

17 Acculturation in Canada

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Canada has been a culturally plural society since before its formal establishment as a nation state in 1867. Indigenous Peoples settled over 10,000 years ago in diverse ecological zones, giving rise to distinct cultural zones that still persist. Around 500 years ago, Europeans arrived and settled, followed by Africans, Asians and South Americans. As a result of contact among these groups, many acculturation phenomena have a long history in Canada. Similarly, acculturation research has been carried out for over 50 years (e.g. Hallowell, 1945; Honigsmann & Honigsmann, 1968), and continues as a focus of psychological research, including a continuing interest in Aboriginal Peoples, immigrants and refugees. Peoples of British, French and other origins have maintained their cultural heritages to a large extent; as a result, acculturation studies have also been prominent among these ethnocultural groups.

In this chapter, we first examine aspects of Canada's socio-historical context, and the policy response to it by various governments. We then present a selective overview of acculturation research in Canada.

17.1 The Canadian context

17.1.1 History of settlement

In its short history, Canada has become a diverse and pluralistic modern society. When European explorers arrived on the east coast of Canada in the 1500s they found a land populated by around half a million Indigenous Peoples living throughout the territory that is now Canada. As the population of French and British colonialists grew, settlers expanded westward and northward. Following the American Revolution of 1776, colonists loyal to Britain came from the United States of America and settled in eastern and southern Canada. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw a continuing flow of British immigrants, as well as Ukrainian, Chinese, Italian and Irish settlers.

In the early twentieth century, many settlers from eastern and southern Europe came to the Canadian prairies to farm. After the 1930s, with the growth of cities, immigrants flowed to urban centers, where the majority of Canadians

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resided and worked. Between 1946 and 1954, 96% of the immigrants admitted to Canada came from Europe. Following changes in immigration policy (see section below), since the 1980s, the majority of immigrants have come from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. Most choose to live in large cosmopolitan cities like Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Due to this shift, visible minorities accounted for 13.4% of the population in 2001, making Canada even more multicultural. Even with this influx of immigrants of diverse origins, and with lingering questions surrounding Québec's place in Canada, Canadian national identity has remained strong (Kalin & Berry, 1996).

17.1.2 Demography

Canada is the second-largest country in the world after Russia, with a total area of almost 10 million square kilometers, spanning a distance of over 5,000 kilometers from east to west and over 4,000 kilometers from north to south. For reasons of agriculture, climate, economics and geography, over 90% of the Canadian population of just over 30 million live within 200 km of the Canada-US border. Over three-quarters of all Canadians live in urban areas (77% in 1996; Statistics Canada, 1996); about one half of all Canadians currently live in Canada's ten largest cities. Roman Catholicism remains the single largest denomination (48%), professed mainly by those of French, Irish and Italian origin, followed by various groups of Protestantism (37%) and Asian religions (4%). The economy is characterized by relatively high affluence (GDP = US\$26,474 per capita), and immigrants have slightly higher incomes than the average.

Canada is a federal state consisting of ten provinces and three territories. The ethnic mix varies by region and province. For example, in Newfoundland 95% of the population are of British origin, while, in Québec, French origins predominate (85%). In Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the majority of the population is neither British nor French. Ontario and British Columbia are the two provinces where most ethnocultural groups other than British and French have chosen to reside. The Province of Québec and the Territory of Nunavut have social institutions and policies (including language, education, civil law) that reflect their respective French and Inuit cultural origins.

Canada has a high level of immigration, with 18.9% of its population of 31 million not born in the country. In recent years, around two-thirds of the annual flow of 250,000 to 300,000 immigrants have been from Asia. The percentage of immigrants varies widely by region and city. For example, in Toronto, 44.0% of the population are immigrants, the highest of all cities in Canada. Immigration has massively transformed the city over the past fifty years; between 1951 and 2001, the percentage with origins in the UK declined from 73% to 27%, and the most frequent names in the Toronto phone book went from Smith and Brown in 1951 to Smith, Lee, Wong, Brown, Singh, Kim, Mohammed, and Patel at present.

