

A short literature review about acculturation in the *American Anthropologist*

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Abstract: The research accomplished a literature review about acculturation on the earlier American Anthropologist journal. Acculturation research appeared on the North American Anthropology; later came to Sociology and Psychology. The main models to approach acculturation followed the historical evolution of the North American culture, and the earlier research barely considered the main dimensions of the acculturation concept. Assimilation and, in a lesser degree, fusion were the preferred models during colonial and imperial times, and American Indigenous were the main researched cultural group. Acculturation was approached as type of cultural influences, and Indigenous cultural change was the main concern. Yet, interaction and learning were not the main concerns. The multicultural model appeared already in the earlier literature, yet it was related to fusion.

Keywords: Acculturation, fusion, multicultural, American Anthropologist, social dominance.

Resumo: A investigação realizou uma revisão da literatura acerca da aculturação na revista American Anthropologist. A investigação acerca da aculturação surgiu nos primórdios da Antropologia norte-americana e, mais tarde, na Sociologia e na Psicologia. Os principais modelos da abordagem da aculturação seguiram a evolução histórica da cultura norte-americana e a investigação inicial quase que não considerou as dimensões fundamentais do conceito da aculturação. Assimilação e, num grau menor, a fusão foram os modelos preferidos durante as épocas coloniais e imperiais, e os indígenas americanos foram o grupo cultural mais investigado. A aculturação foi abordada como tendo apenas uma direção de influências culturais, e as mudanças culturais nos indígenas constituíram-se como a problemática fundamental. Contudo, a interação e a aprendizagem não se constituíram como problemáticas fundamentais. O modelo multicultural já tinha surgido na literatura inicial. Contudo, nos artigos iniciais relacionava-se com a fusão.

Palavras-chave: Aculturação, fusão, multicultural, American Anthropologist, domínio social.

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1 Acculturation: definition and models

The research did a literature review about the acculturation concept on the earlier American Anthropologist journal. It was the first North American journal of Anthropology. It is the flagship *journal* of the *American Anthropological Association*, and it is still one of the most important *journals* at the global level. The acculturation definition is important to limit the research scope. The acculturation phenomenon may be defined by its main dimensions, i.e., intercultural contact, mutual interactions between different cultures (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936), by learning a second culture (Powell, 1880; Rudmin, 2009), and by cultural changes at individual and collective levels.

Acculturation has four models, i.e., assimilation, multiculturalism, fusion, and interculturalism (Castro 2014a, b, 2015, 2016a, b, c, d, e, 2017; Castro & Rudmin, 2016, 2017). In the assimilation model the minority culture is expected to disappear. The mutual learning will not be reported on the expected outcome, because the minority will be assimilated. The Chicago School is an example of this model.

In the multicultural model the minority culture is expected to get cultural adaptation and at the same time to maintain its own culture. In the multicultural approach only the minority is described as learning, and both cultures are interacting with the larger society. The Berry Model (2001) is an example of the model.

In the fusion model, there is interaction, mutual learning between different cultures, and there are cultural mixtures, which will produce a new culture with inner diversity (Bastide, 1973; Castro, 2014a, b, 2015, 2016a; Herskovits, 1967; Frazier, 1942). The Freyre's (1986/1933; Rudmin, Wang & Castro, 2016), and the Ortiz's theories are examples of the fusion model. The intercultural model was not described here.

2 Empirical outcomes

In February 1th, 2016, a refined search on the Website AnthroSource by the word acculturation gave 2162 results in the American Anthropologist. The review identified 17 codes, and selected 90 earliest articles. The statistical outcomes found out that the main topic was cultural change (31.1%). Other relevant results were theoretical (10%), psychological traits (7.8%), review (5.6%), ethnic identity (6.7%), contact (5.6%) and health (5.6%). Other topics had three or less cases.

In the 1950s, acculturation research reached its maximum, because between 1951 and 1960 it accounted for 42.2% of the results. Most articles were written originally in English (96.7%). Authors were mostly North Americans or they worked in North America universities (The USA and Canada). They were mostly males (90%), and females only 8.9%. The majority of articles were produced in the USA or Canada (65.6%). Few works were produced about European countries, the exceptions were the Netherlands by Baal in 1960, Denmark (Anderson, 1958), and Germany (Westphal-Hellbusch, 1959).

