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The History of Acculturation: A review article

Ali Elhami 1✉; Unicaf University, Larnaca, Cyprus; Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain.
Anita Roshan 2; Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain.

Abstract: Migration is a conscious decision that comes with many difficulties and has been a feature of human history since the beginning of time. The process has increased in frequency recently as a result of globalization. These days, a large number of people from less developed or lower-income countries migrate to more developed or higher-income countries to gamble their fate in a new society in the hopes of ameliorating their lot in life, obtaining a more profitable job, raising their kids in a less hazardous environment, or attending top-notch universities. During their experience, they often endure hardships in the target country, such as resettlement stress, racism, unemployment, and/or language difficulties. Hence, the study of acculturation is crucial in understanding how individuals adapt to a new culture and cope with the challenges they may encounter. This article aims to explore the concept of acculturation by looking at existing theories and research on the topic.

Keywords: Migration, acculturation, intergroup contact, adaptation, language knowledge

✉ a.elhami.ali@gmail.com

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CLASSIFICATION OF MIGRATION

Moving from one geographical region to another (Hammar et al., 1997) would be a broad definition of migration. Migration might happen from villages to cities, from one city to another (within a country), or from one country to another country, the latter being called international migration (Ellis, 2008; Hammer et al., 1997).

Two sizable migrant groups can be characterized in light of the reasons behind their international migration. On the one hand, those who are prosperous enough in their country of origin but are seeking distinct life adventures and do not tend to pursue illegal forms of migration, since options for legal migration are accessible, On the other hand, those citizens who experience monetary challenges in their country of origin or the violation of human rights typically go for illegal and perilous forms of migration. Refugees are among the second group, and although it is reported that only a small number of them become successful in migrating to a new nation (Castle & Miller, 2009), some people draw no distinction between refugees and other forms of migration, and negative attitudes towards migrants tend to permeate all kinds of movers. Another classification that arises when considering the duration of the migration is short-term and long-term migration (Berry, 2006). In the same line of thought, Ward and her colleagues (2001) put travelers in two different categories: sojourners and migrants. Sojourners, who travel to achieve their aims at a particular period in life and then go back to their country after achieving their goals (Bochner, 2006) are those whose stay lasts for a shorter period, as in the case of tourists, business travelers, and, of course, students. In contrast, migrants stay at the foreign destination for a longer period of time, either as immigrants or as refugees. This categorization, however, is rejected by those who define migration in different terms. Jordan & Duvell (2003), for instance, believe migration entails leaving the borders of the country of origin because of economic or political pressures, or by own choice, and staying in the target country for over a year (Castles & Miller, 2009), or D'Cunha (2005), who defines migration as individuals relocating to a different country for a variety of reasons, staying there for a minimum of a year, at which point the new country effectively becomes their usual residence.

ACCULTURATION

Each person responds differently to the myriad of new circumstances and situations that those who leave their country of birth and enter a new society encounter, including a new language, new religious beliefs, new cultural traditions, and new clothing and eating habits. Some individuals choose to stick to their cultural norms and traditions, while others prefer to blend in with the new group and pick up their values and habits.

The American soldier and geologist Powell (1880) was the first to base his research on the study of acculturation, and anthropologists (Redfield et al., 1936; Herskovits, 1938; Linton, 1940) followed suit. As time went on, the concept of acculturation became widely accepted in fields such as psychology and psycholinguistics (Ward, et al., 2001), sociology and sociolinguistics (Ellis, 2008; Schumann, 1978, 1986). The rapid growth of migration and our growing understanding of the relationship between culture and behavior are two compelling reasons to study acculturation, according to psychologists Sam and Berry (2006), who work on intercultural contact, migrants, and acculturation. As a matter of fact, interest in the topic dramatically increased

between the 1980s and the 2000s (Schwartz, Unger, Zambo-anga & Szapocznik, 2010), and has endured ever since (Güzel & Glazer, 2019; Güngör, 2020; Bhugra, Watson & Ventriglio, 2020; Sari et la., 2019; Elhami & Roshan, 2023; Raju, 2023).

