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## Psychological support during the acculturation process

*“Social psychological aspects of migrants/refugees’ acculturation”*

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# Acculturation as a concept of defining cultural integration and its effects

- + Acculturation is a concept used to describe the process of two-directional change that occurs when different ethnic groups come in sustained contact with each other (Graves, 1967).
- + The most extensively cited model of acculturation has been developed by Berry (e.g. 1997, 2001, 2005, 2008, 2011).
- + According to Berry's model, when immigrants are faced with the cultural environment of the receiving country they are also confronted with two critical decisions:
  - + a) whether they wish to **preserve** their links with the culture of their **country of origin** and
  - + b) whether they wish to build **relations** with the (dominant) culture of the **receiving country**.

# Berry's model on acculturation

**Depending on how immigrants respond to these two questions, they are understood to employ one of four acculturation strategies:**

## assimilation

- completely adopting the culture of the receiving country and disassociating oneself from the culture of the country of origin

## separation

- maintaining one's heritage culture without adopting elements from the dominant culture

## marginalisation

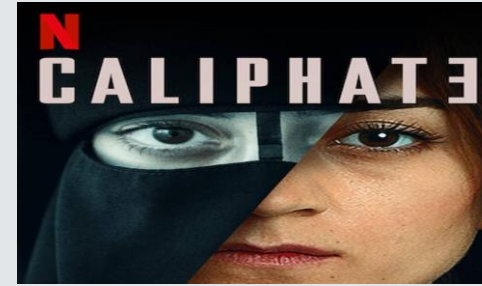
- separating oneself from both cultures

## integration

- maintaining relations with both cultures
- It is assumed to be the most efficient strategy

# Let us think of some examples....

+ Which acculturation strategy would you attribute to the main characters of movies/series etc., such as those in the picture?



# Berry's model on acculturation

- This model has been very influential and has spawned a large body of research on immigrant identities and acculturation process.
- Nevertheless, research has yielded inconsistent findings
- According to the findings of some studies,
  - immigrant youth are at higher risk than native youth to develop psychological symptoms, and/or maladaptive behavior
  - Other studies though, suggested that first-generation immigrants have better health, fewer conduct problems, and better academic achievement than their native counterparts, a phenomenon called the "immigrant paradox"
- That resulted in extended critiques and re-articulation of the originally proposed model



## Main Critiques:

- + Acculturation is a multifaceted and dynamic process that involves a continuous inter-play between self and socio-political and historical forces (eg. acculturation status changes of members of South-Asian communities after 9/11).

## Main Critiques:

- + Immigrants can develop different strategies in different historical and cultural contexts.
- + Even the same immigrant group and at the same period of time can adopt different strategies in different social domains (eg. work and education)

## Main Critiques:

- + Acculturation typology ignores the social inequality/power dimension.
- + Acculturation strategies and immigrant identities are situated within contexts of hierarchical intergroup relations and constitute processes mediated by factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and power and shaped by social representations and institutionalised ideologies
- + The above critiques resulted in extended acculturation models. Berry himself integrated acculturation expectations in his original model and constructed a new typology based on them.



# Acculturation expectations

segregation

- wish for immigrants' separation

multiculturalism

- wish for immigrants' integration

melting pot

- wish for immigrants' assimilation

exclusion

- wish for immigrants' marginalization

# Revised models

- + The Interactive Acculturation Model (Bourhis et al, 1997) places emphasis on the fundamental role of the state institutions and of hegemonic ideological expectations on the acculturation strategies.
- + The Relative Acculturation Extended Model (Navas et al., 2005; Navas, Rojas, García, & Pumares, 2007) differentiated between the ideal acculturation strategy a group prefers and the real or actual acculturation strategy that a certain group may follow due to constraints by intergroup reality
- + Berry himself in his later work (2007, 2011) reconceptualized acculturation strategies as social practices in intergroup encounters instead of preferences.

# Tensions and contradictions/ Figgou and Baka (2018)

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A tension was also identified by Figgou and Baka (2018) in an analysis of educators' discourse regarding immigrant students' integration.

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In the context of accounting for intergroup relations, educators depicted school as a racism-free context and constructed harmonious intergroup relations as a result of immigrant students' similarity with their non-immigrant peers.

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In the context of discussing acculturation, they devalued assimilation and prioritized cultural maintenance on the part of the immigrants.

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Continuing dilemmas of liberal societies which juxtapose social cohesion to cultural distinctiveness (see also Figgou, 2018)

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# School as racism free context

- tolerance and lack of racism are presented as the result of a natural process and **time** that is considered to be sufficient condition for change

1. *Yes apart from family problems which may be really harsh in*
2. *some cases we don't have difficulties. They are fully adapted*
3. *In only one case ...*
4. *Katia: Yes, they have friends*
5. *Georgia: They are fully adapted*
6. *Dina: **We don't have racism and things***
7. *Georgia: No we don't have such phenomena. **Not any more***
8. *Katia: **We used to have serious problems***
9. *Georgia: Yes for example **5 years ago but no not anymore** (FG5)*

## Harmonious intergroup relations as a result of immigrant students' similarity

4. They are together since grammar school and they *have grown up*  
5. *together*, so there are no problems at least in this school, I don't  
6. know.