For the country as a whole, the net migration rate is 5.96 migrants/1,000 population, including economic immigrants. The population growth rate is 1.06%, and the fertility rate is 1.65. However, for the Indigenous population, the fertility rate is more than double the overall rate. Since the 1980s, the number of Asian immigrants and Indigenous Peoples in the country has increased, and the relative proportion of British and French origin decreased, such that the current ethnic origins for the country as a whole are: British Isles 40%; French 27%; other European 20%; Indigenous Peoples 1.5%; and other (mostly Asian) 11.5%. As a result of these patterns of growth, Canada is the most diverse country on many international indicators.

17.1.3 Policy

There are several federal policies that are relevant to the study of acculturation in Canada; we will focus this discussion on two: immigration and multiculturalism.

Immigration In the 1950s, the federal government's immigration policy had been to fill the country's needs in the natural resource and industrial sectors; the policy later shifted towards acceptance of professionally educated workers. In the 1960s, Canada halted its previous preferential treatment of British, French and American citizens (Canada Immigration Act, 1952, see Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2000) and finally implemented immigration policies that did not officially discriminate on the basis of race, color or religion. Some legislative landmarks have also contributed to the shape of Canadian society, particularly the statutes of official bilingualism in 1969 and 1988 (Canadian Heritage, 2004b), multiculturalism in 1971 and 1988 (Canadian Heritage, 2004a), and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 (Department of Justice Canada, 1982).

Under its current immigration policy (Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, 2002), Canada takes in 1% of the population each year (around 300,000 people). These include applicants in the economic class (professionals and skilled workers and their immediate families, comprising 54.7% of those who received permanent residency in 2003; Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005), refugees (for those who meet Geneva Convention or other, mainly humanitarian, criteria; 11.7%), and those who come under the family reunification program (family members of permanent residents; 31.2%).

Multiculturalism The fundamental purpose of Canada's Multiculturalism Act (1971/1988; see Berry & Kalin, 2000, for an overview) is to increase inter-group harmony and the mutual acceptance of all groups in the country; this goal is termed the "group acceptance and tolerance" element of the policy (Berry, 1984). Second, the policy seeks to avoid assimilation by encouraging all cultural groups to maintain and develop themselves as distinctive groups within Canadian society; this element has been referred to as the "cultural" focus of

the policy. Third, the policy argues that group development by itself is not sufficient to lead to group acceptance; "intergroup contact and sharing" is also required, and has been referred to as the "social" focus of the policy. Fourth, full participation in Canadian society cannot be achieved if some common languages are not learned; thus the "learning of official languages" (English and French) is also encouraged by the policy, and elaborated in the Official Languages Act (1969/1988).

17.2 Acculturation research

Given Canada's demographic characteristics and historical context, it is not surprising that issues related to ethnic diversity and acculturation have been long investigated by Canadian researchers and practitioners (Adair, 1999; Berry, 1993; Dobson, 1997). For instance, Rule and Adair (1984) cite Lambert's work on French immersion education (e.g., Lambert & Tucker, 1972), Berry's work on Aboriginal Peoples' adaptation to ecological and cultural changes (e.g., Berry & Annis, 1974; Berry, Winrob, Sindell, & Mawhinney, 1982), and the research on inter-group attitudes by Berry, Kalin and Taylor (1977; see also Kalin and Berry, 1982) as early examples of research on distinctly Canadian matters. In this section, we consider three theoretical approaches (outlined in more detail in Chapters 4, 5 and 6) to recent Canadian scholarship on the psychology of acculturation. These include the study of acculturation within (i) a stress, coping and adaptation framework, (ii) an inter-group relations paradigm, and (iii) a communication processes perspective. We then highlight research conducted by Canadian scholars concerning immigrants, sojourning students, refugees and Aboriginal Peoples.