Prior research substantiates the belief that acculturation, unlike enculturation (which, according to Kim & Omizo (2006), is a continuing process in all people's lives due to confronting new aspects of their own culture), is not only a process in which people have to deal with an unaccustomed culture (Damen, 1987), but in which they also have to acquire the skills to deal with unfamiliar cultural contexts (Sam & Oppedal, 2003). In the initial definition, "acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continued first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (Redfiel, Linton & Herskovits, 1936, p. 149). After about twenty years, in 1954, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) released a revised definition of acculturation, which they defined as cultural change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. The SSRC went on to add that acculturative changes could include the following:

"the consequence of direct cultural transmission; it may be derived from non-cultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modifications induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life" (p. 974).

According to Hazuda, Sterm, and Haffner (1988), acculturation is a sociocultural process in which individuals from one group adopt the customs and beliefs of another. Schwartz et al., (2014) define it as individual cultural adaptation, a definition close to that of Berry (2002), who defines acculturation as family, individual, and cultural changes.

Features of acculturation

As was previously said, acculturation has been well documented by academics as a process involving ongoing, first-hand contact between people from different cultural backgrounds that results in certain cultural and psychological changes (Berry, 2006a; Sam & Berry, 2006; Sam, 2006; Berry, 1980; Redfield et al., 1936; Castro, 2003). These changes in the culture of either individuals or groups not only happen for migrants but may also happen for dominants and include changes in the language and culture (Rothe et al., 2010). Acculturation, therefore, is not a unidirectional process (Berry, 2002) but a two-way interaction (Sam & Berry, 2010). In the lines that follow, the so-called building blocks (Redfield et al., 1936; Sam, 2006) of acculturation will be presented: first-hand continuous contact between groups and individuals, resulting change; and reciprocal influence of both immigrants and the host community.

Contact and Acculturation

Many of the issues that immigrants struggle with—like establishing friends, fitting in at host community events, and picking up language and culture—can diminish or disappear with cross-cultural interaction. As such, it is critical that immigrants acquire the skills necessary to strengthen their cross-cultural relationships in their new community (Masgoret & Ward, 2006). Intercultural contacts assist migrants to communicate (Elhami, 2020a), and "communication is the tool assisting immigrants to satisfy to basic personal

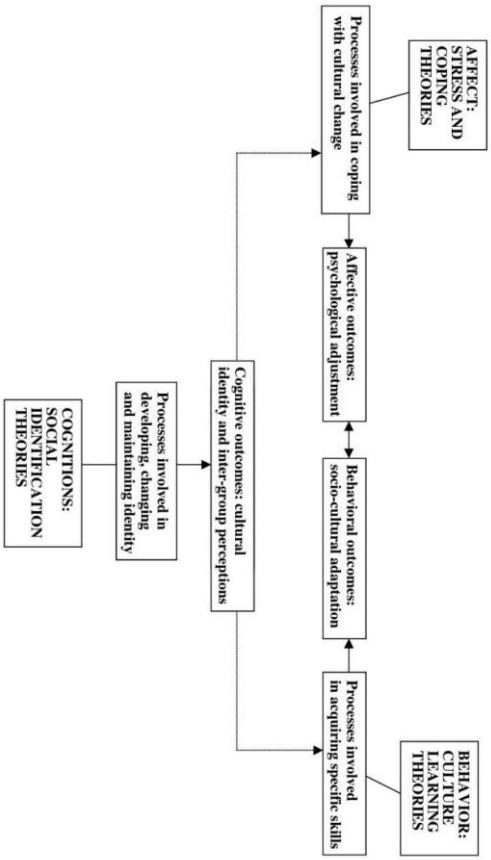
and social needs in the new host culture" (Lakey 2003, p.104). Stated differently, those with greater interaction with the host society experience fewer sociocultural challenges (Ward & Kennedy, 1993; Ward & Searle, 1991) and adaptation issues (Searle & Ward, 1990).

Intercultural contact is not a new phenomenon; however, due to technology and the ease of travel, cross-cultural contact and interaction are increasing (Nguyen & Benet Martinez, 2013). As a result, intercultural contact is now a daily occurrence for both hosts and travelers (Bochner, 2006). Acculturation never occurs in the absence of contact between cultures; therefore, during periods of increased contact, acculturation is likely to occur more frequently.

Change

Contact will inevitably bring about changes, and sustained change will lead to "adaptation" (Sam, 2006; Berry, 2003). The changes may include attitudes and values (Berry, 1997; Berry et al., 2006; Sam and Oppedal, 2003; Sam, 2006), cultural identity and behaviors (Sam & Oppedal, 2003; Sam, 2006), ethnic identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007), national identity (Schwartz et al., 2012; Schwartz, 2010) and cultural behavior and language use (Kang, 2006; Szapocznik, Kurtines & Fernandez, 1980). As a result, three main aspects of individual lives (Ward, 2001; Ward et al., 2001) will modify throughout the acculturation process, recognized as the ABC model of cultural contact. These are stress, coping, and adaptation (Berry, 2006b).

