.

Generation

Acculturation has in the past been equated to generation of immigration. Individuals in different generations face different issues *vis-à-vis* their cultures of origin and destination and thus likely follow different trajectories of acculturation. People born outside the culture of destination often self-identify with their culture of origin, in contrast to those born and reared their whole lives in the culture of destination. For example, second-generation (just like younger) Latin immigrants to the United States adjust better to the majority culture than first-generation (like older) immigrants (Sabogal *et al.* 1987). Parents and children who share the same language and birth country may still differ in their acculturation (McQueen *et al.* 2003). Even siblings within the same family—who are titularly the same generation—do not necessarily acculturate in the same ways or to the same degree.

Generational discrepancies in acculturation are therefore common in immigrant families because the primary socialization of parents transpired in their culture of origin, whereas, depending on their age of arrival, children may experience primary socialization in the culture of destination. This discrepancy between immigrant parents and their children is referred to as the acculturation gap (Farver *et al.* 2002; Birman 2006). Parents and children can undergo differential rates of acculturation and these differential processes can account for significant sources of intergenerational differences, sometimes leading to increased conflict and stress and to problematic adaptation. In consequence, acculturation study needs to differentiate and to examine the variability associated with 1, 1.5, 2, and successive generations. In brief, generations likely vary in acculturation in ways that have consequences for individual immigrant adjustment.

Domain

Acculturation is multifaceted, impacting individuals in affective, cognitive, and behavioral spheres of functioning. Individuals do not necessarily acculturate in all domains of life on the same timetable or in the same direction. Rather, different psychological domains can and do show different patterns and rates of acculturation. Parenting practices appear to acculturate more readily than parenting cognitions. For example, Bornstein and Cote (2001, 2004) found that US Japanese immigrant mothers' cognitions resembled cognitions of mothers in Japan, or were intermediate between those of Japanese and European American mothers, whereas their behavioral interactions with children resembled those of European American mothers more closely than practices of Japanese. Insofar as they acculturate differently, acculturation attitudes do not necessarily predict acculturation behaviors. Ethnic behaviors may decrease from the first to the second generation, although attitudes do not change. Individual immigrants may embrace certain aspects of the culture of destination (e.g., language, dress, and music) and actively reject others (e.g., religious practices, customs, and emotions).

Perhaps the most widely acknowledged illustration of domain variability in psychological acculturation comes from the observation that immigrants tend to acculturate differently in public and private spheres of life (e.g., Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver 2004). Generally, the public domain involves participation in the social lives of both cultures of origin and destination, contacts with nationals, use of mass media, and schooling, whereas the private domain involves personal and value-related matters like preferences in socializing children, language spoken at home, and sanctioned ethnicity of persons to marry. Cultural adaptation is often preferred in the public domain and cultural maintenance in the private domain. For example, Phalet and Swyngedouw (2003) found that Turkish and Moroccan immigrants in The

Netherlands attributed more importance to cultural maintenance in the home and family (private domain), whereas adaptation was more important in school and at work (public domain).

When acculturation investigators focus on general processes or orientations, the more differentiated domain-specific nature of individual acculturation is masked. Domain variability suggests that acculturation is flexible and sensitive to situation-specific norms or demands. Thus, immigrants may seek economic assimilation, linguistic integration, and relationship separation. In brief, acculturation does not affect all aspects of the psyche in an identical way, and domain specificity predicts that different aspects can and will vary in their course of adjustment.

Motives and means

Migrants vary in their motives to emigrate and acculturate. For some, international migration is voluntary, for others, it is involuntary. Some individuals emigrate with a goal to retain the ways of their culture of origin, and some with a goal to embrace those of their culture of destination; others with a plan to bridge the two cultures as best they can, and still others with no plan at all (Berry 2007). Each individual motive conditions acculturation. Refugees, sojourners, and permanent immigrants vary with respect to their reasons for migrating (which can affect their psychological profiles) and plans for remaining in the culture of destination (which can affect their motivation to acculturate), and so follow different trajectories of acculturation. Foreign-born individuals also arrive in new cultural settings via multiple different mechanisms, each of which may portend unique consequences for their acculturation. One frequent migrant pathway is through family reunification; other policies that may account for different patterns of international migration include employment-based programs, diversity-based immigration, border policies, and humanitarian programs. In brief, individual motivations and means to acculturate inform psychological explanations of acculturation.

