Acculturation patterns of immigrants in relation to their level of adaptation

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In Elias Besevegis & Vassilis Pavlopopoulos (Convenors), Acculturation and mutual accommodation: Immigrant and host-national perspectives. Workshop organized at the 14th International Metropolis Conference. Migration and Mobility: National Responses to Cultural Diversity, 14-18 September 2009, Copenhagen, Denmark.
Definitions: Acculturation and adaptation

- **Acculturation**: the phenomena which result when groups of individuals from 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).

- **Adaptation**: the short- and long-term changes (affective, behavioral and cognitive) that derive from the acculturative processes. These are usually summarized in two domains, i.e. sociocultural and psychological (Ward et al., 2001).

- The study of acculturative processes is necessary in order to better understand the findings from research on immigration, which are often contradictory (Baubock et al., 1996).
Three theoretical perspectives in the study of acculturation (Ward et al., 2001)

- **The stress and coping approach**: Considers cross-cultural transition as a series of stress-provoking life events that draw on adjustive resources and require coping responses.

- **The culture learning approach**: Views cultural competence as a process of learning the specific behavioral and social skills that are required to negotiate the new cultural milieu.

- **The social identification theories approach**: Draws on the literature of cultural identity and intergroup relations. Also, points to the importance of attitudes, values, expectations and attributions in intercultural encounters.
A theoretical framework for the study of acculturation and adaptation (Berry, 1997, 2006)

**Group level**
- Country of origin → Acculturation group → Psychological acculturation
- Receiving country

**Individual level**
- Moderators PRIOR TO acculturation (e.g. age, gender, education, health, language, motivation and expectations)
- Moderators DURING acculturation (e.g. type of contact, social support, coping strategies and resources)

**Psychological acculturation**
- Behavior changes
- Acculturative stress
- Psychopathology

**Adaptation**
- Psychological
- Socio-cultural
- Economic
A theoretical framework for the study of acculturation and adaptation (Berry, 1997, 2006)

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A theoretical framework for the study of acculturation and adaptation (Berry, 1997, 2006)
Acculturation strategies of immigrants (Berry, 1997, 2006)

Maintenance of heritage culture and identity

+ integration/multiculturalism

+ assimilation/melting pot

- separation/segregation

- marginalization/exclusion

Relationships sought among groups
Research Questions

► What is the level of socio-economic and psychological adaptation of immigrants in Greece?

► What strategies are adopted by immigrants in order to deal with the multiple challenges of acculturation?

► What is the relationship between acculturation strategies and immigrant adaptation?
   - Explore the effect of demographic variables on acculturation.
   - Test for a structural equation model that specifies relations between acculturation with adaptation.
Demographic characteristics of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Age (Mn)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
<th>Years in GR (Mn)</th>
<th>Education (Mn / 7-point)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkan countries</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former USSR and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab/Muslim</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western countries</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Measures:
## Variables before and during immigration

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>DURING immigration (acculturation)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic</strong></td>
<td>✓ Ethnicity</td>
<td>✓ Length of stay in Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Gender</td>
<td>✓ Place of residence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Education level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychosocial</strong></td>
<td>✓ Motivation for immigration</td>
<td>✓ Ethnic relations</td>
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<tr>
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<td>✓ Use of native language</td>
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<td>✓ Use of host language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Acculturation strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures: Adaptation indices (quantitative)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-economic adaptation</th>
<th>Psychological adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupational status</td>
<td>Gained skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steady job at present</td>
<td>Lost skills (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly savings</td>
<td>Provide family support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic benefits</td>
<td>Personal development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>More opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve financial status</td>
<td>Isolated from family (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve occupational status</td>
<td>Lost social networks (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Racism (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health problems (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fulfilled expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures:
Adaptation indices (qualitative)

Positive and negative aspects of immigration

✓ Factors that impair adaptation
✓ Factors that facilitate adaptation

Future goals and plans

✓ Intentions to stay in Greece and/or ask for citizenship
✓ Goals related to children’s education, work and personal life
Results

► **Research Question 1.** Acculturation strategies of immigrants
Position of immigrant groups in relation to ethnic and host-national orientation

- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Arab/Muslim
- Asia
- Latin America
- Russia
- Albania
- Eastern Europe
- Bulgaria
- Former USSR
- Western countries
- Serbia

Ethnic orientation ($\eta^2 = 0.05$)