Figure 1: The ABC model of culture contact



Source: Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001)

Stress, coping, and adaptation

Since acculturation is a stressful process, the concept of "acculturative stress" plays a significant role in studies on acculturation (Berry, 2006a; Sirin, Ryce & Sirin, 2014). Present-day academics tend to utilize the term "acculturative stress" instead of "culture shock," which was first introduced by Oberg in 1960, for two motives. The first is that the term "shock" is purely negative, while the concept of "stress" provides insight into the way people manage their difficulties (stressors); second, the term "acculturative" appears more proper than "culture," since the latter does not refer to the relationship and differences

between two different cultures (Berry et al., 2002; Berry, 2006a).

The acculturation process always comes with negative experiences, called "stressors" (Berry, 2006a), that lead to acculturative stress in response to the problematic situations and events that happen in intercultural contacts (Kunst & Sam, 2013; Berry, 2006b). In the end, if migrants are able to cope with those stressors, adaptation will happen, but stressors will be part of the life of migrants all throughout the acculturation process, for instance when comparing their life conditions before and after migration (Organista, Organista & Kurasaki, 2002), while conducting social contact with the new group (Ward et al., 2001) or while learning the language of the host community.

Acculturative stress seems more acute when migrants do not know the language of the target country (Schwieter, Jackson & Ferreira, 2018; Paige et al., 2006), when their language proficiency level is low or when they cannot speak English as an international lingua franca. Acculturative stress is also acute when there is cultural distance (Masgoret & Ward, 2006; Bochner, 2006), that is, perceived dissimilarities between the culture of origin and the culture where contact is occurring. Other factors that exacerbate acculturative stress include age, gender or social support: older immigrants, females, and people with less or no social support have shown to suffer more acculturative stress (Berry 1997, 2006b).

Even when the new condition is positive (Ward, Bochner & Furhman, 2001), migrants need to employ "coping strategies" (Berry & Ataca, 2000) to face cultural distance and deal with stressors (Berry, Sam & Rogers, 2006). Lazarus and Filkman (1984) argue that coping strategies are related to a cognitive process that involves, first, understanding and interpreting stressors, and secondly, the individuals' belief on the effectiveness of those coping strategies (respectively called primary and secondary appraisal). There exist three coping strategies: problem-oriented, emotion-oriented and avoidance-oriented. The first one is related to managing and trying to find a solution for problems; the second one is related to self-controlling and reducing the negative feelings produced by stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Parker & Endler, 1996); finally, avoidance-oriented or escape coping strategies are those migrants use to avoid stressors (Endler & Parker, 1994; Kosic, 2006).

Coping strategies play a major role in the process of acculturation, and stand out among acculturation strategies (Kuo, 2014). In a similar vein, Berry (2006b) believes that for decreasing the effect of stressors, one should take advantage of the coping strategies that lead to adaptation which "is facilitated by communication" (Lakey, 2003, p. 104). Therefore, adaptation is defined as the long-term more or less satisfactory changes in migrants' lives (Berry, 2006a) that happen as a result of living in a culturally distant society (Kunst & Sam, 2013). Furthermore, Günthner (2007) argues that the outcomes of adaptation can be either positive or negative. Among the positive outcomes, Matsumoto et al. (2001) name reducing stress, interpersonal relationships, positive mood, and self-confidence. As for negative outcomes, interpersonal relationships' problems, depression, anxiety, and decreased performance at school for students and at work for adults (Matsumoto et al., 2001) can be mentioned.

The context of adaptation is multifaceted, so Block (2014) believes that there are various options for the adaptation of migrants in relation to the time-space

concept (Harvey, 1989), whereby improved technology and transportation facilitates virtual and face to face contact with people from different countries. As a result, people all over the world will have more common interests, experiences and knowledge about each other (Perlmutter, 1991), and this will facilitate adaptation. Some types of adaptation are economic adaptation (Berry, 2006a), marital adaptation (Ataca & Berry, 2002), psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation (Ward, 1996, 2001; Ward & Rana, 1999; Searle & Ward, 1990, Ward et al., 1999) and sociolinguistic adaptation.