Time

Each individual's length of stay in their new country relates to their acculturation experience. Silbereisen and Titzmann (2007), who studied ethnic German immigrants from the FSU, found friendships were nearly 100 percent intra-ethnic in the period shortly after arrival in the country of destination.

Context

Individual differences in acculturation derive not only from variability in what people bring to the process of acculturation but also variability in the structural affordances of the situations in which individual migrants find themselves and those which they left. Consider variability associated with each context. People tend to emigrate from developing nations, and sending societies (and so their emigrants) represent a wide range of national origins and cultures that uniquely shape the nature of acculturation. The relation between parental harshness and child aggression is positive for Canadians of European ancestry but negative for Canadians of South Asian ancestry. Acculturation studies tend to lump sub-groups together when in actuality they demand differentiation: Hong Kong Chinese differ from Mainland Chinese arriving on Canadian shores, and Chinese migrants to the United States differ depending on whether they emigrated from rural or urban areas. Harwood *et al.* (2002) discussed in detail variability found among Latin American families in socialization goals that reflect their individual country of origin. Communities of Turkish immigrant worker families in European societies are generally more cohesive (e.g.,

showing higher levels of ethnic density, associational life, language retention, and co-ethnic marriages) than otherwise similar Moroccan immigrant communities (Phalet and Heath 2011). Accordingly, Turkish immigrant parents are more effective in transmitting cultural values and religious beliefs and practices to their children than Moroccan parents (Phalet and Schönplflug 2001). Obviously, in each case individuals in the group vary along the dimension in question.

For their part, modern, Western, industrialized receiving societies differ in their cultures, policies, and so forth and are themselves inhomogeneous, many having experienced socio-political changes associated with past immigration. An individual's path in acculturating is affected by whether the receiving context encourages or discourages interaction with and acquisition of the mainstream culture. Some receiving contexts suppress migrant diversity; others segregate or marginalize immigrants; whereas still others promote pluralism and support diversity (Berry and Kalin 1995). Societies with a positive multicultural ideology provide more positive settlement contexts for individual migrants through social supports from institutions (e.g., culturally sensitive health care and multicultural curricula in schools), and they are less likely to enforce cultural change (through assimilation) or exclusion (through segregation and marginalization). Individuals within these varying contexts are positioned to take differential advantage of them. Compare three groups of countries in Europe: countries with long histories of considerable and diverse immigration (England and The Netherlands), countries with guest-worker histories (Germany and Austria), and countries with short immigrant histories (Norway and Finland). Different immigrant groups have gravitated to these countries, where they are treated differently. In historical immigration countries, such as Australia, Canada, and the United States, heritage and mainstream cultural orientations are more compatible and less conflicting, hence biculturalism is more prevalent, than in more recent (especially South and Central) European receiving countries where integration policies are less developed or absent.

Local context too exerts an impact on individual acculturation. In longstanding migration gateways, like Amsterdam and New York City, neighborhoods incorporate successions of multiple immigrant groups, promoting contact and comingling. Here, individual immigrants may find multi-cultural networks that provide a range of choice as to whether and how much to participate in the mainstream society. In some ethnic communities immigrants can purchase items from, converse entirely in the language of, and lead a life that differs little from their place of origin. By contrast, immigrants who settle in less multi-cultural areas are likely to follow different patterns of acculturation. For example, lower co-ethnic concentrations experienced by newer immigrants, in comparison to well-established ones in larger ethnic enclaves, afford services and support networks that differentially cater to the ethnic community. They in turn shape individual ethnic vitality.

A related factor that may affect individual acculturation is the cultural distance between the two contexts. For example, for Peruvians migrating to Chile the same continent and shared language presumably constitutes a closer distance to acculturate than Chinese migrating to Chile across continents and languages. The further evaluation of ethnic groups according to social distance is called the "ethnic hierarchy." In The Netherlands, Surinamer and Antillean immigrants are evaluated more positively than Turks and Moroccans. Distance can be measured by country-level indicators, such as gross domestic product or Hofstede measures, or by examining perceived cultural distance (how similar or different cultures of origin and destination are perceived to be).

In brief, individuals from diverse contexts of origin migrate to diverse contexts of destination, and so migrants acculturate in unique combinations of the two, and where individual immigrants come from, where they arrive, and the intercultural distances between the two all matter to their psychological acculturation.

