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Multicultural Identity

What It Is and Why It Matters

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Multicultural Identity: What It Is and Why It Matters

I think of myself not as a unified cultural being but as a communion of different cultural beings. Due to the fact that I have spent time in different cultural environments, I have developed several cultural identities that diverge and converge according to the need of the moment.

(Sparrow, 2000, p. 190)

The global increase in intercultural contact owing to factors such as immigration, speed of travel and communication, and international corporate presence is difficult to ignore. Undoubtedly, multiculturalism and globalization influence how people see themselves and others, and how they organize the world around them. The year 2009 marks the beginning of Barack Hussein Obama's U.S. presidential administration. Not only does Obama exemplify the word "multiculturalism"—as a biracial individual from a multicultural family who has lived in various countries—several of his key advisors have also lived outside the United States (Bartholet & Stone, 2009), and almost half of his cabinet are from racial or ethnic minorities (Wolf, 2009). In fact, in his inaugural speech, Obama stated that multiculturalism is a national strength (Obama, 2009), and since then, he has deliberately set out to select a diverse cabinet, based on the premise that multicultural individuals have insights, skills, and unique psychological experiences that contribute to society.

The prevalence and importance of multiculturalism has long been acknowledged in psychology (e.g., Hermans & Kempen, 1998; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993), yet the phenomenon has been investigated empirically only since the late 1990s. However, the study of multicultural identities has exciting implications for the field of psychology, and for social and personality psychology in particular, as the issue of how individuals develop a sense of community, national, cultural, ethnic, and racial group membership becomes particularly meaningful in situations of cultural clashing, mixing, and integration (Baumeister, 1986; Phinney, 1999). Furthermore, the social and individual factors that influence multicultural identity provide psychologists with another window through which to study individual variations in self-concept dynamics. In fact, as Phinney eloquently said (1999): “increasing numbers of people find that the conflicts are not between different groups but between different cultural values, attitudes, and expectations *within themselves* [italics added]” (p. 27). Lastly, the study of multicultural identity affords unique methodological tools. By virtue of having two or more cultures that can be independently manipulated, multicultural individuals give researchers a quasi-experimental design ideal for the study of how culture affects behavior (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000). In addition, previously identified cross-cultural differences can be replicated in experiments with multicultural individuals (Sanchez-Burks, Lee, Choi, Nisbett, Zhao, & Koo, 2003). Furthermore, these cross-cultural differences can be examined while controlling for variables that confound national comparisons (e.g., gross national product) by using multicultural individuals in a within-subjects design.

Despite the world’s long history of intercultural contact and mixing, empirical research on multicultural identity has begun only since the late 1990s, with the increase of cultural diversity in academia, politics, and the media. In this chapter, we define and discuss the constructs of multiculturalism and multicultural identity from both an individual and societal perspective, and also quickly summarize the relevant issues in acculturation theory, from which current cultural identity research took its roots. Second, we identify some concerns in multicultural identity research, such as how to best measure and conceptualize this type of identity, and the issue of individual and group differences. With regard to the latter, we pay special attention to the construct of Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) and its correlates. The implications of multiculturalism research, particularly benefits for the individual as well as society at large, are also reviewed. Finally, we discuss the relevance of

multicultural identity theory and research to other types of multiple identities (e.g., bisexual identity).

Multiculturalism: Individual and Societal Level

Who is multicultural? There are many definitions of multiculturalism, ranging from general (i.e., based on demographic characteristics) to psychologically specific conceptualizations (e.g., cultural identifications or orientations). Broadly speaking, those who are mixed-race and mixed-ethnic, those who have lived in more than one country (such as expatriates, international students, immigrants, refugees, and sojourners), those reared with at least one other culture in addition to the dominant mainstream culture (such as children of immigrants or colonized people), and those in intercultural relationships may all be considered multicultural (Berry, 2003; Padilla, 2006).¹ In the United States alone, multicultural individuals may include the 13% who are foreign-born, the 34% who are non-White, and the 20% who speak a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). High numbers of multicultural individuals can also be found in other nations where migration is strong (e.g., Canada, Australia, Western Europe, Singapore) or where there is a history of colonization (e.g., Hong Kong).

Psychologically, there is no commonly agreed definition of multiculturalism. Loosely speaking, multicultural individuals are those whose self-label (e.g., "I am multicultural") or group self-categorization (e.g., "I am American" and "I am Chinese"; "I am Chinese-American") reflects their cultural pluralism. More specifically, multiculturalism can be defined as the experience of having been exposed to and having internalized two or more cultures (Hong et al., 2000; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007). Relatedly, multicultural identity is the condition of having strong attachments with and loyalties toward these different cultures (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). Notice then that multicultural identity is only one component (although perhaps the most important one) of the more complex and multidimensional notion of multiculturalism. That is, an individual who has been exposed to and has learned more than one culture is a multicultural person, but only when this individual expresses an attachment with and loyalty to these cultures can we say that the individual has a multicultural identity.

Multiculturalism is a broader term referring to more than one culture (i.e., two cultures, three cultures, four cultures, and so on), whereas

biculturalism is a more specific term referring to exactly two cultures. Although the terms “multicultural” and “bicultural” are typically used to describe individuals, they can also be used to describe nations (e.g., bicultural Canada, where Anglophone and Francophone cultures coexist), and institutions and policies (e.g., multicultural education). Although the term is recent, the concept of biculturalism dates back to the origins of modern Canada (1774, when British authorities allowed French Canadians full use of their language, system of civil law, and freedom to practice their Roman Catholicism). Biculturalism should not be confused with bilingualism (having fluency in two languages), although these terms are conceptually related, since often (but not always), bicultural individuals and institutions are also bilingual.