Research on cultural distance among different types of migrants demonstrates that cultural distance affects sociocultural adaptation. As Dunbar (1994) and Triandis (1995) point out, the more cultural distance the more adjustment difficulties. Furnham and Bochner (1982), for example, in a study on international students in the UK, prove that students with more cultural distance have more difficulties for sociocultural adaption than those with less cultural distance. In a similar line, Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001) point out that those immigrants who perceive less cultural differences with the host culture have a higher level of adaptation. All these studies claim that increased cultural distance is related to increased difficulties in learning the language of the host community (Furnham & Bochner, 1982), and Ellis (2008) argues that less cultural distance leads second language learners to better performance.

CULTURAL LEARNING

One of the main ingredients of acculturation is learning the culture of the host community (Sam & Oppedal, 2003), and is crucial to adaptation process (Massgoret & Ward, 2006). In the similar line of thought, Rudmin (2009) defines acculturation as second culture acquisition. Hence culture learning is a crucial notion studies related to acculturation. Culture learning has developed as a theory over time (Masgoret & Ward, 2006). It first appeared in social psychology with the study of intercultural encounters (Argyle, 1982; Bochner, 1982; Gallois, Franklyn-Stokes, Giles & Coupland, 1988; Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Kim, 1991). Later on, the trace of the culture learning model can be seen in Gudykunt's (1993) approach to effective communication, focusing on the abilities to take advantage of appropriate information and to adapt oneself to intercultural communication. More recently, Masgoret and Ward (2006) have focused on the "cultural differences in communication style, norms, and values, to concentrate on definition and prediction of sociocultural adaptation, that is, the ability to fit in or negotiate interactive aspects of life in new cultural milieu" (p. 59).

Behaviors and beliefs are transmitted from one person, generation, and group to another through cultural learning process (Dean, Kendal, Schapiro, Thierry & Laland, 2012; Hewlett & Roulett, 2016; Van Schaik & Burkart, 2011) and over time (Mathew & Perreault, 2015), based on Heyes (1994) this learning is the result of interaction and observation. In regard to this idea, Lagere & Harris (2016) demonstrate that younger children are more successful at learning behaviors and beliefs. The most important factor that help younger generations to be more successful in cultural learning is flexibility (Legare & Harris, 2016), in fact behavioral flexibility, which is defined as "the continued interest in and acquisition of new solutions to a task through either innovation or social learning, after already having mastered a previous solution" (Lehnes, Burkart & Van Schaik. 2011, p. 447), helps individuals to

improve their actual behaviors and beliefs (Davis et al., 2016).

Cultural learning, which might facilitate the acculturation process, comes from contact with other cultures (Ikeguchi, 2008), in regard to culture learning, exploration, observation, participation, and imitation (Legare, 2019) might play a beneficial role. For instance, like Children who learn through exploring and observing the world (Alvarez & Booth, 2013), immigrants of different ages might be able to learn the culture of the new society by exploring and observing the behaviors of the citizens. Participation is another way of learning culture, in this regard; Berry and his colleagues (2002) believe that when groups contact each other, their culture behaviors might change. Sometimes learning the culture of the target society is indeed imitating their behavior for survival (Ward et la., 2001).

SOCIAL IDENTIFICATION ORIENTATION

Orientation of immigrants or newcomers towards being socially identified by or with the dominant group is another aspect in acculturation which might change during intercultural and social contact with the dominant group. A basic solution to social problems among immigrants in a new society would be a change in social identity (Brewer, 1979; Messick & Brewer, 1983; Brewer & Schneider, 1990) which means individuals who are oriented to be identified socially as a member of dominant group might face less problems that those who tend to identified as their original ethnic group.

Social identification orientation towards the dominant group plays a prime role in decreasing psychological distance and its negative effects, by which they will find (more) common goals and achievements (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1982) and intercultural contact might be increased. Furthermore, De Cremer and Van Vugt (1999) assert that with increasing group identification "people will become motivated to achieve positive outcomes for their group rather than for themselves" (p. 872), this shows that psychological distance (of which motivation is one aspect) could be decreased with social identification orientation.

