Ethnic Adaptation

A look at key theories
Two ends of a Continuum

• In the literature on ethnic relations three predominant patterns are identified as ways in which groups relate to each other.

•  I. Assimilation

•  II. Acculturation

•  III. Cultural pluralism-
ASSIMILATION AND CONTRAST
Two Extremes

• For our purposes today we will focus primarily upon number two and three – Assimilation vs. Cultural pluralism.

• These exist at polar ends of a continuum on inter-group living (survival)
Assimilation

- Assimilation, the **blending** or fusing of minority groups into the dominant society

- Example US melting pot..
ACCULTURATION

• **Definition**

• *Acculturation* is a process in which members of one cultural group *adopts* the beliefs and behaviors of another group.
Acculturation reciprocal--

• Although acculturation is usually in the direction of a minority group adopting habits and language patterns of the dominant group.
acculturation can be **reciprocal**—that is, the dominant group also adopts patterns typical of the minority group
Assimilation

- Assimilation of one cultural group into another may be evidenced by changes in:

1. Language preference,
2. Adoption of common attitudes and values,
3. Membership in common social groups and institutions,
4. Loss of separate political or ethnic identification
Social policy /open to societies

• These are the two broad avenues of social policy open to societies which contain various ethnic minorities.

• On the one hand...a society can encourage assimilation

• On the other hand...a society can promote cultural diversity.
Assimilation

- Where **assimilation** is pursued, there is pressure throughout the society to promote **conformity**.
Pluralism

• Whereas when cultural diversity is the goal, there is a very permissive attitude and cultural heterogeneity is encouraged or tolerated.
Ideal types

• Usually the *policy of nations* are not entirely consistent with either model.

• In other words, they are *ideal types* which may *approximate reality* but are never quite attained.

• The only exception might be in a totalitarian state. (ie. Germany WW2)
The controversy.

For example, people compare the US & Canada in terms of a mosaic vs. a melting pot.

• However, in reality neither nation completely fits their ideal type.

• The whole question of assimilation vs. cultural pluralism is highly controversial.
The term "melting pot" David Zangwill playwright

- Although the idea of "melting" as a metaphor for ethnic assimilation had been used before,
- Zangwill (1908) was the first to use the term "melting pot" as a symbol for this occurrence in American society.
Salad bowl culture?

- Both scholars and lay people often ask questions such as:
  1. Should we **allow cultural autonomy** within a broader system? (Porter, 1965)
  2. Does a **salad bowl culture** promote equal opportunities for all ethnic groups?
  3. Are there **limits to diversity**? Is there a point at which diversity **undermines unity**?

• • •
Arguments for cultural pluralism

• Those who favour cultural pluralism argue that

1. the social system is enriched by cultural diversity.
2. Ethnic groups maintain their own patterns while at the same time develop respect for other groups.
3. Each group preserves its own traditions and values thereby fostering harmony within the whole society.
Acculturation = voluntary Integration

- In a pluralistic society, any assimilation that occurs takes place voluntarily—because the individual desires to become apart of the majority culture.
- **No coercion** takes place to create a homogeneous culture.
- **Any assimilation** that occurs takes place voluntarily—because the individual desires to become apart of the majority culture.
- .
Arguments in Favour of assimilation

• Those who favour assimilation argue that the process is necessary to promote:

1. cordial relations
2. -prevent conflict
Assimilation

3. Maintain national identity characterized by strength and cohesion.

4. Eliminate prejudice and discrimination by removing ethnic distinctions.

5. Maximize cultural consensus and minimize social disorganization and social problems.
The process of *ethnic group adaptation*.

- How does an a group transplant itself in a new social context?

- **Theories of adaptation**
  - 1. Two stage, three stage, multiple stage
  - 2. Ethnic language retention
Ethnic Persistence

• The degree to which an ethnic group persists in a larger cultural context, is dependant upon the structural, cultural and processual components of the host society.

• How the Host relates to the immigrant and his/her future generations.
Ethnic Group Adaptations

• **Two Stage Adaptation Theories**

• All **two stage models** deal with the beginning of the ethnic community and then go on to address the **post immigrant phase**.