17.3 Theoretical orientations

17.3.1 Stress, coping and adaptation

One prominent theoretical approach focuses on understanding how individuals cope with *acculturative stress*, and, through processes of adaptation, achieve various outcomes, including psychological and physical health and behavioral adjustments (e.g., social, occupational, educational; see Berry & Annis, 1974; Dyal & Dyal, 1981; and Chapter 4, this volume). Two themes are central to Canadian research: the adoption of a multidimensional approach to the study of acculturation; and the effort to model the relations between stressors and outcome variables, taking into account a variety of mediators and moderators of those relations.

Multidimensionality. Consistent with the Canadian multicultural policy's pluralistic ideology, many scholars emphasize that understanding cultural

adaptation requires a consideration of two independent aspects: the extent of affiliation with the larger Canadian society; and the degree of involvement with the ethnic group of origin (Berry, 1980, 2001, see also Chapter 3; Dompierre & Lavallée, 1990; Ryder, Alden & Paulhus, 2001; see Vallee, Schwartz & Darknell, 1957, for an early discussion). Although this bidimensional, or "four-fold," model has received criticism on methodological and ideological grounds (Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001; see Berry & Sam, 2003, for a response), the point remains that a comprehensive understanding of acculturation processes requires an orthogonal consideration of all relevant ethnic referent groups. This has typically meant the group of origin and the dominant ethnic group, although in certain settings additional groups may be relevant (e.g., in some parts of Québec, particularly in and around Montréal and the western border with Ontario, there are two dominant language groups, French and English).

Other researchers have incorporated the orthogonal acculturation model into their examinations of more specific acculturation-related constructs, particularly ethnic identity (e.g., Sayegh & Lasry, 1993; Lasry & Sayegh, 1992). In their *situated ethnic identity model*, Clément and Noels (1992; Noels, Clément & Gaudet, 2004) take the issue of multidimensionality a step further, by arguing that ethnic allegiance with each group may shift depending upon the social situation. This situational variation may have important implications for acculturation, such that cultural change is more likely to occur in less intimate domains (e.g., at work), where there is greater opportunity for inter-ethnic interaction, than in more personal domains (e.g., at home) which may be relatively sheltered from the effects of acculturative contact.

Modeling the acculturation process. Acculturation is not only a multidimensional phenomenon, but also a multivariate phenomenon. Hence, different acculturation patterns may be evident depending upon the variable considered (e.g., attitudes, identity, behaviors; see Clément, Gauthier, & Noels, 1993; Laroche, Kim, Hui & Joy, 1996; Laroche, Kim & Hui, 1997). To capture the relations between variables (including stressors and adaptation outcomes), several scholars have proposed models of the acculturation process (e.g., Young & Gardner, 1990; Masgoret & Gardner, 1999; Noels, Pon & Clément, 1996; Gaudet & Clément, 2005). For example, Safdar, Lay and Struthers' (2003; see also Safdar & Lay, 2003) multidimensional individual differences acculturation model posits that psycho-social adjustment, connectedness to family and culture, and the experience of acculturation-specific and non-specific daily hassles (Lay & Nguyen, 1998) predict ingroup and outgroup behavior and psychological distress, which are mediated by the acculturation attitudes of separation and assimilation. Although empirical tests of such models generally support the proposed relationships, most lack a longitudinal component that would allow a legitimate assessment of causal claims (but see Kealey, 1989). Nonetheless, they provide a much-needed theoretical framework for organizing acculturation-relevant variables.

17.3.2 Inter-group relations and social identity

A second perspective on acculturation is taken by researchers of social identity (see Chapter 6). As Liebkind (2001:399) points out, "acculturation does not take place in a social vacuum, rather it unfolds itself within the context of intra- and intergroup relations." Inter-group theory, particularly social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), arrived in Canada in the 1970s, and was used to examine relations between French and English groups in Québec. Aspects of this theory have now been extended to study relations between immigrant groups and the English and/or French groups.