ACCULTURATION MODELS AND STRATEGIES

Despite the importance of first-hand contact, numerous factors seems to have influence on adaptation to the host community, hence, all first-hand contacts among migrants and dominate group do not end up in adaptation. However, Sam (2006) believes that, as adaptation may happen during or after acculturation, rejection or resistance may happen. Accordingly, Berry (1997, 1980, 2006a) introduces two choices that individuals or groups can make: they may want to maintain their culture of origin, or they may prefer to adapt to the new society. Based on those two dimensions (maintenance or adaptation), three models of acculturation (the "uni-dimensional" model, the "bi-dimensional" model, and "fusion") as well as four acculturation strategies (integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization) are introduced, which will be discussed from now on.

Three models of acculturation

Dimensionality is an aspect of the acculturation process (Berry, 2008) which means acculturation could take place in one dimension (direction) or two or more dimensions. Dimensionality indeed shows the tendency to join the new cultural group with learning new cultural behaviors from the dominant group that lead a group to forgetting and

the other group maintaining their heritage values, traditions, and cultural behaviors. The second one which seems large proportion of immigrants tend to follow (Ryder et al., 2000; Britto & Amer, 2007) requires sustaining in their original cultural identity as well as fostering their relationship and interaction with the dominant group (Berry, 2008; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). And surprisingly, it paves the way for better understanding of the adaptation process (Navas et al., 2005)

The uni-dimensional model (Gordon, 1964; Arends-Toth & Van de Vijver, 2006a) believes acculturation is a unidirectional process (Crotes, 1994; Cuellar, Arnold & Maldonado, 1995) that occurs as the result of learning the skills of the host society while the skills of the heritage culture fade (Lafromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993; Tonsing, 2010; Arends-Toth & Van de Vijver, 2006a). This model, sometimes called the linear model, adopts an assimilationist perspective, so Alba and Nee (2003) name it "westernization", "Americanization", "Anglicization" and "denationalization". In this model, as migrants will have more interaction with the host community, they will have (automatically) less interaction with their heritage group (Horenczyk, Jasinskaja-Lahti, Sam & Vedder, 2013), and they will gradually lose their ability in heritage etiquette while they will learn the etiquette of the host country.

The second model (Gonzales, Knight, Morgan-Lopez, Saenz & Sirolli, 2002; Ryder, Alden & Pauthus, 2000; Carlson & Güler, 2018) holds that acculturation is a bi-dimensional construction in which the heritage culture and the host culture learning do not affect each other. In the bi-dimensional model of acculturation, the learning the skills of the host society do not influence heritage skills (LaFrombois, et al., 1993; Sayegh & Larsy, 1993; Arends-Toth & Van de Vijver, 2006a), and individuals keep their heritage culture while learning the new culture in the new cultural environment (Berry, 2003; Gue, Suarez-Morales, Schwarts & Szapocznik, 2009) A migrant for instance, who is learning the culture of the host community, does not forget his/her cultural traditions. And this matter is taken as an advantage of bi-dimension model and shows the flexibility of the migrants upon learning the new cultural behaviors and keep the original ones (Flannery et al., 2001)

The third model, fusion claims for an integrated culture made up of a mixture of both cultures. Therefore, acculturation does not entail a choice between cultures, but a blend (Coleman, 1995; Arends-Toth & Van de Vijver, 2006a).

Acculturation strategies

Berry (1980, 1997, 2006a) provides a typology of acculturation strategies that includes four schemes: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration. "Assimilation" is the adaptation, or enforced adaptation, to a new language, culture, and lifestyle (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). Individuals, therefore, do not tend to keep their own culture and identity and seek for interaction with the host society (Berry et al, 2002; Phinney et al, 2006; Berry, 2006b; Berry, Sam & Rogers, 2006); and the host country awaits individuals to be completely adapted to the new culture (Berry, 2006a). Rudmin (2006) believes that minority groups often endeavor to assimilate. "Separation", originally called "rejection" (Sommerlad, 1968), is the strategy whereby migrants avoid learning the new culture and elude interacting with the dominants to try to maintain only their culture of origin (Berry, Sam & Rogers, 2006; Berry, 2006a). Some scholars (Robinson, 2003; Anwar, 1998) claim that separation is the preference of first-generation Asians in Britain due to

cultural distance, language and religion. Similarly, another study on Turkish students in USA universities shows that Turkish students employ separation strategies (Bektaş, Demir & Bowden, 2009). "Marginalization", the least preferred strategy (Robinson, 2003; Berry, 2003) among migrants, happens when individuals or groups do not sustain their own culture and, at the same time, are not keen on interacting with dominants (Berry, Sam & Rogers, 2006, Berry, 2006b).