Multicultural ideology and policies advocate that society and organizations should include and equally value distinct cultural groups (Fowers & Richardson, 1996). Although the term multiculturalism is typically used to acknowledge the presence of the distinct cultures of immigrant groups, sometimes it can also be applied to acknowledge the presence of indigenous peoples in colonized nations. One assumption behind the multicultural ideology is that public acceptance and recognition of one’s culture and opportunities for multicultural interactions are crucial for self-worth and well-being (Burnet, 1995). Support for this argument is found in counseling (Sue & Sue, 2003), education (Banks & Banks, 1995), corporate (Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, in press), and developmental contexts (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Yip, Seaton, & Sellers, 2006). Work closely examining multicultural attitudes and their effects from both the minority and majority perspectives (e.g., Verkuyten, this volume; Verkuyten, 2009; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006) reveals some interesting moderating factors. First, cultural and ethnic minorities (e.g., Turkish, Moroccan) are more likely to endorse multiculturalism than members of an ethnic majority group (e.g., Dutch). Second, multiculturalism is positively associated with self-esteem among ethnic-minority individuals who identify strongly with their ethnic group, while this interactive effect does not exist for majority individuals. Further, strength of ethnic identification is positively related to endorsement of multiculturalism for minority individuals, while the link between ethnic identification and multiculturalism is negative among majority individuals.

Multiculturalism has been formally adopted as an official policy in nations such as Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands, for reasons that vary from country to country. Multicultural policies influence the structures and decisions of governments to ensure that political and economic resources are allocated equitably to all represented cultural

groups. Examples of government-endorsed multicultural policies are dual citizenship, government support for media outlets (e.g., newspapers, television, radio) in minority languages, support for cultural minority holidays, celebrations, and community centers, and acceptance of traditional and religious codes of dress and behavior in the public sphere (e.g., work, school).

Acculturation and Multiculturalism

Multicultural identity and acculturation are tightly intertwined, with multi/biculturalism being one of four ways to acculturate; therefore, we review the development of acculturation theory and the definition of biculturalism from an acculturation standpoint before delving further into our discussion of multicultural identity.

Traditional views of acculturation (the process of learning or adapting to a new culture) asserted that to acculturate means to assimilate—rejecting one’s ethnic or original culture and adopting the new or dominant culture (Berry, 2003). In other words, acculturation originally was conceptualized as a unidimensional, one-directional, and irreversible process of moving toward the new mainstream culture and away from the original ethnic culture (Trimble, 2003). However, a wealth of acculturation studies conducted since the mid-1980s (see Sam & Berry, 2006 for a review) support acculturation as a bidimensional, two-directional, multi-domain complex process, in which assimilation into the mainstream culture is not the only way to acculturate. In other words, equating acculturation with assimilation is simply inaccurate.

The bidimensional model of acculturation is based on the premise that acculturating individuals have to deal with two central issues, which comprise the two cultural orientations of acculturation (Berry, 2003): (1) the extent to which they are motivated or allowed to retain identification and involvement with the culture of origin, now the non-majority, ethnic culture; and (2) the extent to which they are motivated or allowed to identify with and participate in the mainstream, dominant culture. The negotiation of these two central issues results in four distinct acculturation positions: assimilation (involvement and identification with the dominant culture only), integration/biculturalism (involvement and identification with both cultures), separation (involvement and identification with the ethnic culture only), or marginalization (lack of involvement and identification with either culture; see Rudmin, 2003 for a thorough discussion of this strategy). Empirical work on these four acculturation

attitudes or strategies reveals that, at least at the individual level, the most common strategy used by immigrant and cultural minorities is integration/biculturalism, followed by separation, assimilation, and marginalization (Berry et al., 2006; Sam & Berry, 2006). Further, there is now robust evidence supporting the psychometric validity of the multidimensional model of acculturation and its advantages over unidimensional models in predicting a wide array of outcomes (Flannery, Reise, & Yu, 2001; Ryder, Allen, & Paulhus, 2000).²

Additional support for the idea that individuals can simultaneously hold two or more cultural orientations is provided by recent socio-cognitive experimental work showing that bicultural individuals shift between their two cultural orientations in response to cultural cues, a process called "cultural frame-switching" (CFS; Hong et al., 2000; Verkuyten & Pouliasi, 2006). Bicultural individuals' ability to engage in CFS has been documented in multiple behavioral domains such as attribution (Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; Cheng, Lee, & Benet-Martínez, 2006; Hong et al., 2000; Verkuyten & Pouliasi, 2002), personality self-views (Ramirez-Esparza, Gosling, Benet-Martínez, Potter, & Pennebaker, 2006; Ross, Xun, & Wilson, 2002), identity (Verkuyten & Pouliasi, 2002), self-construals (Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999), and cooperation (Wong & Hong, 2005), among others. Note that CFS is not merely a knee-jerk response to cultural cues; rather, it occurs when a particular cultural schema influences behavior to the extent that it is cognitively accessible (it has been recently activated by explicit or implicit cues) and applicable (it is relevant to the situation; Hong, Benet-Martínez, Chiu, & Morris, 2003; Tadmor, No, Hong, & Chiu, this volume).