7. Takis: And in their writings I see that these *kids don't have a different*  
8. *consciousness*, they have grown up together in grammar school,  
9. they were born here, they do not have a different consciousness  
10. so as to say that *we can't discern them*, we don't understand  
11. that this kid comes from Albania for example or for anywhere  
12. else. (FG 4)

# Devalued assimilation & prioritized cultural maintenance

1. *I had noticed this phenomenon in the classroom. There was an*
2. *Albanian pupil, she was not born here, a good student, she was*
3. *asked if she wanted to enroll in the program and she said "No I*
4. *don't want to speak Albanian, to think of Albania or to hear about it".*
5. *Moderator: Why was that?*
6. *I don't know. It seemed strange course. I believe she was feeling*
7. *uncomfortable. She kept trying to speak in the local dialect. She was*
8. *trying to get integrated by speaking, she was ashamed. I was really*
9. *impressed. "I don't want to hear about it" she said.*



# Acculturation accountability

- Anjum and colleagues (2018) focused on the ways in which accountability is managed within the context of interviews on the cultural adaptation of first-generation Muslim immigrants in the United Kingdom.
- Analysis indicated that different rhetorical contexts within the same interviews occasioned different ways of accounting oriented to different accountability concerns.
  - when particular acculturation orientations were introduced by interviewers, participants treated the questions as problematic.
  - when they introduced acculturation in their own terms, they provided narratives of acculturation success.

# Imposed multiculturalism

## *Reluctance to participate in multicultural festivities*

1. *Petra: The same happened in Christmas celebration organized in*
2. *school. We asked students to bring traditional recipes from their*
3. *countries of origin in order to cook traditional dishes. They didn't, apart*
4. *from very few students. Moreover, a student from class C2 told me*
5. *"what can we bring? We come from Albania" And I say "So? Don't you*
6. *eat in Albania? (FG7)*

(From Figgou & Baka, 2018)

## **Respect for multiculturalism but granting citizenship on cultural assimilation**

- Emphatic agreement on citizenship acquisition as an indisputable right for immigrant youth
- Arguments grounded on the premise that immigrant children are completely integrated
- Strong views in favor of multiculturalism and against assimilation and at the same time
- immigrants' right to citizenship is grounded on their complete integration or even assimilation

# Citizenship as the last stage of cultural integration process


1. *Int/er: I would also like us to discuss a bit about the issue of ithageneia acquisition*
2. *by immigrant students. Are you familiar with the issue?*
3. *Stathis: yeah roughly. I've been talking about it with some of my ex students' parents.*
4. *Some of my ex students applied for it. Seems to be a complicated process*
5. *Int/er: Yes? What do you think about it? Do you think they should obtain Greek*
6. *ithageneia ?*
7. *Stathis: Definitely. I am DEFINITELY in favour of it. It is a right that should be given to*
8. *them. They were born here and grew up here. See two of my students who have*
9. *applied come from Albania. Their parents come from Albania. But they do not know the*
10. *language they do not speak Albanian. They are completely integrated. (Figgou, 2018)*

## Culture as a reified construct (Chirkov, 2009)

- Following the deductive-nomological and quantitative approach, research often overlooks the specificities of the context
  - within which acculturation takes place and
  - which plays a crucial role in shaping people's experiences in a new multicultural environment.
- Culture in most acculturation research is depicted as a system of beliefs which is settled and beyond controversies.
- This is in contrast, however, to the representation of culture as involving dilemmatic aspects, constituted in other theoretical and research traditions.

1. int/er: And what do you think about the refugees' future integration (.)
2. how do you think things are going to be after a few years?
3. Xenia: I believe that the small children (.) the primary school children
4. are already integrated (.) you have to see my godchildren (.) they don't
5. eat anything apart from pizza (.) pizza ice-cream and chocolates (.) nothing
6. else (.) and they don't buy any other sportswear apart from Nike anymore (.)
7. it strikes me how quickly they change (.) they have substituted coke for water (.)
8. they don't drink water (.) only coke (...) I'm sure that the subsequent generations
9. will be assimilated (.) and some marriages between them and us have already
10. taken place (.) and I'm happy about it (.) because although they have been born
11. and grown up in other countries with a different way of life from ours (.) they are
12. Greeks (...) they speak the Pontian dialect (.) the language of their grandfathers
13. (.) and they have some sorts of food (.) traditional food (.) some customs
14. common with us. (Figgou, 2010)



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- According to the speaker,
    - what culture do the children of the refugees belong to and
    - what culture is the guarantee of their integration?

# **culture or citizenship;**

- Is the concept of culture the only or the best vehicle of integration?
- Other scholars prioritize citizenship or political participation as a criterion

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