• Pre-industrial to modern industrial
Two Stage Adaptation Theory

- Best known is Raymond Breton's institutional completeness theory.

- A two staged structural theory of adaptation

- Ethnic groups adapt by creating parallel structures between themselves and the larger society.
Breton Findings

1. Ethnic groups persist through development of their unique ethnic community

2. They adapt by modifying social institutions and activities from the home country (preindustrial to industrial).
Breton’s Findings

3. The more institutionally complete an ethnic community, the more ethnic group members can adapt to the new society.

• Institutional completeness—welfare agencies, newspapers, youth clubs, credit unions etc.
3 Stage Theories of Ethnic Adaptation

• M. Hansen (1933) WILL HERBERG (1955)

• LEO DRIEGER (1977)

• Wsevolod Isajiw (1980)
Model of three generational change

- Three Stage adaptation theories tend to consider post modern realities and the three generational hypothesis.
The first to develop a model of three generational change within the adaptive process for ethnic groups was Hansen.

He proposed that "what the son wishes to forget...the grandson wishes to remember" (1938:9-10)

Marcus Lee Hansen, “American Immigrants and their Generations” (1938)
Will Herberg 1955

- Will Herberg in 1955 used Hansen’s concept in his study entitled, “Catholic, Protestant-Jew”

- Herberg found that, “since the American constitution gives the right of individuals to worship as they please while its culture professes assimilation, a contradiction is created.” (1955:12)
American religious worship

- Although Americans were not expected to change their religion, an assimilation ideology results in:
  - **First generation**- worships in ethnic church.
  - **Second generation**- does not attend church-son rejects the church of his father and attempts to adapt to an American lifestyle.
  - **Third generation**- attends one of America's three mainstream churches.
Drieger (1977)

- Drieger also proposed a Three Stage Adaptation Model:
  - 1. Immigrant stage,
  - 2. Enclavic stage,
  - 3. Post enclavic stage.
Immigrant stage

I. Immigrant stage is characterized by the initial wave of immigrants. They attempt to establish an initial ethnic enclave separate from outsiders.
II. Enclavistic stage

- The **enclavistic stage**, the immigrant attempts to establish **territorial concentration** through:
  - language,
  - homogamy,
  - residential proximity
  - voluntary associations.
Post enclavic

• III. Post enclavic Stage-

• Ethnic communities achieve self actualization by achieving "regenerating pluralism"
Five Essential Aspects of Regenerating Pluralism

• 1. Ideological mythology -- a rallying point for the group.

• 2. Historic Symbols - heros, totems symbolizing group pride.

• 3. Charismatic Leadership - either contemporary or historical.
Regenerating Pluralism

• 4. Social Status Symbols- future generations must strive to maintain and surpass. Usually built out of an ethnic economic enclave.

• 5. Support for an ethnic language- important for maintaining ethnic identity and values.
Isajiw also has a 3 gen. theory of adaptation

• Isajiw (1999) found that third generation Canadians experienced a rediscovery of their ethno-religious and racial roots.

1. Transplantation,
2. Rejection,
3. Rediscovery

• These stages are dynamic and reflect an adaptive ethnic culture.
Canadian Adaptations

• I. Transplantation- occurred in the years between the late 1800's and the Great Depression when Canada was involved in nation building.
II. Rejection- correspond to periods between 1929 -1945 when the parameters between ethnic group life and Canadian society were developing.

- It was a period of turmoil for many ethnic groups in Canada such as Jewish and Italian.
Rediscovery-

III. Rediscovery- reflects the past twenty years or so as ethnicity has become part of our national ideology and is reflected in the 1982 Constitution.
Dorothy Herberg (1980)

• Dorothy Herberg  *An Adaptive Framework of Ethnic Communities*

• Her Adaptive Framework reflects a multi-stage theory of ethnic adaptation.
Herberg’s Model of Adaptation

Considers the importance of:

1. **origins** of ethno culture - one must know the past to understand the future.

