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Introduction: Social Change and Acculturation

Joseph E. Trimble

Within the past 200 years, seemingly all nations of the world have been experiencing extraordinary, almost explosive changes. Almost every known element of society has been affected to the point that in some societies, change is being challenged. At an environmental level, for example, we are witnessing the ravages of deforestation, the erosion of once-abundant fertile land, the degradation of air quality, the depletion of natural food sources, and the consequences of mismanaged and poorly planned urban development. At a sociocultural level, transnational immigration has created significant economic, health, and social-psychological problems in societies and nations where problems of any significance have rarely occurred. Changes are also occurring rapidly in the social structure and organization of many of the world's countries. For most indigenous aboriginal populations, changes have been imposed or produced invariably through legislation, colonization, war, disease, and industrialization. Moreover, immigrant masses have left their communities of origin in search of change as they look for accepting political climates, improved economic conditions, and the protection of their beliefs and values. These changes, in addition to the proverbial "shrinking" of the world prompted by improved communication and travel channels and the globalization of economic and legal and social systems, have produced more intense culture and ethnic contact than ever before in the history of humankind. Sociocultural change is therefore the progenitor of acculturation.

Change and Acculturation

Change is an undeniable, enduring fact of human life, if not of all living forms. Some change is preprogrammed and determined by evolutionary

I extend my deepest gratitude to the administration and research staff at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University for providing me with the time, resources, and support that allowed me to conduct research for the preparation and writing of this section. Additionally, I extend my warm appreciation to my Radcliffe Research Junior Partners—Harvard College seniors Peggy Ting Lim and Maiga Miranda—who conducted research and provided me with wonderful, thought-provoking commentary and advice for many topics covered here.

and sociobiological forces. The remaining portion is acquired through a multitude of circumstantial and sociocultural influences. The study of acquired and imposed change forms the bulk of research initiatives in the social and behavioral sciences. At one level of inquiry, research is centered on social change, or the "modification or alteration in the social structure of a society" (Fisher, 1982, p. 488). However, limiting the interest to just the change of some structural or functional social force is hardly inclusive. Because of a slight nudging of the genes, humans are constantly conforming, changing, and striving for a new stability—new ways of thinking, perceiving, and understanding. They seek out alternatives for an improved quality of life and new forms of technology that can improve outmoded tools. Another view of social change spreads the forces among more discrete elements. Katz (1974), for example, categorized social change into four types: (a) individual change, including variations in personality; (b) incremental change, which is represented by gradual modifications in the structure of society; (c) radical change, which involves the reorganization and restructuring of a social system; and (d) cultural change, in which attitudes, beliefs, and behavior changes are the major focus of interest. Katz's conceptual scheme, therefore, proceeds from the individual to the structure of society to the psychosocial characteristics of group members. The four elements roughly follow the general level of inquiry in sociology, anthropology, and psychology.

Social change creates an apparent paradox for the theoretician and the practical-minded researcher. At any given time, life has the contrasting qualities of being static and changing. Eitzen (1974) emphasized that two forces provide the basis for social change in contemporary society. The first force involves the general desire for technological change—actually, for any form of change. The second force places restrictions on one's freedom to promote and achieve new and improved ways to meet and achieve needs and goals. In many sociocultural systems, rituals, taboos, religious convictions, and similar forms of social control govern and regulate individual and group change efforts. Consequently, the two processes, in addition to various social control mechanisms, constitute the dialectic of society—that is, weighing and reconciling contradictory arguments for the purpose of understanding society's forces and dynamics. "As contrary tendencies, they generate tension [and] change" (Eitzen, 1974, p. 12).

As a concept and a theoretical construct, social change has been examined and explored under a number of aliases. In anthropology the concepts of enculturation, acculturation, and assimilation include, wittingly or unwittingly, the concept of change brought about by societal influences. In sociology, presumably the origin of the social change construct, social change topics such as social movements and collective behavior form the major source of information for change enthusiasts. Moreover, in psychology, change, especially at the individual level of analysis, is explored through studies on learning, clinical intervention, individuation, socialization, conformity, modernization, and to a lesser extent, acculturative stress and identity development and formation.