Lastly, it is important to point out that the acculturation perspective does not presuppose that multicultural individuals internalize and use their different cultures globally and uniformly. Acculturation changes can take place in many different domains of life: language use or preference, social affiliation, communication style, cultural identity and pride, and cultural knowledge, beliefs, and values (Zane & Mak, 2003); and acculturation changes in some of these domains may occur independently of changes in other components. For instance, a Japanese American bicultural individual may endorse Anglo-American culture behaviorally and linguistically and yet be very Japanese (ethnic culture) in terms of her/his values and attitudes. Similarly, a Mexican American bicultural individual can behave in ways that are predominantly Mexican (e.g., speak mostly Spanish, live in a largely Mexican neighborhood) and yet display great pride and attitudinal attachment with American culture. In fact, some recent acculturation work suggests that,

independently of how much the mainstream culture is internalized and practiced, immigrants and their descendents often adhere to the ethnic cultural values even more strongly than members of their home country, probably because they can become gradually “encapsulated” within the norms and values of an earlier era in their homeland (Kim-Jo, Benet-Martínez, & Ozer, in press).

Thus far, the discussion of acculturation and multiculturalism has been at the individual level, but acculturation is also tied to multiculturalism at the societal level. At the national level, there are strategies corresponding to the individual acculturation strategies above (Berry, 2003; see Figure 5.1). Countries with public policies that promote the assimilation of acculturating individuals are described as melting pots. Those that encourage separation are referred to as segregationist, and those that promote marginalization are labeled exclusionary. Most importantly, national policies supporting the integration/biculturalism strategy are considered multicultural. For example, Canada’s multicultural policies encourage ethnic and cultural groups to maintain, develop, and share their cultures with others as well as to accept and interact with other groups (Berry, 1984). Although acculturating individuals by and large prefer the bicultural or integration strategy, in reality, most host countries are melting pots, encouraging the assimilation of acculturating individuals into the dominant culture (Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006; Verkuyten,

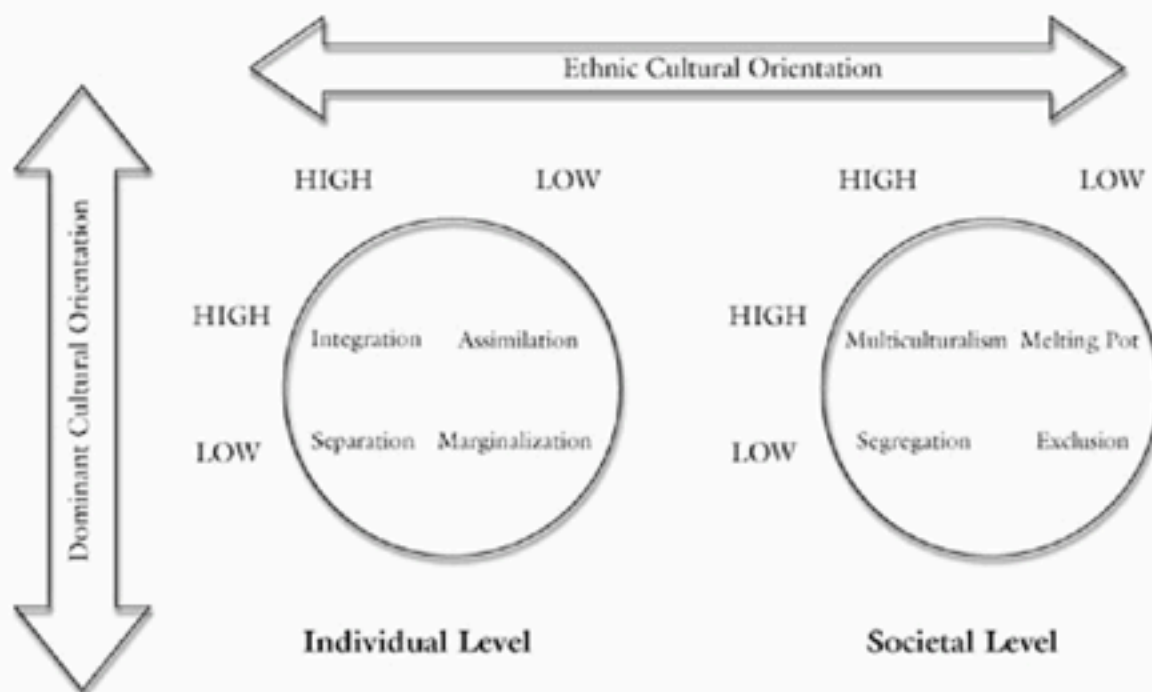


Figure 5.1 Acculturation and multiculturalism at the individual versus societal levels. Adapted from Berry, 2003.

this volume). Consequently, when national policies and dominant groups' acculturation attitudes do not match with acculturating individuals' strategies, conflicts and problems in intergroup relations may arise (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Horenczyk, & Schmitz, 2003). Thus, public policies regarding acculturation and biculturalism undoubtedly can affect intercultural relations within a country, especially as changing global migration patterns diversify many nations around the world.

Multiculturalism: Operationalization and Measurement

Acculturation, and the narrower constructs of multiculturalism or biculturalism, have been operationalized and measured in a variety of ways, including unidimensional scales, bidimensional scales (e.g., median-split, addition, multiplication, and subtraction methods), direct measures of acculturation strategies, cultural identification question(s), or simple demographic questions. An exhaustive review of the available instruments and theoretical and psychometric issues involved in measuring biculturalism (and acculturation) is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006; Zane & Mak, 2003 for excellent reviews). Accordingly, we provide instead a practical and brief summary of the available approaches and their pros and cons.