Anthropology was undoubtedly the main field (76.7%), followed by Psychology (17.8%), and it was “The oldest of our recent trends, and the most important in terms of membership and number of publications, is Psychology” (Meggers, 1946, p. 178). Meggers (1946) provided an extensive list of psychological references. Barnett et al. (1953) also reported the influence of Psychology. Sociology only got 2.2% of the outcomes. At methodological level measuring devices were employed (13.3%), and projective tests were also employed on 10% of the articles.

A defining dimension of the acculturation concept is the direction, and mainly the two-way direction. The code options were one-way (66.7%), two-way (28.9%) and not defined (4.4%). Hence, often only the minority was approached. Minority and majority cultural groups were described as active on 22.2% of the articles, yet they were not active on 47.8% of cases, and on 30.0% of cases were not defined. Cultures were described as interacting on 86.7% of the articles, and as not interacting on 7.8% of the cases, and it included also the not defined option (5.6%). This code appeared, because there were few descriptions of interaction, and often only the minorities were described as learning majority cultures. Yet, interaction is a defining dimension of acculturation.

The main feature of the fusion model is to report a common and shared culture. Hence, one code was asking, ‘are cultural groups sharing cultural traits?’, and the outcomes were yes (26.7%), no (52.2%), and not defined (21.1%). Changes are also a defining dimension of the acculturation concept. However, the multicultural model is emphasizing the minority cultural maintenance and, at the same time, cultural adaptation. It reveals a contradiction, because adaptation also triggers changes. This code was asking ‘is there mainly cultural change (4.4%) or maintenance’ (5.6%). Additional options were both of them (86.7), none (2.2%), and not defined (1.1%). The outcomes displayed that often cultural changes and maintenance were

occurring at the same time, and it reported the limits of the assimilation and the multicultural models.

The next code was checked out taking into account the description of the relationship. The code asked, 'is the relationship harmonious (6.7%), problematic (55.6%) or *conflictual*' (20.0%). It also included the option not defined (17.8%). The outcomes confirmed that acculturation was often motivated and problematic. Another code asked, 'is there any asymmetric power relationship approached?' The code outcomes were yes (50.0%), no (4.4%), and not defined (45.6%). The next code asked 'is discrimination approached?', and unlike the previous two codes, it was not approached by the mere description of the relationship, because discrimination should be reported as a concern. The outcomes were yes (11.1%), no (11.1%) and not defined (77.8%). Hence, discrimination was not a main concern in the earlier anthropological research.

Indigenous was the most frequent minority label (45.6%), and Afro-Americans (2.2%) were not often approached. Additional relevant outcomes were Eskimo (4.4%), more than two (11.1%), and not defined (16.7%). The statistical outcomes revealed the historical evolution of the acculturation concept and of the North American culture, because the West was still under colonization. Europeans were under acculturation only by Anderson (1958), and Willems (1944), and the latter approached Germans immigrants in Brazil. The majority label outcomes were Anglo-American (27.8%), White (17.8%), Spanish (6.7%), more than two (7.8%), another (30.0%), and not defined (30.0%). The outcome on the not defined option (30%) reported that majorities were not apparently under acculturation, and that majorities were not a concern.

The review aimed to know which acculturation model was pervasive. The code options and outcomes were assimilation (31.1%), fusion (18.9%), multicultural (5.6%), and not defined (25.6%). Consequently, the assimilation model was the most pervasive, followed by fusion. In the fusion model some of the works were theoretical, e.g., Hallowell (1957) criticized the pervasive one-way, and he provided other examples of fusionist works, i.e., Chamberlin, Foster, Beals, and Gillin. The North-American Anglo-Saxon culture was rarely reported to learn second cultures and to produce mixed cultures. The exception was Merriam (1955), because he reported mixtures, for example, the jazz music, and Barnett in 1940.