Acculturation is a salient form of social change. Certainly, accultura-

tion may well be synonymous with sociocultural change. Originally identified and conceptualized by anthropologists, the concept now is included in the research agenda of psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, social workers, and educators. Because of the increased interest in the topic, acculturation's meaning and application is changing. Similarly, techniques and procedures for measuring the concept are changing, too, to the point that some critics argue that researchers are measuring an elusive construct whose meaning is undergoing change. Escobar and Vega (2000), for example, forcefully challenge the meaning and measurement of acculturation on the grounds that it has become a catchall for anything that has to do with social and individual change of people from different ethnocultural groups. Many researchers tend to attribute the results of social and individual change solely to the acculturative process. Moreover, social change has been offered as an explanation for producing different acculturative changes in members of given cultures. Unfortunately, some are now blaming negative adaptation and adjustment to acculturation as though acculturation has a direct effect on adaptive outcomes. Such attributions, however well intended, have confounded the research process and muddled the field of inquiry. Yet, there is no doubt that when two or more intact cultural groups come into direct contact and experience change, conflict is one predictable outcome. How individuals and groups deal with the contact and the possible cultural conflict continues to be an important and significant research question.

Acculturation

The concept of acculturation has a long history in the social and behavioral sciences particularly among anthropologists and sociologists. Acculturation has been used to better understand the modernization processes that various cultures and communities were undergoing during the 19th and early 20th centuries. More recently, acculturation became an important concept in the explanation of the varied experiences of ethnic and cultural minorities as international migration, economic globalization, and political conflicts supported the creation of multicultural societies. As a construct, acculturation includes changes not only at the individual or psychological level but also at the sociocultural level. Indeed, analyses of the construct cannot ignore the influences of social and environmental changes on an individual's values, beliefs, behaviors, and affect. Regardless of the approach used to study acculturation and the acculturative process, individual and social change must be factored in the process.

History

Early in the 20th century, anthropologists were the first social scientists to recognize the significance and importance of cultural contact between disparate groups. To account for and draw attention to this dynamic and

important phenomenon, Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) proposed the term *acculturation* and defined it as "phenomena which results 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" (p. 149). The essential phrase in this definition is "continuous first-hand contact," with *continuous* being the key word. Acculturation was therefore perceived to be the result of long-term contact among individuals from different cultures (excluding other short-term interactions produced by travel, war, commercial or missionary activities, or even temporary expatriate employment). Another important distinction is that the cultural groups possess a unique and identifiable "eidos" and "ethos" (i.e., "lifeways" and "thoughtways"). In the course of the interaction between the groups, much cultural diffusion, borrowing, and conflict typically occur, often leading to immutable changes in an individual's "lifeways" and "thoughtways." Also important in this initial definition is the emphasis on change in all cultures involved in the interaction, not just on the acculturating group that is accommodating or becoming assimilated into the dominant, or *host*, culture.

In 1954, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) revised the concept of acculturation and defined it as follows:

... culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value systems, the processes of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the operation of role determinants and personality factors. (p. 974)

The essential concepts in the SSRC definition are *change* and *adaptation*. Subsequent research and exploration of the two processes generated different views of the acculturation construct.

The more traditional definition implies that a cultural group progresses from a native or tradition-oriented state through a transitional stage to an elite acculturated stage (Spindler & Spindler, 1967). According to this notion, cultural changes proceed away from one's own lifeway in a linear manner and culminate in the full and complete internalization of another culture's lifeways. More contemporary social researchers voice their difficulty with the traditional view, claiming that acculturation is neither a linear process nor an achievable end, especially if the process occurs during the initial contact and change period.