2. common **structures** present for all groups

3. the importance of **family**.
The Adaptive Experience

A **timeline** of gradual change through experience.

- She argues that ethnic group experience should be understood in terms of a **time line**.
- **Members** of ethnic groups as either immigrants, Canadian-born, second and third generation will experience **significant Benchmarks**.

• **Benchmark A** Place of origin - demographics, language, government, socio-economic factors

• **Benchmark B** - reasons for emigrating

• **Benchmark C** - settlement period - culture shock, stages, working with host culture

• **Benchmark D** - institutional completeness

• **Benchmark E** - new ethnocultural identity
Benchmarks

In her time line, there are five basic points or Benchmarks reflecting the death and process of rebirth of culture.

- **Benchmark A** - person, family or group die in one culture and are reborn in another.

- **Benchmark B & C** - reflect the ongoing process of death and rebirth.
Benchmarks

- Benchmark D - the new place of rebirth
- Benchmark E - a new identity is born
- Benchmark F & G - identity differences with each succeeding generation in Canada.
The Importance of language in ethnic adaptation

In R. M. Bienvenue, and J. E. Goldstein (eds.), Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations in Canada (2nd ed.).
Toronto: Butterworths and Co. (Canada).
Language loss in Canada

• This relationship is particularly significant in the **Canadian context**.
• Many ethnic groups have expressed concern for **loss of language** since they are aware of its importance for group survival.
Language Retention

Significance of Language Retention to Ethnic Communities

• 1. A way of expressing traditional ethnic culture

• 2. An important key (dynamic force) in ethnic community survival.
Existing literature suggests-

1. Language is a **common force binding** a group together.

2. Language is fundamental to **group identity-symbol of social solidarity**
3. Language a symbolic tribal expression

Hertzler, Joyce O.

1. **Language**- defines **the boundaries** of an ethnic group.
2. Sets parameters of **insider** and **outsider** or who is excluded and included.
3. If children **fail to learn the language** of the group they fail to understand and appreciate ethnic values.
E. Herberg

- Although language is important to ethnic group identity, it is **not** a prerequisite to the maintenance of an ethnic community.
3rd generation


- 3rd generation will likely return to an appreciation of ethnic community even without learning the language

- Learning language is a likely outcome of renewed ethnic interest but not a prerequisite.
Jeffery Rietz (1985)

- Looks at LANGUAGE RETENTION
- Focused on **four ethnic groups**: Largest urban ethnic groups in Canada
  - (Germans, Italians, Ukrainians, Polish)
- Long immigration histories
- Each of his sample contained people of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd generation.
Objective:

• To see whether or not language is important for ethnic group solidarity.
Sample Selection:

- **Four criteria for selection:**
  1. The groups were chosen for their similarities to Anglo Canadians.
  2. Groups were well integrated into Canadian society.
  3. Usually found in clusters
  4. All share European heritage
Sampling

- **Sampled** representatives of all four ethnic groups over 18 years of age in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver in 1973.
Features of Rietz’ Sample

1. Stratified random sampling techniques were employed.
2. Two stage sampling: a total of 1319 were interviewed.
3. Interviews were conducted both in English and the other four languages.
4. Distinguished between four generations, not the usual three.
5. Immigrants represented 64% of the total sample.
Findings:

1. Language was an important vehicle of thoughts, perceptions and sentiments of ethnic communities.
2. **Second and third generations** move away from their ethnic communities.

3. As movement occurs there is very **limited retention of language** in the children and grandchildren of immigrants.
4. Noted some **generation trends** in language:

- 1st- fluent
- 2nd- 11% fluent
- 80% some fluency
- 3rd- 0% fluent
- 40% some fluency
- 60% loss of language
• 5. Intergenerational language loss is strongly correlated with intergenerational withdrawal from the ethnic community.
6. Community participation drops off less sharply than language knowledge.