Although not restricted to ethnic groups, social identity theory and related frameworks (e.g., Moghaddam, 1988; Taylor & McKirnan, 1984) have implications for understanding acculturation patterns because of their predictions regarding the reactions of minority-group members to their relative status in society (Lalonde & Cameron, 1993). An important premise of the inter-group approach, which is outlined in the framework proposed by Berry (1980), is that the dominant group has the power to constrain the attitudes of non-dominant-group members towards cultural maintenance and participation in the larger society. In this vein, Bourhis and his colleagues developed the *interactive acculturation model* (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Sénécal, 1997). This model is designed to predict the quality of inter-group relations likely to derive from the adoption of different acculturation orientations. They argue that relational outcomes are the product of the acculturation orientations of both the dominant majority and immigrant groups, and that these orientations are influenced by state integration policies. Conflict between groups is most likely to occur with a mismatch in acculturation orientations, or when the two groups have "agreed to disagree" (i.e., both adopt separation/segregation or cultural exclusion as a mode of adaptation).

17.3.3 Intercultural communication

Consistent with the policy of official bilingualism, language and communication have been key variables of interest for several Canadian researchers. Although developed to understand the phenomenon of bilingualism, many of these models are de-facto acculturation models in which communication plays an important role (see Chapter 5, for an extended discussion of language and cultural learning). Lambert's early work on bilingualism was directed not only at understanding the positive and negative cognitive effects of bilingualism, but also at the conditions that contribute to positive and negative social psychological outcomes. Lambert (1967, 1978; see also Lambert & Taylor, 1990; Taylor, Meynard & Rheault, 1977) argued that language acquisition was associated with the acquisition of other cultural characteristics (e.g., identity). These patterns could be "additive" or "subtractive" depending upon the sociostructural status of the group. For members of majority groups, learning another language

involved the addition of another language and cultural repertoire, as well as the maintenance of the original language and cultural identity. For minority-group members, proficiency in the language of the dominant group was likely to be associated with the loss of the original language and identity.

More recent work includes Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model which posits that inter-group attitudes (termed "integrativeness") can influence motivation to learn a second language and achievement in that language, and are associated with a variety of social psychological outcomes, including acculturative consequences (Young & Gardner, 1990; Lanca, Alksnis, Roese & Gardner, 1994). Another example is Clément's (1980) socio-contextual model, which claims that the relation between inter-ethnic contact and a variety of acculturative outcomes, including identity and psychological health, is mediated by linguistic and communicative self-confidence (Clément, 1986; Clément, Noels & Denault, 2001; Noels & Clément, 1996; Noels *et al.*, 1996; see also Pak, Dion & Dion, 1985; Lee & Chen, 2000).

17.3.4 Section conclusion

Although each represents a rich scholarly tradition, the three theoretical orientations reviewed here are not mutually exclusive, nor are they exhaustive of all the conceptual perspectives evident in Canadian research. For example, a relatively recent perspective on acculturation that is informed by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) focuses on the motivational processes that underpin the adoption of particular cultural orientations (Chirkov, Ryan, Kim & Kaplan, 2003; Downie, Koestner, ElGeledi & Cree, 2004). As well, although they do not address acculturation processes directly, studies of basic processes (e.g., self-concept, emotions, etc.) in bicultural individuals lend some insight into the experience of biculturality and cultural change (e.g., Heine & Lehman, 2004).

17.4 Acculturating groups

17.4.1 Immigrants

Much of the research using the conceptual perspectives discussed earlier was carried out with immigrant samples. Although this work has contributed to the development of general models to describe the acculturation experience of individuals, several Canadian scholars argue that more attention must be directed to understanding how the immigration experience is instantiated depending upon factors such as gender and age/generation, and to considering interpersonal and family dynamics.

With regards to gender, Dion and Dion (2001; see also Boyd, 1986; Lee & Cochran, 1988; Wittebrood & Robertson, 1991) note that men and women from more gender-segregated societies than Canada may face challenges to their

assumptions regarding gender roles and relations. Not infrequently, the desire to improve the life circumstances of the family can necessitate that women seek paid employment outside the family, a role often not previously enacted in the country of origin. According to Noh, Wu, Speechley and Kaspar (1992) women thus face a "double burden" of paid and unpaid occupations, often combined with renegotiation of the power dynamics in the family as Canadian values regarding gendered expectations and responsibilities penetrate the spousal relationship (Ataca & Berry, 2002). A consideration of gender also offers insights into some quandaries that may be experienced by the second generation. Daughters are often expected to embody traditional ideals, and to be responsible for passing them on to the next generation (Dion & Dion, 2004; Tang & Dion, 1999). Such expectations may contrast with the simultaneous desire of immigrant parents for their children, including their daughters, to take advantage of educational, professional and economic opportunities that were the grounds for moving to Canada (Naidoo, 1985).