Host-national orientation ($\eta^2 = 0.29$)
Clusters of immigrants in relation to acculturation variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assimilation (21%)</th>
<th>Integration (46%)</th>
<th>Individualism/Diffusion (8%)</th>
<th>Separation (25%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean (z-scores)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic contact</td>
<td>Use of ethnic</td>
<td>Host-national contact</td>
<td>Use of host</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contact</td>
<td>language</td>
<td>language</td>
<td>language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-2.0
-1.5
-1.0
-0.5
0.0
0.5
1.0
Acculturation strategies as a function of length of stay in the host country

\[ \chi^2(6, N=577)=121.76, p<.001 \]
Acculturation strategies as a function of gender

χ²(3, N=587)=43.29, p<.001
Acculturation strategies as a function of family status

\[\chi^2(6, N=580) = 33.80, p < .001\]
Research Question 1: Summary of findings

- The acculturation strategies of immigrants largely replicate the bidimensional model proposed by Berry (1997) with the exception of Diffusion.

- Length of stay in the host country is positively related to Integration and negatively to Separation.

- Compared to the total sample, a large proportion of:
  - Albanian immigrants integrate,
  - immigrants from Balkan countries assimilate,
  - immigrants from Eastern Europe tend to be diffused,
  - immigrants from African and Arab/Muslim countries separate.

- More men (than women) choose to separate while more women (than men) are assimilated.
Results

Research Question 2. Relationship between acculturation patterns and adaptation of immigrants
Socio-economic and psychological adaptation as a function of acculturation strategies

Socio-economic adaptation (p<.001) 
(\eta^2=.08)

Psychological adaptation (p<.001) 
(\eta^2=.07)
Structural equation model specifying relations between acculturation, adaptation, and length of stay in the host country.
Structural equation model specifying relations between acculturation, adaptation, and length of stay in the host country

\[ \chi^2(4, \, N=601)=7.07; \, p=.132; \, CFI=.99; \, RMSEA=.036 \]
Multiple analysis of correspondence of acculturation strategies and of negative aspects of immigration

- **Assimilation**
  - Individualism/Diffusion
  - Legal issues

- **Integration**
  - Separation
  - Work issues
  - Cost of living
  - Bureaucracy

- **Separation**
  - Legal issues
  - Homesick

- **Negative aspects of immigration**
  - Lack of language skills
  - Intergroup relations

Dimension 1 (61% of explained variance)

Dimension 2 (33% of explained variance)
Multiple analysis of correspondence of acculturation strategies and of positive aspects of immigration

- ASSIMILATION
  - host-national relations
  - employment, satisfaction

- INTEGRATION
  - environmental factors
  - ethnic relations

- SEPARATION
  - personal factors
  - language skills

- INDIVIDUALISM/DIFFUSION

Dimension 1 (69% of explained variance)
Dimension 2 (28% of explained variance)
The quality of adaptation varies in accordance to the preferred acculturation strategy of immigrants, as follows:

- the most negative outcomes correspond to separation,
- while the most beneficial outcomes are related to integration and assimilation.

Therefore, host-national orientation seems to hold a key role for adjustment; on the other hand, ethnic orientation may or may not lead to positive outcomes.

Length of stay in the host country is only indirectly related to adaptation, i.e. through acculturation orientation (Berry et al., 2006).
General summary – Conclusions

► Three factors to account for immigrant adaptation: ethnic origin, length of stay in the host country, and acculturation strategy.

► Integration and Assimilation led to practically equal level of adaptation, the most positive among immigrants

► Separation yielded the most negative outcomes; moreover, it was adopted by 1 to 4 participants

► Diffused profile: closer to Individualism (Bourhis et al., 1997) rather than to Marginalization (Berry, 1997).

► Length of stay in the host country: when time is not enough (proper policies and interventions are necessary).
Limitations and future directions

► Inclusion of additional variables (e.g., identification to one’s ethnic group) might affect the size and conceptual meaning of acculturation clusters.

► Limitations regarding the composition of the sample did not allow for study of acculturation strategies in relation to adaptation within each ethnic group, separately.

► Caution is necessary when trying to generalize across various ethnic groups, cultural contexts, and time sections (Sam & Berry, 2006).
Thank you for your attention!

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URL: http://www.psych.uoa.gr/~vpavlop
References


Γκότοβος, Α., & Μάρκου, Γ. (2004). Παλιννοστούντες και αλλοδαποί μαθητές στην ελληνική εκπαίδευση. Αθήνα: ΙΠΟΔΕ.


