

EFFECTS OF CULTURE CONTACT ON INDIVIDUALS

A person's own or original culture ("culture one") will be affected by, and respond to, contact with or the influences of another culture ("culture two"), in a variety of possible ways. Below are four kinds of psychological responses, which will affect a person's personal and interactive behavior.

| RESPONSE | TYPE | INITIAL EFFECT ON CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNITY LIVING | LONG-TERM EFFECT ON INDIVIDUAL | LONG-TERM EFFECT ON WIDER COMMUNITY |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| Reject culture of origin (Culture 1). Embrace new, second culture (Culture 2) | "Passing": (Repudiation of own culture). | Culture 1 norms lose salience. Culture 2 norms become salient | Loss of ethnic identity. Self-denigration and loss of self-esteem. | Assimilation; erosion of features of Culture 1 identity; culture 2 dominance. |
| Reject Culture 2. Exaggerate qualities of Culture 1. | Chauvinistic: (Aggressive enthusiasm for own culture) | Culture 1 norms increase in significance, Culture 2 norms decrease accordingly. | Nationalism, racism, bigotry, and uncritical ethnocentrism. | Inter-group friction; resistance and resentment by 'incoming' or minority' individuals. |
| Vacillate between the two cultures | Marginal: (Indecisive & uncomfortable with both cultures) | Norms of both cultures important, but perceived as mutually Incompatible. | Conflict. Identity-confusion. Over-compensation. | Reform and social change impossible without coercion or dominance; resentment or non-cooperation. |
| Synthesize both cultures. | Mediating: (Skilled at intercultural living). | Norms of both cultures important, and perceived as capable of being integrated. | Personal growth for committed individuals. | Inter-group harmony, pluralistic community, and preservation of cultural integrity. |

The significance of "tradition", "dogma", inherited patterns of belief and behavior, and a person's understanding of "God's will", "Truth" and so on, will all play a role in determining the outcome.

Taken, with modifications, from Dawid Venter, "Mending the Multi-Coloured Coat of a Rainbow Nation," *Missionalia* 1995:316-317, using S. Bochner, "The Social Psychology of Cross-Cultural Relations", from *Cultures in Contact*, S. Bochner (ed). Oxford, Pergamon, 1982:5-44. (This from page 27).

Bochner's model assumes that (a) cultural contact can occur in mono-, bi-, or multi-cultural situations; (b) that "the cultural composition of the setting has a direct influence on the individuals in it" according to whether they resist or undergo changes toward other cultural groups (i.e. become mono-, bi-, or multicultural persons); (c) people modify their environments so that even dominant cultures undergo change (23-24). The model also implies why culture should be taken seriously: changes of attitude, perception or feeling signal a "re-ordering of the individuals' cognitive structures, making them in a real sense different persons (ibid, 24).

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