Early attempts at measuring biculturalism relied on bipolar, single-dimension scales that explicitly or implicitly reflected a unidirectional view of acculturation. In this framework, low scores or the starting point of the scale typically reflected separation, and high scores or the other end of the scale reflected assimilation, with biculturalism being tapped by middle scores or the midpoint of the scale (e.g., Cuéllar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980; Rotheram-Borus, 1990; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987). These unidimensional scales should be avoided because they equate involvement and identification with one culture to a lack of involvement and identification with the other culture. In addition, these scales confound biculturalism and marginalization. For example, a scale item may be "Who do you associate with?" and the response choices may be labeled with 1 = *mostly individuals from the ethnic culture*, 2 = *individuals from both the ethnic and dominant cultures equally*, 3 = *mostly individuals from the dominant culture*. A bicultural individual would select "2" because he/she has many friends from both cultures,

but a marginalized individual may also select "2" because his/her lack of socialization with members from each culture is similar.

With the increased adoption of the bidimensional model of acculturation came an increase in the number of bidimensional scales, where involvement with ethnic and dominant cultures is measured in two separate multi-item scales. With this method, biculturalism can be operationalized in different ways. Typically, bicultural individuals are those who have scores above the median (e.g., Ryder et al., 2000; Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000) or midpoint (e.g., Donà & Berry, 1994) on both cultural orientations. More recently, cluster analyses (e.g., Lee, Sobal, & Frongillo, 2003) and latent class analyses (e.g., Stevens, Pels, Vollebergh, & Crijnen, 2007) have also been used to create categories of acculturation strategies, including the integration or bicultural strategy. This typological approach allows researchers to differentiate bicultural individuals from other acculturating types (assimilated, separated, or marginalized) but does not provide a biculturalism score. Other, non-typological ways of operationalizing biculturalism when using bidimensional scales are to add the two cultural orientation subscale scores (e.g., Cuéllar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995) or combine them into an interaction term (Birman, 1998) so that low and high scores represent low and high levels of biculturalism, respectively. One caveat of these last two methods is the difficulty in differentiating between individuals who have medium scores on both cultural scales and those who score very high on one scale and low on the other. Lastly, some researchers have used a method where scores on the two cultural orientation scales are subtracted from another, so that scores close to zero denote biculturalism (Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980). This approach is not recommended because, like unidimensional measurement, it makes bicultural and marginalized individuals indistinguishable from each other. Obviously, two key advantages of these multidimensional approaches are that the cultures of interest (e.g., ethnic, mainstream, and religious cultures), regardless of their number, can be independently assessed, and that their measurement can be tailored to particular acculturating groups (e.g., mixed-race individuals, sojourners, etc.).

Some researchers prefer to measure the acculturation strategies directly (e.g., Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989). These instruments typically include four scales with statements capturing favorable attitudes toward the integration (biculturalism), assimilation, separation, and marginalization strategies. Because each individual receives a score on each of these acculturation strategies, a bicultural individual would be someone whose highest score is on the integration

subscale. This widely used approach has some advantages over traditional acculturation scales (e.g., it allows us to measure the construct of biculturalism *attitudes* directly) but it suffers from some nontrivial conceptual and psychometric limitations (e.g., low score reliabilities, lack of scale independence; see Kang, 2006; Rudmin, 2003; Zane & Mak, 2003 for reviews).

When time or reading levels are compromised, researchers may choose to measure biculturalism with one or two questions. For instance, bicultural individuals can be those who self-identify with a hyphenated label (e.g., Persian-American) rather than an ethnic (e.g., Persian) or a national (e.g., American) label, those who endorse the label “bicultural” (vs. “monocultural”), or those who score above the midpoint on two single items stating “I feel/am U.S. American” and “I feel/am Chinese” (e.g., Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). Lastly, we should warn against the common practice of using demographic variables such as generational status, legal residence, or linguistic ability and preference as a proxy for psychological acculturation (e.g., Buriel, Calzada, & Vasquez, 1982). As mentioned earlier, bicultural involvement and identification can occur at different rates for different life domains, for different individuals, and for different cultural groups, and demographic variables seem to be poor to modest predictors of these changes (Phinney, 2003; Schwartz, Pantin, Sullivan, Prado, & Szapocznik, 2006).

Individual and Group Differences in Multicultural Identity

“I had been rowing back and forth, in a relentless manner, between two banks of a wide river. Increasingly, what I wanted was to be a burning boat in the middle of the water, visible to both shores yet indecipherable in my fury.”

(lé thi diem thúy, 2003)

The process of negotiating multiple cultural identities is complex and multifaceted. A careful review of the early (and mostly qualitative) work on this topic in the acculturation (e.g., Padilla, 1994; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997) and popular (e.g., Chavez, 1994; O’Hearn, 1998) literatures reveals that multicultural individuals often talk about their multiple cultural attachments in complicated ways, including both positive and negative terms. Multiculturalism can be associated with feelings of pride, uniqueness, and a rich sense of community and history, while also bringing to mind identity confusion, dual expectations, and

value clashes. Further, multicultural individuals deal differently with the implications of different cultural and racial stereotypes and the pressures coming from their different communities for loyalties and behaviors (LaFromboise et al., 1993). An important issue, then, is how particular personality dispositions, contextual pressures, and acculturation and demographic variables impact the process of multicultural identity formation and the meanings associated with this experience.