The research did an additional search for the words plural and multicultural in the American Anthropologist database. The researcher downloaded the articles

from the older pages of both searches in order to get the earlier articles. Most of the results were not connected to the multicultural model. The works of Vogt (1955) and Polgar (1960) were found during the search. Polgar (1960) provided more examples of multicultural works. He mentioned Bateson (1935), Tax (1941), Barnett et al. (1953), Bruner, 1956, and Crowley (1957). Yet, the work of Crowley (1957) was considered as fusionist by the current review, because he reported mixtures and shared cultures. Bateson (1935) did not use the word multicultural, but he provided clues about what was considered a plural society, and it was “. . . the persistence of both groups in dynamic equilibrium within one major community.” (Bateson, 1935, p. 74).

The common element among the descriptions of Tax (1941), Vogt (1955) and Polgar (1960) was that fusion preceded the multicultural outcome. Therefore, the three authors described, in fact, fusion processes. However, they ascribed them to the multicultural (plural) model, because there were cultural maintenances. Another common feature was that violence and asymmetric relationships occurred only during fusion. The multicultural outcome was described as peaceful by Tax (1941), Vogt (1955), and by Polgar (1960). Multiculturalism was called stable pluralism, because cultures were expected to be on permanent contact with relative tolerance (mutual recognition), and with no further cultural changes, but it was not realistic.

Tax (1941) described Spaniards and Indigenous peoples in Guatemala. Spaniards, who were the dominant cultural group, changed and they became Ladinos, because they mixed with Indigenous. According to Tax (1941), the Indigenous culture achieved cultural maintenance, and they were described as an autonomous culture, regardless contact and intercultural relationship. It is interesting to notice that Tax explained the cultural maintenance, and the continuous intercultural contact with no change by the Lamarck evolutionist thought. Consequently, the description of Tax was closer to Herbert Spencer's social evolutionism than to the cultural relativism of Boas.

Vogt (1955) described Indigenous, Spanish-Americans and Anglo-Americans gathered together during Laguna Fiesta, New Mexico. Their relationships were characterized by economic motivations. Social roles were stable, and the different ethnic groups were interacting, but they were not described as changing. Fusion occurred between Spanish and Indigenous cultures, and it surrendered to Spanish-Americans. In short, on Tax (1941), Vogt (1955) and Polgar (1960) the acculturation

processes had only one-way, regardless that at least one culture was under fusion. Yet, the Anglo-Saxon culture was not described as learning any second culture.

3 Conclusions

The conclusion was outlined according to the acculturation defining dimensions as they were provided at the beginning, and considering culture as a dynamic process of fusion. The review outcomes reported that acculturation research went from Anthropology to Sociology and Psychology. In the anthropological literature acculturation research was a dominant topic from its early phase until 1960s. However, acculturation research appeared in colonial and imperial times. Europeans and Westerners were dominating the planet. Furthermore, eugenics, racism and social evolutionist ideas appeared in order to vindicate European and Western domination and even genocides. Consequently, most works were reporting a problematic and asymmetric relationship, and the theme of discrimination gained strength only after 1960s.

Cultural changes were the main topic of the anthropological literature, and the mere contact with intercultural interaction with two-ways of cultural influences was not a major concern. The outcomes reinforced the colonial and imperial views of acculturation. Intercultural contact occurred among Western and American Natives, who were the main researched minority. Yet, Westerns were rarely reported as learning second cultures.

The reactions regarding the Western domination confirmed that acculturation was a motivated phenomenon, and that it was often asymmetric and antagonistic, because social dominance narratives were common, even when the minority cultural maintenance was a concern. The main questions were not the anthropological description of the Native culture and of the intercultural contact, but how to regulate the Western domination and exploitation.

Most of the authors were writing in English, and most of them were males working on North America. Later, the anthropological research was extended to South America, to Caribbean Islands, and in a lesser degree to Africa and Asia. Psychology was a main field on the earlier anthropological literature, and it encompassed projective tests and measuring devices.

Fresh research should further contextualize the acculturation concept. It is necessary to add additional social sciences to Anthropology, and the current review

should be enlarged to the sociological and the psychological literatures. The current review reported that Western majorities were not apparently under acculturation, and that they were not a concern, even because often they were not supposed to change. However, today, in the USA, the white majority will be a minority, and the white middle-class has often poorer health (Case & Deaton, 2015) than immigrants, reinforcing the immigrant paradox (Markides & Coreil, 1986). Furthermore, the recent Western demographic changes (Case & Deaton, 2015) are leading to racism and to intercultural violence (Richeson & Sommers, 2016).

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