These gender issues may be especially salient for the families who undergo stage or serial migration, whereby one family member migrates to seek work without the spouse and children, who later join him/her once employment and living arrangements have been established (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Dion & Dion, 2001). Although the husband is often the initiating member, because of governmental programs such as the Live-In Caregiver Program (www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/caregiver/), many women too leave their families for several years to initiate the familial migration process. During separation, both spouses may acquire new skills and responsibilities traditionally assumed by the other spouse. Upon reunification, gender expectations for behavior may have changed, such that men may be more involved in domestic duties and women more in family decision-making. Although some changed expectations and behaviors might be perceived positively, these personal changes and lengthy separations have much potential to cause family disruptions (Pratt, in collaboration with the Philippine Women Centre, 1999; Smith, Lalonde & Johnson, 2004).

Astronaut families provide another contemporary illustration of the transnational family involved in contemporary migration to Canada. Astronaut families are those in which some family members, often the father but sometimes both parents (in the case of "parachute" or "satellite kids"), return to the country of origin to work while the remaining family members reside in the new country (Aye & Guerin, 2001). Motivated to immigrate by the security offered by citizenship in a politically and economically stable nation, educational opportunities for their children, and the promise of improved quality of life (Tsang, Irving, Alaggia, Chau & Benjamin, 2003), these families maintain ties with the culture of origin because they desire to return to the country of origin once these goals have been achieved (Waters, 2003). While there are advantages to this strategy, the issues surrounding disruption of familial and pousal relationships, loss of career and support networks, increased domestic

responsibilities, loneliness, and the cultural transformation of astronaut wives and satellite children warrant research attention (Waters, 2002, 2003; Tsang *et al.*, 2003). Moreover, the return of these transnational families to the country of origin (should it occur) may also have important psychological implications (cf. Kanno's [2000] study of children of returning Japanese expatriates).

This focus on transnational families is not meant to suggest that immigrant families in other circumstances merit less research attention. A growing body of research on children and adolescents and their families is contributing to a better understanding of immigration and integration into Canadian society. In their review, Hicks, Lalonde and Pepler (1993) concluded that the stresses of migration and resettlement do not invariably lead to higher rates of emotional problems and maladaptive behaviors, but that risk and protective factors can moderate such outcomes (see also Westhues & Cohen, 1998). Their conclusions are consistent with those of Kwak and Berry (2001), whose study of Vietnamese, Korean and East Indian families showed that understanding generational differences and conflicts must be particularized by each group's selective emphasis on different cultural issues (see also Costigan & Su, 2004; Kester & Marshall, 2003; Leung, 2001; Wong, 1997).

17.4.2 Sojourners: international students

Because it is one of the world's top providers of education to international students, Canada's post-secondary student body contains a sizeable proportion of international students at the undergraduate and graduate levels (4.6% and 12.3% respectively; Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2002). Popadiuk and Arthur (in press) note that more than 100,000 international students are currently enrolled in Canadian universities, coming predominantly from countries in Asia, followed by Europe, North America, Africa, South America and Oceania. There is much to be gained from this international contact for both parties: the students acquire an international education, experience and contacts, while Canada benefits in terms of financial gains, enhanced international reputation, and increased commercial, trade and diplomatic linkages (Cunningham, 1991). It is, hence, crucial that a concerted effort be made to ensure a satisfactory experience.