Although most acculturating individuals use the integration/biculturalism strategy (Berry et al., 2006), research on acculturation has almost exclusively focused on individual differences *across* acculturation strategies rather than *within* acculturation strategies. Yet, not all bicultural individuals are alike. Early theoretical work on this issue is worth reviewing, even if briefly. In a seminal review of the biculturalism phenomenon, LaFromboise et al. (1993) described two biculturalism modes: *alternation* and *fusion*. Alternating bicultural individuals switch their behaviors in response to situational cultural demands, whereas fused bicultural individuals are oriented to a third emerging culture that is distinct from each of their two cultures (e.g., Chicano culture). Birman (1994) expanded on LaFromboise et al.'s (1993) framework to describe four types of bicultural individuals: *blended* (i.e., fused), *instrumental* (individuals behaviorally oriented to both cultures but identified with neither), *integrated* (individuals behaviorally oriented to both cultures but identified with only their ethnic culture), and *explorers* (behaviorally oriented to the dominant culture but identified with only their ethnic culture). Phinney and Devich-Navarro's (1997) qualitative and quantitative study sought to empirically integrate Berry's (1990), LaFromboise et al.'s (1993), and Birman's (1994) conceptual models of biculturalism. This study identified two bicultural types which were given labels similar to those in LaFromboise et al.'s study: *blended biculturals*—who felt positively about both cultures and did not feel conflicted, and *alternating biculturals*—who also identified with both cultures but saw conflict between them.

These researchers are credited with calling attention to bicultural individuals and for advancing this area of research; however, a conceptual limitation of the above typologies is their confounding of identity and behavioral markers. Specifically, whereas the labels “blended” and “fused” refer to identity-related aspects of the bicultural experience (e.g., seeing oneself as Asian American or Chicano), the label “alternating” refers to the behavioral domain, that is, the ability to engage in cultural frame-switching (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002). Naturally, individuals' subjective experience of their identity and their behavior/competencies do not have to map onto each other (Roccas &

Brewer, 2002). For instance, a bicultural individual may have a blended or fused identity (e.g., someone who is proud of being both Jewish and American) and also alternate between speaking mainstream English and Yiddish, depending on the context. Thus the labels “blended” and “alternating” do not seem to tap different types of bicultural individuals but rather different components of the bicultural experience (i.e., identity vs. behaviors).

Bicultural Identity Integration (BII)

After an extensive review and synthesis of the empirical and qualitative acculturation and multiculturalism literature, Benet-Martínez et al. (2002) proposed the theoretical construct of Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) as a framework for investigating individual differences in bicultural identity organization. BII captures the degree to which “biculturals perceive their mainstream and ethnic cultural identities as compatible and integrated vs. oppositional and difficult to integrate” (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002, p. 9). As an individual difference variable, BII thus focuses on bicultural individuals’ subjective perceptions of managing dual cultural identities (i.e., how much their dual cultural identities intersect or overlap). The emphasis here is on subjective (i.e., the perception of) cultural overlap and compatibility because, as was found in a study of over 7,000 acculturating adolescents in 13 countries, objective cultural differences do not seem to relate to adjustment (Berry et al., 2006).

Bicultural individuals with high BII tend to see themselves as part of a hyphenated culture (or even part of a combined, emerging “third” culture), and find the two cultures largely compatible and easy to integrate. Bicultural individuals with low BII, on the other hand, tend to see themselves as living “in-between cultures” and report seeing the two cultures as largely conflictual and disparate. In summary, bicultural individuals high and low on BII identify with both mainstream (e.g., American) and ethnic (e.g., Chinese) cultures but differ in their ability to create a synergistic, integrated cultural identity. Theoretically, BII may relate to other identity constructs, such as nonoppositional vs. oppositional identity (Ogbu, 1993) and identity synthesis vs. confusion (Schwartz, 2006), but these relationships still need to be explored empirically.

Recent studies on BII are beginning to elucidate the relationships between BII and relevant behavioral, cognitive, and social variables. For example, BII has been found to moderate the process of cultural

frame-switching (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Cheng et al., 2006; Zou, Morris, & Benet-Martínez, 2008). Specifically, bicultural individuals with high BII respond to the activation of the corresponding (e.g., Chinese or American) cultural meaning system by providing responses that are culturally congruent (e.g., stronger external attributions after seeing Chinese primes, and stronger internal attributions after seeing American primes). Bicultural individuals with low BII, however, display the reverse effect. That is, they provide culturally incongruent responses to cultural primes (e.g., stronger external attributions to American primes and stronger internal attributions to Chinese primes). These contrastive responses suggest an automatic or unconscious reactance against the cultural expectations of a given situation, a phenomenon often reported in academic and popular depictions of identity conflict (e.g., Ogbu, 2008; Roth, 1969). BII has also been linked to having (1) richer social networks (Mok, Morris, Benet-Martínez, & Karakitapoglu-Aygun, 2007); (2) moderately complex cultural schemas (Benet-Martínez, Lee, & Leu, 2006); (3) higher creative performance (Cheng, Sanchez-Burks, & Lee, 2008); (4) higher psychological adjustment, even after controlling for neuroticism (Chen, Benet-Martínez, & Bond, 2008); (5) more overlapping perceptions of one's own cultural ingroups (Miramontez, Benet-Martínez, & Nguyen, 2008); and (6) stronger preference for culturally blended persuasive appeals (Lau-Gesk, 2003).

Recent work shows that BII is not a unitary construct, as initially suggested in earlier work (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002). Instead, BII seems to involve two independent psychological constructs, cultural conflict and cultural distance, each representing unique and separate aspects of the dynamic intersection between mainstream and ethnic cultural identities in bicultural individuals (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). Cultural distance captures the degree of dissociation or compartmentalization vs. overlap perceived between the two cultural orientations (e.g., "I see myself as a Chinese in the U.S." vs. "I am a Chinese-American"). Cultural conflict, on the other hand, captures the degree of tension or clash vs. harmony perceived between the two cultures (e.g., "I feel trapped between the two cultures" vs. "I do not see conflict between the Chinese and American ways of doing things"). (See Table 5.1 for scale items and Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005, Table 2) for the factor structure of the scale.) The psychometric independence of cultural conflict and distance suggests that these constructs are formative (i.e., causal) rather than reflective (i.e., effect) indicators of BII (Bollen & Lennox, 1991). That is, rather than a latent construct with two resulting dimensions (cultural distance and conflict), BII should perhaps be

Table 5.1 Bicultural Identity Integration Scale (BIIS-1)

Cultural distance

1. I am simply a Chinese who lives in North America.
2. I keep Chinese and American cultures separate.
3. I feel Chinese American (R).
4. I feel part of a combined culture (R).