7. Found no increase in third generation interest in ethnic participation.
8. **Third generation characterized by:**

- A. some language knowledge
- B. maintenance of close ties with some members of their ethnic group.
- C. reduced participation in the ethnic community
- D. continued ethnic identification
9. All of those who learned their ethnic language as a child were more likely to participate in their ethnic communities than those who learned later on in life.
• 10. **No Difference** by generation in the importance of ethnic language knowledge to **community participation**.
• Even figures across the generations.
• In other words, as language knowledge becomes less widespread, it does not become less relevant to community participation
Failure of the second and third generation to learn ethnic language is a significant factor in the decline of ethnic solidarity.
12. This was the case even when parents desired their children maintain a closeness to their ethnic group.
  
• Where there was **no ethnic language retention** there was no ethnic group participation.

• Children **raised in an environment** conducive to language retention are more likely to remain close to their ethnic group, than those who are not.
13. In those respondents with no knowledge of ethnic language the effects of parents encouraging ethnic participation and solidarity were nil.
This suggests that **efforts to renew ethnic interest** and consciousness will meet with much more difficulty once an original ethnic identity is lost.
Summary of Reitz (1985)

• In general, use of **ethnic language** in the parental home is very strongly related to language retention.

• There is a great need for more study into the **basis for ethnic solidarity** without language.
• Reitz wonders how ethnic persistence will develop in the Canadian context which stresses *multiculturalism* and not multilingualism.
Summary

- Ethnic groups adapt to Host societies in a variety of patterns.
- Early research emphasized two stage adaptation—toward assimilation and modernization.
- Newer research accounts for post modern realities.
Incorporation of Ethnic Groups

- Structural
- Cultural
- Identity
Structural Incorporation

• **Secondary Group** Structure

• **Primary Group** Structure
Ethnic Stratification (secondary)

- Differential Incorporation
- John Porter’s Vertical Mosaic
- Wallace Clement
Ethnic Stratification

• **Defined as** - the hierarchal ordering of ethnic groups

• **Ordering**
  • -the degree of power
  • -the level and quality of life members enjoy
  • -the collective resources of the groups
  • –prestige among members
Ethnic Status (structural)

• The place an ethnic group holds in the hierarchal system.
• The standard of comparison is group at the top of the stratification system.
Ethnocentrism

- The Majority Ethnic Group can display:
  - Ethnocentrism—an attitude by which members of a group tend to consider themselves superior to other groups.
  - Leads to stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.
Prejudice, Nativism, Discrimination

- J.S Friedman (1973) Alberta
- Discrimination

- Wilson Head (1975) Toronto-Discrimination.
Social Closure

- Franco Ontario vs. Quebecois
- Luckas (1971) – single industry towns.
- See Penetang study-outsiders from Quebec vs. Franco-Ontarians.
Cultural transformation

• A process of cultural transformation initiated by contacts between different cultures.

• At a global level, acculturation takes place as societies experience the transforming impact.
Three Forms of Ethnic Culture and Change

• Assimilation - absorbed

• Acculturation - adaptation

• Cultural Pluralism - neither of the above
The global trend towards modern economic organization and developed market economies has been accompanied by a process of cultural transformation.
Economic Material Conditions

- A **key change** is towards a transformation of economic organization:
- The great majority of individuals come to generate their income through employment or running businesses,
- Rather than from **economic bonds** with family and community
Modern world-post industrial

• In the modern world, there is great ease of international communication and interaction between cultures.

• Sociologists have generally focused attention on the global impact of the capitalist western world on other societies.
Global Transformations and Identity

• Each society may experiences a unique process of cultural and economic transformation,

• There are some common trends that appear to be linked to the development of a complex sense of identity
Influencers of Identity

• Social roles and socialization are shaped by norms and values that are largely foreign influences media.

• Educational and occupational experiences are the primary agents of the individual's acculturation process.
Learning and absorbing

- Sociologists use the term to refer simply to the process of learning and absorbing a culture, making it synonymous with socialization, but ‘enculturation’ is a more appropriate word for that meaning
hybridity

• A concept that has emerged in discourse around ethnic acculturation is hybridity.
• In nineteenth century language, hybrid, implied impurity of race.
• Global consciousness has meant a valid sense of being in a rapidly changing global village.