In their review of international student counseling, Popadiuk and Arthur (2004); see also Arthur, 2001 (2004); Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986) point out that, although international students face many of the same challenges as other students (e.g., learning new administrative procedures), they also encounter additional hurdles that render their experience unique. In particular, they must deal not only with the vicissitudes of cultural transition common to most sojourners (e.g., limited communication skills), but also with the problems often associated with being from a non-dominant ethnic background (e.g., prejudice and discrimination). There is some evidence that international students experience more problems than resident students (Chataway & Berry,

1989; Zheng & Berry, 1991); this tendency may be particularly evident for older, graduate and/or female students (Dyal & Chan, 1985; Leung & Berry, 2001; Adrian-Taylor, Noels & Tischler, *in press*).

Rather than emphasizing the problems that can arise during an educational sojourn abroad, and hence marginalizing international students, Popadiuk and Arthur (2004) suggest that a focus on health promotion, improving the accessibility and legitimacy of counseling services, customizing group interventions, and improving multicultural counseling competencies could go a long way to enhancing these students' international experience. In a parallel effort to promote a more positive perspective on the international students, research attention directed towards identifying the predictors of successful sojourns may prove beneficial, including studies of the benefits of intercultural experiences; how students elicit social support from home, the host nationals, and other international students; and how to improve coping and problem-prevention strategies employed by international students and their hosts.

17.4.3 Refugees

In Canada 118,282 residents currently have refugee status, and in 2002, 31,500 individuals entered the country on humanitarian grounds (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2002). There are at least two sources of stress for refugees that are not experienced by other immigrants (Beiser, 1999). These are the atrocities that individuals experience while living in conflict-ridden countries (e.g., imprisonment, assault, seeing family members suffer and/or die) and the challenges of escaping from their country, which often are accompanied by a period of residence in a crowded, and often dangerous, refugee camp. Like other immigrants, refugees selected for resettlement must adapt to their new country, which may or may not be a place they would have chosen to live. As a result, refugees are usually considered to be at risk for psychological distress (Berry & Blondel, 1982; Williams & Berry, 1991; see also Young, 2000; Winter & Young, 1998; and Chapters 13 and 14).

Despite these circumstances, Beiser (1999) argues that most refugees succeed in Canada, although some people do suffer from depression, substance abuse, and posttraumatic stress disorder. Based on the results of his ten-year longitudinal study of Southeast Asian refugees, Beiser (1999) argues that postmigration stresses may affect mental health more profoundly than the traumas of uprooting, flight and incarceration, in part because refugees may disconnect from the past in order to avoid thinking of traumatic events or longing for a lost past before the conflict arose, when things were much better than their current circumstances (see also Beiser, Turner & Ganesan, 1989). The longitudinal nature of this study provides a perspective on cultural change and its link to wellbeing in ways that few other studies can. An important finding is that factors that may facilitate adjustment in the early stages of resettlement, such as having a like-ethnic community, being married or female, may become

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detrimental to adaptation in later stages. Central to successful adaptation was the acquisition of English language, which was the key to obtaining good employment.

Other factors which would seem to be important for the adaptation of refugees include satisfaction with the new country (Husni, Cernovsky, Koye & Haggarty, 2002), while retaining aspects of the original culture (Donà & Berry, 1994). Young and Evans (1997) report that Salvadorean refugees were no different from native Canadians in psychological distress, and attributed their wellbeing to the type of refugee movement they experienced (anticipatory rather than acute; see Kunz, 1973), the relative similarity between Salvadorean and Canadian cultures (compared to East Asian cultures), youth, the presence of family members, employment, and/or engagement in English language training. Nonetheless, these individuals reported lower life satisfaction and quality of life, particularly with regards to marital relations, parent-child relations, material wellbeing and job satisfaction. To this list of problems, Durst and Lange (1999) add discrimination and a fractured community. Meralli (2002) maintains that some of the distress experienced in refugee families may stem from incongruities in estimating intergenerational differences in acculturation, which may result from low levels of verbal sharing and companionship, with a focus on integrating the family unit into the new society (Fantino & Colak, 2001; Hyman, Vu & Beiser, 2000). Moreover, the trauma experienced by refugees may be transmitted intergenerationally to offspring not alive when these events took place (Baranowsky, Young, Johnson-Douglas, Williams-Keeler & McCarrey, 1998).