Cultural conflict

5. I am conflicted between the American and Chinese ways of doing things.
6. I feel like someone moving between two cultures.
7. I feel caught between the Chinese and American cultures.
8. I don't feel trapped between the Chinese and American cultures (R).

Note. The BIIS-1 can be used with any ethnic minority culture and any host culture. To adapt this scale, substitute the ethnic minority culture for "Chinese," the host culture for "American," and the host country or continent for "North America." Adapted from Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005).

understood as emerging or resulting from (rather than leading to) variations in cultural distance and conflict. Thus, behaviors, attitudes, and feelings described by cultural researchers under the rubric of low BII (e.g., the feelings reported by the bicultural individual quoted earlier) may in fact be largely capturing the phenomenology of the more basic experience of cultural conflict and/or cultural distance.

Cultural distance and conflict are each associated with different sets of personality, performance-related, and contextual antecedents (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005), which explains the very different phenomenological experiences of biculturalism in the existing literature. Specifically, as indicated by path analyses, cultural distance is predicted by having a close-minded disposition, lower levels of cultural competence (particularly with regard to the mainstream culture), experiencing strains in the linguistic domain (e.g., being self-conscious about one's accent), and living in a community that is not culturally diverse. Cultural conflict, on the other hand, is largely predicted by having a neurotic disposition, experiencing discrimination, and having strained intercultural relations (e.g., being told that one's behavior is "too American" or "ethnic"). In summary, cultural distance is particularly linked to performance-related personal and contextual challenges (e.g., cognitive rigidity, low linguistic fluency, culturally limited surroundings), while cultural conflict stems from strains that are largely intra- and interpersonal in nature (e.g., nervousness, social prejudice, and rejection).

Group Differences in Multiculturalism

Multicultural individuals may belong to one of the following five groups based on the voluntariness, mobility, and permanence of contact with the dominant group: immigrants, refugees, sojourners, ethnic minorities, and indigenous people (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). Immigrants arrive in the host country voluntarily and usually with the intention to stay, whereas refugees arrive in the host country by force or due to lack of other alternatives. Like immigrants, sojourners, such as expatriates and international students, also arrive in the host country voluntarily, but their stay is usually temporary. Ethnic minorities and indigenous people are those born in the host country, but indigenous people differ from ethnic minorities in that the host country was involuntarily imposed upon them (e.g., via colonization). The ethnic minority group may be divided into second-generation individuals (whose parents are immigrants or refugees) and third- or later-generation individuals (whose parents were born in the host country; Padilla, 2006). Many mixed-race or mixed-ethnic individuals are also multicultural, regardless of their acculturating group status (Padilla, 2006).

There may be group-level differences among the groups mentioned above with regard to their levels of BII due to their group's history in the host country, their relations with members of the dominant group, the current political and socioeconomic situation, and other structural variables. For instance, immigrants and sojourners chose to migrate to the host country for economic or educational opportunities, and many have the option of returning to their native countries; thus, relative to the other groups, this type of multicultural individual may be more focused on opportunities and less focused on cultural issues. Consequently, cultural differences may not necessarily be internalized or translated into the experience of cultural identity conflict. Conversely, refugees and indigenous people are often forced into contact with the dominant culture, and the involuntary nature of this contact (e.g., refugees may want to return to their native countries, but this is not possible due to conflicts between the host and native countries or within their native countries) magnifies cultural differences and identity conflict. Relatedly, African Americans, with their history of involuntary slavery and expatriation, may also experience more cultural conflict than other groups. Lastly, there are reasons to think that feelings of cultural conflict may also be common among mixed-heritage individuals and second-generation individuals (at least relative to immigrants and sojourners). Mixed-race and mixed-ethnic individuals are

often given (implicit or explicit) messages suggesting that they are not “enough” of one culture or the other (Root, 1998). Likewise, second-generation ethnic minorities are considered not “ethnic” enough by both their parents and dominant-culture peers with regard to certain cultural “markers” (e.g., ethnic language fluency), while also not being considered part of the mainstream culture (Padilla, 2006).

In addition to the voluntariness of contact and group expectations, variables such as generational status and cultural socialization may also play a role in BII, particularly the experience of cultural distance. Immigrants first learn their ethnic culture in their native country and later learn the dominant culture in the host country, thus their competencies and associations with each culture may be more compartmentalized and situation-specific (i.e., high cultural distance) compared to other groups. This dissociation may also occur among second-generation ethnic minorities for whom dominant and ethnic cultures are largely relegated to the public (e.g., work) and private (e.g., home) spheres, respectively. However, other second- and later-generation ethnic minorities (e.g., Chicano individuals) may be reared with a blend of both cultures, and thus the structure and experience of their identities may be more blended (i.e., low cultural distance). All in all, notice that the above propositions focus on the *relative* level of perceived cultural distance or conflict across groups—that is, we do not assert that some groups perceive cultural distance or conflict while others do not.