Processes in psychological acculturation

Individuals acculturate. How? What processes are involved? At base, acculturation entails some internal negotiation between the cognitions and practices of (at least) two cultures. Eventual adaptations therefore must have core psychological features (Ward *et al.* 2001). Different processes have been proposed that accord with different theoretical perspectives of acculturation. Early unidimensional models of acculturation presumed additive/subtractive processes. Newer bicultural models pose questions about how individual immigrants integrate cultures. Individuals might combine—alternate, balance, or merge—contrasting cultural orientations generally or do so for specific situations or domains. Different process models of individual acculturation harbor idiosyncratic assumptions and implications. For example, alternation rests on the assumption that it is possible to maintain positive relations with two (or multiple) cultural systems without having to choose (permanently) between them. Immigrant adolescents from the FSU to Israel have been reported to balance their established Russian cultural identity with their new Israeli identity rather than reject one at the expense of the other. It is also feasible that immigrants create new cultures with unique features that are atypical of either culture of origin or destination. Indian immigrant mother–infant dyads in the United States engage in vocal interaction patterns that differ from both Indians in India and European Americans in the United States (Gratier 2003).

Risks and rewards in psychological acculturation

A focus on the individual in acculturation has almost from the start raised mental health concerns, and that long-standing clinical orientation has rather consistently stressed deficits, disorders, and disabilities. Not unexpectedly, healthcare practitioners are occupied with immigrants who seek help for their psychosocial struggles. However, acculturation is as much a well-spring of opportunities as a source of problems and entails individual rewards as well as risks. In dwelling on challenges, it has been easy to overlook immigrant successes.

Risks

The tendency to “pathologize” acculturation is partly attributable to roots of its study in psychiatry. Theories and research on acculturation were initially strongly influenced by medical fields concerned with pathological symptomatology believed to accompany “culture shock.” It was widely accepted that immigrants inevitably encounter problems that are presumptive of poor psychological adaptation. Living in two cultures was deemed problematic because managing the complexity of dual reference points generates identity ambiguity, confusion, and anomie. Migration can cause or is at least associated with stress and increased risk of mental health problems, such as anxiety, alienation, psychosomatic symptomatology, depression, and identity diffusion (Berry and Kim 1988). Turkish children in The Netherlands reportedly manifest higher levels of internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors, than their native peers.

Because immigrant families straddle two cultures, intergenerational discrepancies can also arise, as we have seen, between parents, who wish to inculcate traditions of their culture of origin in their children, and children, who wish to conform to and be accepted by peers in the culture of destination (Kaplan and Marks 1990; Szapocznik and Kurtines 1993; McQueen *et al.* 2003). Asian Indian immigrant parents attempt to engage their American-born adolescents in Indian cultural practices, observe religious rituals and beliefs, feel a sense of pride and moral commitment to their ethnic group, and they may take them to visit India. But their adolescent

children often prefer to speak primarily English, participate in American culture activities, have mostly American friends, want an unarranged marriage, and refer to themselves as American or Asian American (Farver *et al.* 2002). Thus, within immigrant families, individuals often differ with respect to their acculturation, and this gap in acculturation statuses can generate inter-generational tension and conflict (Birman 2006), socioemotional difficulties in adolescents, and parenting challenges characterized by poor communication, uncertainty, and diminished satisfaction. Chinese immigrant parents who adhere to the importance of education and the hierarchical parental role at home and emphasize superficial, performative levels of traditional Chinese parenting in their new American cultural context tend to have distressed Chinese American adolescents, whereas those who adapt the broader, general principles and tenets of Chinese parenting (e.g., importance of respect, education, and self-cultivation) tend to have non-distressed Chinese American adolescents (Qin 2006, 2008).

Manifold other psychological challenges attend individuals who rear children transnationally. At the individual level, attachment difficulties have been noted because children withdraw from parents from whom they have been separated, and some transnational parents bear hardships because they are unable to live up to their own (cultural) expectations of providing appropriate care. Focusing on children left behind by their parents (especially mothers) highlights emotional consequences, problems with managing decision-making and power sharing between parents and grandparents or other caregivers, and problems that arise if parents start a new family in their new country.