"Integration", the most preferred strategy according to the vast majority of studies on acculturation (Berry, 2003; Snauwaert et al., 2003; Robinson, 2003; Ward & Leong, 2006; Berry, 2006a; Ward, Adam & Stuart, 2011; Groenewold, de Valk & Van Ginneken, 2013; Koydemir, 2013; Abu-Rayya & Sam, 2017; Sancho-Pascual, 2019) is the most difficult strategy to accomplish (after assimilation, Ward, 2009), but as it is a bi-directional process (Moreno & Francisco, 2009) it positively affects both immigrants and dominants (Birman, Simon, Chan & Tran, 2014; Berry, 1990, 1997, 2006b; Phinney et al., 2006) which is one of the important aspect of integration. Another significant aspect is the relationship between integration and adaptation, accordingly, Liebkind (2010) and Sam and Berry (2010) point out that integration is the most effective strategy in adaptation among immigrants.

Integration happens when migrants not only maintain their cultural values, but they also learn and follow the cultural values of the host community. Heckman and Bosswick (2006) define it "an interactive process between immigrants and the host society" (p. 11), which depends a lot on the dominant group (Berry, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997; Navas & Tejada, 2010). In this line of thought, Berry (2001) adds that integration may happen in societies with multicultural values, positive attitudes toward intercultural and cultural contact, low discrimination levels, and a tendency to be identified with different groups. In turn, Sancho-Pascual (2019) believes that "integration can only be achieved successfully if the dominant group has an open and inclusive attitude towards cultural contact and the maintenance of different identities" (p.2). Integration is positively connected to psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Sang & Ward, 2006; Ward, 2009; Ward & Lin, 2005), and, among students, it has also proved to have a positive effect on their studies (Ward & Kennedy, 1993).

Han, Berry & Zheng (2016) propose that integration and marginalization are, respectively, the most and the least preferred strategies to improve the resilience of individuals, but there is no unanimity in the literature. Piontkowski, Florack, Hoelker & Obdrzalek (2000) and Berry and Ataca (2000), working on Turks in Germany and on Turks in Canada, display how both groups prefer separation, whereas Berry and Ataca (2000) show that only Turkish immigrants in Canada with low socioeconomic status prefer separation. In another study on Nigerians in America (Ndika, 2013), Nigerians are shown to opt for separation and assimilation. Another study on Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands (Arends-Toth & Van De Vijver, 2003) displays the use of the integration strategy in public and of separation in private contexts, although other studies (Güngör & Bornstein, 2009) do not find such a difference between public and private contexts have in second-generation Turkish immigrants. Other studies on Iranian migrant in Spain also showed that there are factors such as religiosity (Author, 2024), prior language knowledge before migration (Elhami & Roshan, 2023; Elhami & Roshan, in press), and cultural differences (Elhami, 2020b/c) are also effective in employing assimilation,

integration, separation, or marginalization.

CONCLUSION

This article has reviewed and gathered studies on acculturation, intergroup contact, and cultural adaptation to highlight the effects of these factors on individuals' adjustment to a new country. It also focused on the importance of integration and its positive impact on psychological, sociocultural, and academic adaptation. The findings suggest that a dominant group's open and inclusive attitude towards cultural contact and the maintenance of different identities plays a crucial role in facilitating individuals' adjustment to a new country. Additionally, this review emphasizes the need for further research to better understand the complex dynamics of acculturation and intergroup contact in order to develop effective strategies for promoting successful cultural adaptation.

This review also emphasizes the importance of language in the acculturation process, as it serves as a crucial tool for communication and social integration. Lack of language knowledge in the host community might be one of the greatest impediments to this process. It is also necessary to briefly review the acculturation framework of Arends-Toth and Van de Vijver (2006a/b) in which the process consists of three salient forms. The first is acculturation conditions, which are group and individual factors such as discrimination, language knowledge, characteristics of the host community and their behaviour with newcomers, etc. Acculturation conditions make individuals inclined toward one of the acculturation strategies, which are known as acculturation orientations (strategies). The last one is acculturation outcomes, which study the consequences (psychological and behavioural) of acculturation orientations (Celenk & Van de Vijver, 2011) and demonstrate the psychological effects of employing assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalization on individuals.

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