Psychological Consequences of Multiculturalism

What impact, if any, does multiculturalism have on individuals and the larger society? The issue of whether multiculturalism is beneficial is often theoretically and empirically debated. Some researchers contend that the integration/biculturalism strategy, as compared to the other three acculturation strategies (separation, assimilation, marginalization), is the most ideal, leading to greater benefits in all areas of life (e.g., Berry, 1997; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). However, others have argued that this is not always the case, because the process of dealing with two cultures places a burden on the individual and can lead to stress, isolation, and identity confusion (e.g., Gordon, 1964; Rudmin, 2003; Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). While some researchers have found positive links between biculturalism and adjustment (e.g., Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980; Ward & Kennedy, 1994), others have found no link or a negative one (e.g., Burnam, Hough, Karno, Escobar, & Telles, 1987; Rotheram-Borus, 1990). In other words, findings

have been mixed with regard to the direction and magnitude of these associations (Myers & Rodriguez, 2003; Rogler, Cortes, & Malgady, 1991).

A recent meta-analysis suggests that these seemingly contradictory findings may be attributable to the ways in which biculturalism has been measured (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2009; see also our review of measurement issues in this chapter). Across the 83 studies and 23,197 participants examined in this meta-analysis, biculturalism was found to have a significant and positive relationship with psychological and sociocultural adjustment. However, the magnitude of this association was moderated by the type of acculturation scales used (see Figure 5.2). When only studies using direct measures of acculturation strategies were included, the relationship was weak to moderate ($r = .21$). However, when only studies using unidimensional scales were included, the relationship was strong ($r = .54$). Finally, when only studies using bidimensional scales were used (i.e., biculturalism measured via scores above the median or midpoint on both cultural orientations, the addition method, the multiplication method, or cluster or latent class analysis), the relationship between biculturalism and adjustment was even stronger ($r = .70$). In other words, biculturalism is related to better adjustment, but this relationship is best detected when biculturalism is measured bidimensionally. Perhaps involvement with two or more cultures (vs. the cultural relinquishing that characterizes assimilation or

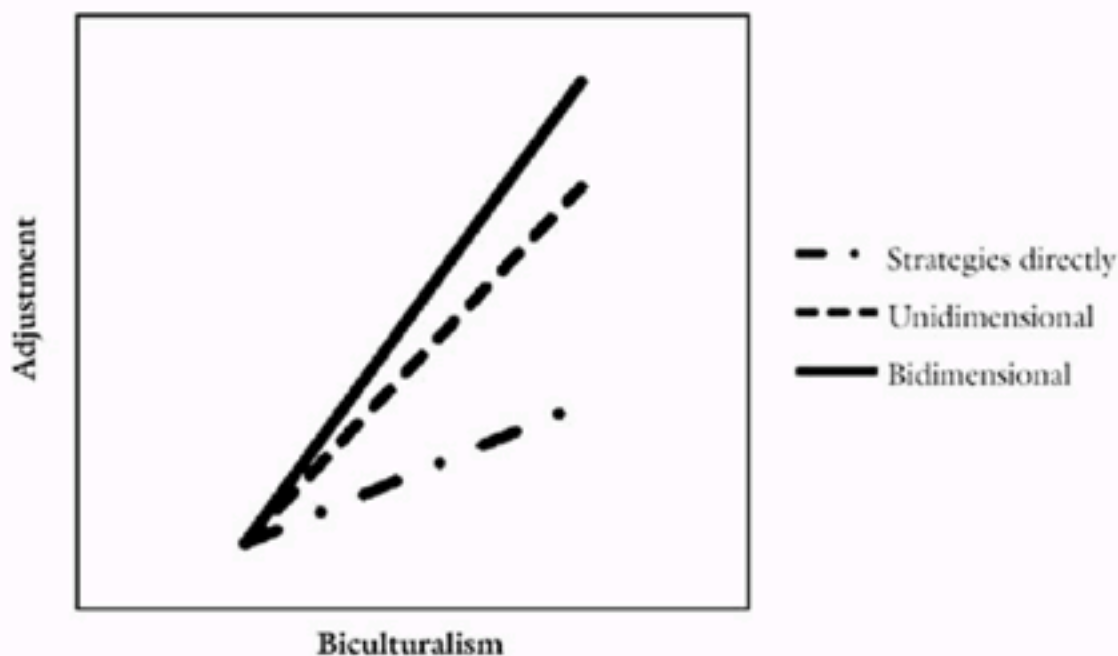


Figure 5.2 Effect size of the biculturalism–adjustment relationship by type of acculturation scale.

separation) facilitates the acquisition of cognitive and social skills as well as wider behavioral repertoires and competencies which, in turn, buffer multicultural individuals against the psychological maladjustment (e.g., anxiety, loneliness) or sociocultural challenges (e.g., interpersonal conflicts, intercultural miscommunication) that can often characterize the acculturation experience (Padilla, 2006).

It is important to note that multiculturalism is not necessarily an individual choice; groups and intergroup relations also play a role. For example, one may want to use the integration/biculturalism strategy, but if one is never accepted into mainstream society, then the integration/biculturalism strategy may not be possible. Similarly, if one lives in a community without same-ethnic individuals, then it may not be possible to blend one's cultures, or if one consistently encounters discrimination, then it may not be possible to perceive one's cultures as harmonious. In fact, research has found that perceived discrimination, along with poor intergroup relations and perception that the dominant group is impermeable, predicted greater cultural identity conflict (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Lin, 2008). Although more research is needed to determine causality among intergroup relations, multiculturalism, and adjustment, public policies, such as multicultural policies regarding greater diversity, the integration of dominant and ethnic cultures, or the prohibition of disparate treatment for different groups, may influence one's multiculturalism, which in turn, may affect one's well-being.