If the elements of a *dominant or contributing* culture have not been fully and thoroughly internalized, then full acculturation (or assimilation, in the words of Gordon, 1964) cannot occur. Indeed, assimilation, if it does take place, may take several generations for the process to become complete—if it does become complete. Many acculturation theories assume that the terms *assimilation* and *acculturation* are used interchangeably. Suarez-Orozco (2001) pointed out that assimilation and acculturation themes predict that change is "directional, unilinear, nonreversible, and continuous" (p. 8); however, this is not what occurs with immigrant pop-

ulations. Ethnic, or cultural, groups select portions of a *dominant or contributing* culture that fit their original worldview and, at the same time, strive to retain vestiges of their traditional culture. Some of the limited research on the acculturative process shows that acculturation promotes and brings about positive change. Yet, another by-product of acculturation can be negative, disruptive, and stressful circumstances. Such change is often referred to as *acculturative disorganization* (Chance, 1965). Building on this notion, Berry (1980) developed a definition of acculturation that involves intergroup contact, conflict, and adaptation. He maintained that "acculturation may be treated as a two-level phenomenon involving the group and the individual" (p. 11). Berry's emphasis on individual adaptation led him to conceptualize the interaction as *psychological acculturation*.

According to Berry (1980), psychological acculturation produces four types of adaptation: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. Berry and Annis (1974) elaborated on this definition and developed an ecological-cultural-behavioral model. The model attempts to show how behavior varies as a function of ecocultural settings. The primary interest involves the shift in behavior, which existed prior to and during contact and stress, or disruptive behaviors that emerge as a result of the influences and contributions of the *dominant or contributing* culture. In this context, acculturation is considered a multidimensional process generating several definitive outcomes.

Dimensionality

The acculturative process was once thought to be a unidirectional course of cultural change eventually resulting in full assimilation (cf. Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986; Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Nevertheless, a more recent understanding of the construct suggests acculturation is multifaceted and that true assimilation may never occur. Indeed, adaptation and change are essential components of the definition; however, moderating variables, preferences, and the desire for ethnic affiliation must be considered. In a related article, Richman, Gaviria, Flaherty, Birz, and Wintrob (1987) pointed out yet another component—the possibility that the dominant, or *donor*, culture may undergo a change process influenced by aspects of the *newcomer* culture or acculturating group. This assumption, of course, had been inherent in some of the initial definitions of acculturation.

Researchers promoting and advancing acculturation research are adopting bidimensional and multidimensional perspectives. Following pioneering work by Berry (1980) and others, researchers (many of whom are contributors to this book) currently acknowledge the fact that acculturation is a process in which elements of the *newcomer* and *dominant and contributing* cultures are retained and internalized (e.g., Mendoza, 1984; Sodowsky, Lai, & Plake, 1991). Instead of attempting to isolate individuals using an index that approaches full assimilation, one must consider the possibility that many options are available to individuals interacting with a new culture. Furthermore, as argued by Trimble (1989), the response to

culture contact may depend on a person's situation. This phenomenon can be called *situational acculturation*; the person and situation form a coterminous interaction. This interaction is an intricate recursive process that determines cognitive and perceptual appraisals; in turn, these appraisals influence behavioral outcomes. Mendoza (1984) suggested that an acculturating individual may reject religious practices, assimilate dress customs, and integrate food preferences and celebration of certain holidays. One's acculturative status, therefore, is best understood from a composite of indexes rather than from an aggregated summative index.

Racial, Ethnic, or Cultural Identification and Acculturation

The argument has been made that acculturation is intimately related to ethnic, racial, or cultural identity and that one can be measured from the other. Furthermore, some researchers expect changes in identification as a result of changes in acculturation. The extent of the relationship between these two constructs is further explored by Phinney in chapter 3. Nevertheless, it is important to explore how the social change process that produces acculturative stress may also produce changes in an individual's self-identification.