In sum, although they may be considered an "at risk" group, research suggests that refugees in Canada generally adapt well to their new home. Nonetheless, their psychological health concerns have often been overlooked because the primary focus has been on providing physical sanctuary (cf. Berry & Sam, 1997), a situation that clearly merits redressing.

17.4.4 Aboriginal peoples

Empirical research with Aboriginal peoples, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, is relatively less well represented in Canadian acculturation scholarship, but generally suggests that the acculturation situation for many individuals from Aboriginal communities is a difficult one (Berry *et al.*, 1982). In his cross-Canada study of Aboriginal cultural identity, Berry (1999) reported that the lives of many research participants had been extensively affected by the nature of contact with non-Aboriginals, particularly through residential schools and the justice system. This colonizing contact resulted in disruptions to cultural identity, expressed as identity loss and confusion, as well as an associated decline in social and psychological wellbeing. The experience of prejudice and discrimination, and attendant cultural dissolution, has been linked to several destructive consequences, including poorer academic

achievement, a higher rate of incarceration, more drug, alcohol and gambling addictions, and a higher suicide rate than the Canadian general population.

In his examination of suicide, Kral (1998; Kral & Dyck, 1995) recognizes the importance of distress as a motivating factor, but maintains that the idea of suicide, and how such ideas are spread throughout a cultural community, underlie the higher incidence of suicide attempts in particular communities (for a discussion of an Aboriginal community, see Kral *et al.*, 2000). Chandler (1994) explores the possibility that the distress associated with suicide arises when persons come to view themselves as disconnected from their past and especially their future. In their examination of Aboriginal youths, Chandler and Lalonde (1998; Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol & Hallett, 2003) argue that, by undermining cultural continuity, the assaults directed at Aboriginal societies have added to the array of developmental and social challenges that can undermine a sense of personal continuity, such that individuals come to lack concern for and commitment to a possible future self, and hence may be at greater risk for suicide. An important point made by Chandler and Lalonde (1998; Chandler *et al.*, 2003) is that suicide rates across Aboriginal communities are not uniform; some show low rates of youth suicide, and these communities tend to be those who actively strive for cultural continuity (e.g., regaining legal title to traditional lands and re-establishing forms of self-regulation in various institutions [e.g., government, education, health care, etc.]).

Taylor (1997; Taylor & Wright, 2003) maintains that difficulties experienced by Aboriginal groups stem from a situation of unclear, undefined identity and anomie, although he differs in the presumed origin of this identity vacuum. According to Taylor (1997), Aboriginal groups and others faced with "valueless colonization" exist in a situation in which the original cultural systems have been destroyed by colonizers, and inadequate or inappropriate effort has been made to teach the values, ways of being, and norms of the colonizing culture. Lacking a sense of collective (cultural) identity, individuals struggle to make sense of their own personal identity. Taylor claims that language is an important cultural resource because it is one of the few visible manifestations of collective identity. Consistent with this premise, the results of an examination of Inuit children living in the Québec Arctic demonstrated that early schooling in the heritage language is associated not only with better performance on standardized intelligence tests, but also significant gains in self-esteem (Taylor & Wright, 2003; Wright & Taylor, 1995; Wright, Taylor & MacArthur, 2000).

In sum, this research suggests that some Aboriginal individuals exemplify the marginalized situation that can arise as a result of forced contact with a powerful other (Berry & Sam, 1997). The toll of colonization cannot be underestimated; at the same time, a second current in these and other studies speaks to the resilience, both personal and collective, of many Aboriginal persons and communities (Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Chapter 15, this volume). Future research might well address the manner by which oppression is successfully overcome.

17.5 Conclusions

This chapter has highlighted the context of acculturation in Canada, not only in terms of the socio-historical milieu in which many ethnocultural groups interact, but also in terms of the scholarly perspectives through which the experience of different acculturating groups is studied. Many of the themes and issues identified in this chapter are likely to be important not only in Canada but also in other multicultural societies. Canada's relatively unique emphasis on cultural and linguistic pluralism and tolerance, however, provides a distinctive environment for understanding the processes of acculturation.

17.6 References

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