Multiculturalism may also have significant implications for greater national success and improved national functioning (Berry, 1998; Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). In children and adolescents, multiculturalism is positively related to greater academic achievement (Farver, Bhadha, & Narang, 2002; Régner & Loose, 2006). These educationally successful students may be able to contribute a great deal to society when they become adults. In the workplace, multicultural individuals may also contribute to organizational success, especially when it comes to expatriate assignments, because their multicultural competence may generalize to intercultural competence, which is necessary for expatriate success (Bell & Harrison, 1996). In addition, they have skills (e.g., multilingualism, cultural frame-switching, intercultural sensitivity) that are crucial in our increasingly globalized world; thus, these individuals are ideal cultural mediators for intercultural conflicts and miscommunications within communities, nations, and internationally (see our introductory point about President Obama). More generally, it has been

found that individuals with more extensive multicultural experiences, such as multicultural individuals, have greater cognitive complexity (Benet-Martínez et al., 2006), integrative complexity (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006; Tadmor, Tetlock, & Peng, 2009), and creativity (Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008; Maddux & Galinsky, 2009), which are necessary for innovation and progress. In sum, policies promoting biculturalism and multiculturalism may benefit bicultural individuals *and* society at large. Unfortunately, in reality, most host countries continue to encourage the assimilation strategy despite the fact that acculturating individuals by and large prefer the integration/biculturalism strategy (Van Oudenhoven et al., 2006; Verkuyten, this volume).

The Intersection of Other Types of Cultures

The terms “multicultural” or “bicultural” are typically used to refer to national or ethnic cultures; however, these terms can also be used to describe the intersection of other cultures (e.g., professional cultures, geographic cultures, generational cultures). For example, an individual from the southern region of the United States living in the northern region of the United States may be bicultural. A culture of honor, which justifies violence in defense of one’s reputation, is relatively prevalent in the south but not the north; therefore, southern White males living in the north may have to adapt to the norms in the north and negotiate those two cultures (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996). Sexual minorities, such as lesbian women, may also be bicultural, considering that they negotiate lesbian culture and mainstream heterosexual culture (Fingerhut, Peplau, & Ghavami, 2005). Furthermore, the pair of cultures to which “biculturalism” refers need not be within the same category. For example, engineering is a male-dominated occupation; therefore, women engineers may also be considered bicultural because they must negotiate their identities as women and as engineers (Cheng et al., 2008). In addition, individuals such as Turkish Dutch Muslims may be multicultural because they negotiate their ethnic culture (Turkish), the dominant culture (Dutch), and their religious culture (Muslim; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). The theory and research on multiculturalism discussed in the previous research may thus also apply to these other intersections of cultures, but further research is desperately needed.

Concluding Comments

Researchers and practitioners have acknowledged the importance of multiculturalism, and noted its links to mental health, intergroup relations, and academic and occupational success (e.g., Hermans & Kempen, 1998; LaFromboise et al., 1993). Recently, multiculturalism has also taken center stage in popular culture. Earlier, it was mentioned that Obama is undoubtedly multicultural and that biculturalism may refer to cultures other than ethnic cultures. At the 2009 Radio and Television Correspondents' Dinner, John Hodgman, a humorist and actor famous for his role in Apple's Mac vs. PC commercials, delivered a speech on biculturalism and hybridity, and identified Obama as being of two worlds: the world of "nerds" and the world of "jocks" (C-SPAN, 2009). Like a nerd, Obama values science, objectivity, and the questioning of the status quo, and like a jock, Obama is likeable, confident, and fun to be around. As mentioned earlier, some bicultural individuals may experience the pressure of not being "enough" of one culture or another. In line with this, Hodgman questioned Obama's authenticity as a nerd and tested him on his nerdiness. Although delivered as a humorous speech, it accurately highlights the bicultural experience, particularly the expectations and possible strains related to that experience.³

Multiculturalism is indisputably a fact of life. Through exposure to and internalization of different cultures, individuals can experience different ways of learning, viewing, and reacting to the world. This experience makes these individuals' cultural identities more complex and layered and enriches their cognitive and behavioral repertoires. Recent research shows that these psychological processes lead to higher cognitive complexity and more creative and tolerant thinking. These attributes are an indispensable skill in our global world.

Notes

- 1 For the sake of simplicity and consistency, in this chapter we favor the broader term "multicultural" or "multiculturalism" over the term "bicultural." Regardless of the term used, we always refer to individuals and societies who position themselves between two (or more) cultures and incorporate this experience (i.e., values, knowledge, and feelings associated to each of these identities and their intersection) into their sense of self.

- 2 The possibility of being oriented to an emergent third culture has important implications for research on multiculturalism. The currently accepted bidimensional model of acculturation with ethnic and dominant cultural orientations might be replaced by a tridimensional model, where the third cultural orientation is the emergent third culture (Flannery et al., 2001). Moreover, this tridimensional model might be more applicable to later-generation individuals than either the unidimensional or bidimensional model of acculturation. As yet, no study has examined a third cultural orientation or compared a tridimensional model to the other models.
- 3 Biculturalism also appears in more mainstream outlets, such as the Hollywood blockbuster movie, *Star Trek* (Abrams, 2009). One of the central themes in this movie is Spock's mixed heritage, with a Vulcan father and human mother. The movie follows Spock from his childhood, where he struggled with being bicultural and was bullied for not being Vulcan enough, to his adulthood, where he seemed to reconcile the perceived cultural conflicts associated with his biculturalism and to embrace both identities.

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