Just as acculturation has several definitions, a construct such as ethnic identity generates many viewpoints. To understand the complications, one must consider the meanings of race and ethnicity. Feagin (1978) defined a racial group as one in which "persons inside or outside the group have decided what is important to single out as inferior or superior, typically on the basis of real or alleged physical characteristics subjectively selected" (p. 7). An ethnic group (Feagin, 1978) is one "which is socially distinguished or set apart, by others and/or by itself, primarily on the basis of cultural or nationality characteristics" (p. 9). Thompson (1989) elaborated on the term *ethnic group* and chose to view it as a culturally distinct population that can be set apart from other groups. Such groups, Thompson argued, engage in behaviors "based on cultural or physical criteria in a social context in which these criteria are relevant" (p. 11). Instead of *ethnic group*, Berry (see chapter 1) prefers the term *ethnocultural group*.

Although the terms *ethnic* and *race* often are used interchangeably, Helms (1990) maintained that "'racial identity' actually refers to a sense of group or collective identity based on one's *perception* that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group" (p. 3; see also Burlew, Bellow, & Lovett, 2000). The three terms (cultural, ethnic, racial) may share a common meaning but only in that people congregate according to common core characteristics. The source of the core characteristics can be criteria established and deeply held by the in-group, but out-groups can also set their own criteria for designating and differentiating one group from another. Thompson (1989) is highly critical of the labeling process and draws attention to theoretical and practical matters of "those who have had the fortune or, in most cases, the misfortune of being labeled 'ethnics' in the modern world" (p. 42; see also Trimble, 2001).

Helms (1990) concurred, to an extent, as she found it rather confusing "since one's racial-group designation does not necessarily define one's racial, cultural, or ethnic characteristics" (p. 7).

To distinguish one group or individual from another using race, ethnicity, or culture is an attempt to be culturally distinctive. Labeling a group as a distinct cultural (i.e., racial or ethnic) unit, however, tends to promote stereotyping and lead to overgeneralizations, further compounding the complexity of the problem. It is not uncommon for outsiders to believe that identifiable members of a racial group act as a single unitary whole—"a group mind"—and are more homogeneous than heterogeneous (Trimble, 1991, 2001).

Whether one chooses to investigate and explore acculturation from an individual or group level of analysis, change and identity must be included in the investigation. In this volume, several significant and compelling studies and reviews of acculturation correlates are presented to explain, as Berry states (see chapter 1), "how people go about their acculturation."

Understanding Acculturation and Social Change

As mentioned, there is an emerging need to better understand the relationship between acculturation and identity and the collinear effects of social change. Chapter 3 (Phinney) advances the field in this respect. Regardless, a better understanding of acculturation and social change requires the cooperative efforts of future researchers, who must move beyond previous research questions toward the answers of the issues raised in this book. For example, researchers need to better understand the relationship between acculturation and identity and explore the fact that acculturating individuals often experience racism and discrimination. These experiences are not uncommon in societies undergoing social change, and they are expected to have profound effects on individuals' levels of acculturation, their concurrent acculturative stress, and the level of personal identification with the culture of origin and the dominating or contributing culture.

As researchers increase their understanding of acculturation as a social change process, better measures are needed. Although this argument is made very strongly in a chapter in this book (see chapter 2, Zane & Mak), it is worth mentioning here. Acculturation measures are in desperate need of intense psychometric evaluation and scrutiny. Most acculturation measures assume measurement equivalence between and within study groups. Few if any acculturation measurement studies adequately explore the various components of measurement equivalence (e.g., construct, functional, metric). These measurement approaches provide researchers with the unique opportunity to isolate scale and item properties that go well beyond use of standard correlation procedures.

Research on the association between personality variables and acculturating individuals is another area ripe for exploration because little information is available on the subject. We may find that certain personality

styles are more resilient to the negative effects of acculturation than others, and the effects may vary within and among ethnocultural groups. The possibility of personality changes produced by social change and acculturation is an area that deserves attention if we are to better understand the results of a process that seems even more powerful during this century than it has been in the previous 2 centuries.