Rewards

Stressing troubles associated with immigrant status obscures successes that individual immigrants may achieve in self-esteem, cognitive functioning, and life satisfaction. Filipino and Chinese immigrant youth may suffer elevated familial problems, but they are often accompanied by high academic achievement. Asian Americans, including Hmong, Burmese, and Cambodians, do not have high incomes, but Koreans, Japanese, and Taiwanese do. People who live in two cultures need not inevitably suffer; indeed, some authors have asserted unique advantages that accrue to living in two worlds. Individuals who effectively blend cultures reportedly exhibit higher cognitive functioning and greater mental health status (Rogler *et al.* 1991). Cross-cultural experiences open one to self-discovery, personal growth, and escape from social roles and culturally restrictive perceptions. Numerous immigrants build good lives in their new cultures, as history amply attests. Contemporary research has unveiled a plethora of immigrant strengths, including large majorities of intact two-parent families, a strong work ethic, and notable commitments to the culture of destination. These dual views of risks and rewards have consolidated in an emerging perspective that acculturation is a multidimensional and bidirectional process in which individuals can forge cognitions and practices from cultures of origin and destination in a positive framework.

Policy implications of psychological acculturation

These theoretical, empirical, and clinical considerations have implications for policy *re* citizenship, social welfare, health, and education that touch individual immigrants (Yoshikawa 2011). Immigration policies vary across countries (www.mipex.eu), just as public acceptance of immigrant diversity varies.

Norms of the heritage context may be construed as problematic when practiced in the mainstream context. Head covering in French schools is a notable example. Many policy factors affect individual immigrants' acculturation, and also their well-being. Immigrants who live in an

undocumented legal status hesitate to seek medical attention unless in emergency or acute situations; as a result, they fail to benefit from preventative healthcare (Bernhard *et al.* 2007).

The assumptions of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers about the lives of immigrants matter for the interventions and programs they provide, the conclusions they draw, and the regulations they develop and implement. When their assumptions are misplaced, the effects on immigrants may be adverse. Insofar as systematic relations exist between how individuals acculturate and how they adapt, the possibility exists for the development of some “best practices” in how to promote positive psychological acculturation. Policies and programs, as macro-level influences on the individual, often operate through the family level from effects that originate in higher ecological spheres, such as communities, neighborhoods, and social networks (Yoshikawa and Hsueh 2001).

Future directions in psychological acculturation

We have so far hinted implicitly or discussed explicitly several future directions of an individual psychology of acculturation. Acculturation is today treated holistically, but an individual-level analysis calls for disaggregation. Research has neglected how bicultural competencies originate at the level of the individual, processes by which bicultural skills develop and are expressed in the individual, and the psychological sequelae of biculturalism for individuals. In the future, we need to look more carefully as well at the speed, completeness, and felt comfort with acculturation within and across domains of psychological functioning. In this connection, longitudinal research will likely yield unique insights into so-far under-researched temporal processes and trajectories of individual acculturation.

As acculturation research becomes sensitive to the dizzying array of global emigration and immigration actualities, and spreads its net to examine a greater multiplicity of migration contents and contexts, similarities and differences in processes of individual acculturation and associated adjustment or maladjustment of individuals will rise to challenge accepted notions that derive from group acculturation research. Findings in one cultural arena or area of the world do not necessarily generalize to others. As our knowledge of the individual in the midst of international migration experiences advances we will need to alter our acculturation conceptions and theories. To paint a more complete picture of individual acculturation, future research will do well too to focus on positive migration and acculturation and identify keys for individual successes.

Conclusions

The numbers of individuals living outside their country of birth is large and will continue to grow. Recent surveys indicate that perhaps 700 million individuals would migrate to a new country permanently if they had the chance. The demographic, political, economic, religious, and familial networks that exist through individuals who are situated between two (or more) cultures has mushroomed based on the globalization of contemporary life, the speed, ease, and economy of communication and transportation, and the worldwide rights revolution. Acculturation has consequently become one of the most salient individual-difference constructs in psychology, and the burgeoning psychological literature has begun to refine our understanding of immigrants and their individual acculturation. This individual perspective is requisite to understand psychological processes of continuity and change attendant to migration and acculturation.

Given contemporary circumstances, immigrants are likely to gain competence in two cultures, move from one to another flexibly, and maintain transcultural ties blurring historical boundaries

of social and psychological space. Still, immigrants need to master key skills to function optimally in different worlds—this fundamental individual aspect of acculturation endures. Major theories of acculturation in the past have tended to neglect the raft of individual differences we have discussed that facilitate, inflect, or retard acculturation. How international migrants acculturate psychologically is a product of many factors. Ours is not the first or only exposition of psychological acculturation (Social Science Research Council 1954; Graves 1967; Teske and Nelson 1974), and in this chapter we have intended neither a comprehensive nor exhaustive account of psychological acculturation. Rather, our goal has been to alert the reader and acculturation theorist and researcher alike to some not unimportant guideposts that constitute a psychology of individual acculturation, one that complements historical focus on the group.

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