In a related domain, research and measurement must include studies of situational acculturation—the way situations shape and determine behavior, cognition, and affect of acculturating individuals. It makes intuitive sense that one's acculturative status varies from situation to situation. When at home and with the family, people's behavior may be more similar to the prescriptions of their culture of origin than when they are at work or in an educational institution. In short, the situation and the corresponding demands of the *dominant or contributing* culture may contribute considerably more to people's choice of behavioral repertoires than the general acculturating expectations that they have learned. Therefore, it also makes sense for researchers to actively explore the role that emotion plays in the acculturation process and the influences various emotions have on determining appropriate behavioral choices.

Inherent in many of the models for acculturation described is the notion that biculturalism is possible and common among individuals exposed to two or more cultures. Indeed, numerous recent studies have shown that biculturalism is not only common but also quite beneficial to individuals (Johnson et al., 1997; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Root, 2001). Unfortunately, acculturation and social change research seldom includes bicultural influences. There is another aspect of biculturalism that is of interest among ethnic minority groups in the United States and in other multicultural societies. Specifically, this is the learning and experiencing of two cultures by an individual who is the child of parents who have a mixed cultural background (e.g., an Asian American father and a non-Hispanic White mother). Little research is currently found on these individuals, often labeled biracial or of mixed race, although in the last few years more attention has been given to analyzing their situation (Root, 1992, 1996, 2001; Zack, 1995).

Conclusion

Much work obviously remains for social and behavioral scientists to sufficiently understand the process of acculturation and its relationship to social and sociocultural change. The challenges are significant, but so are the opportunities. A proper understanding of the acculturative change produced by social change will help advance the field, but more important, the expected increase in knowledge should help alleviate the personal and societal costs associated with unchecked and misunderstood social change.

Before any additional research is undertaken however, the overlap between and the nature of the two constructs must be clearly delineated, operationalized, and measured in culturally appropriate ways with the

principles of measurement equivalence serving as guides. The following example may help clarify the source of many of the problems associated with the use and meaning of the constructs. In 1928, the renowned anthropologist Margaret Mead traveled to the Admiralty Islands off the Northeastern coast of New Guinea to study the thought patterns of "primitive" children on the island of Manus. From 1928 to 1929, Mead described the Manus as a rather carefree, peaceful, and simple people who were extremely competitive, tense, apprehensive, demanding, high tempered, imperious, intolerant of delays, and persistent. Daily activities were primarily fishing and trading. Their society was held together by an entrenched belief that the "ghosts of the recently dead" influenced lives at all levels (Mead, 1956, p. 21; Mead, 1977).

Mead returned to the Admiralty Islands and the Manus in 1953 to find that major changes had occurred among the people, changes fostered and influenced by a multitude of circumstances, including missionaries, trading, World War II, and technology. In general, Manus adults were more friendly and relaxed and less competitive than in 1928. Instead of living in stilted huts above the shallow lagoons, most lived in tightly clustered tents and shelters constructed by the military during their occupation in the early 1940s. The schedules of daily activities, which were traditionally tied to chance and the "rhythm of human lives," were replaced by the Christian calendar. Women seemed to have gained new freedoms. Mead noted that "the removal of old taboos, the disappearance of then old name avoidances, the prohibition of child betrothals, the permission for women to consent to their own seductions, the prohibition against fathers or brothers becoming angered by the behavior of daughters and brothers" dramatically thrust Manus women into a nominally equitable status with men—a status they had not experienced for centuries, if ever (Mead, 1956, p. 402). Moreover, Mead discovered that many or most Manus had completely abandoned traditional ways by integrating their lifestyles with those of the modern world.

Although considerably more can be written about the changes experienced by the Manus and the changes they are experiencing now, the brief discussion raises a few profound questions. Which change-related constructs do we use to describe and understand the nature of the changes? Did the Manus experience acculturation? Psychological acculturation? Acculturation stress? Sociocultural change? Social change? Modernization brought on by social contact and "cultural borrowing and fusion"? Surely, individual, social, and cultural changes occurred among the Manus. However, which construct would thoroughly explain and clarify the change process and its consequences? In light of the contents of this chapter and others in this book, relying solely on acculturation and social change constructs would be insufficient and shortsighted.

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2003