From Melting Pot to Simmering Stew

Acculturation, Enculturation, Assimilation, and Biculturalism in American Racial Dynamics

On January 20, 2009, Barack Obama was sworn in as the forty-fourth president of the United States. Although he was heralded as the first African American to serve in the highest and most powerful position in the nation (and perhaps in the world), President Obama’s cultural heritage was more subtle and complex. He was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, to an American mother, Stanley Ann Dunham, whose family (in Wichita, Kansas) was primarily of English descent, and Barack Obama Sr., a Luo from Nyang’oma Kogelo, Nyanza Province, Kenya. His father and mother married in 1961 and divorced in 1964, after which his father returned to Kenya.

After her divorce, Dunham married Indonesian student Lolo Soetoro. In 1967 they moved the family to Indonesia, where Barack attended schools in Jakarta from ages six to ten. He finished his schooling (grades five to twelve) in Honolulu while living with his maternal grandparents. Thus, not only was Obama of mixed race, but he also grew up in a state where more than 25 percent of the population reports a heritage of two or more races. The multicultural environment in Hawaii influenced his cultural perspective. Obama wrote,

That my father looked nothing like the people around me—that he was black as pitch, my mother white as milk—barely registered in my mind. . . . The opportunity that Hawaii offered—to experience a variety of cultures in a climate of mutual respect—became an integral part of my worldview, and a basis for the values that I hold most dear. (Obama 1995)

This mixed-race heritage and multicultural childhood provided the foundation for Obama to become the first biracial and bicultural president. His campaign appealed to young voters and minorities. Overall, 68
percent of voters between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine years cast their ballots for Obama, versus 30 percent of that age group who supported John McCain (Hebel 2008). Fifty-two percent of the 30- to 44-year-olds supported Obama. Final exit-poll tallies indicated that Obama won the Asian American vote 62 percent to 35 percent, the Latino vote 67 percent to 31 percent, and the African American vote 90 percent to 10 percent (Chen 2009). Certainly, Obama's biracial heritage and multicultural skills catalyzed a trend among younger generations and allowed him to connect with diverse groups of voters. He is widely praised for his ability to listen to many perspectives and seek common ground in making decisions.

Further raising the visibility of biculturalism in the United States, Sonia Sotomayor was confirmed by the United States Senate on August 6, 2009, as the first Latina Supreme Court justice. Sotomayor was born in the Bronx, a borough of New York City, to Juan Sotomayor, who was from the area of Santurce, San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Celina Báez from Santa Rosa in Lajas, a rural area on Puerto Rico’s southwest coast. Spanish was her first language and her family regularly visited Puerto Rico to see relatives during the summers. Sotomayor became fluent in English later in childhood, and was inspired to pursue a legal career through reading Nancy Drew novels and watching Perry Mason on television.

The life stories of Obama and Sotomayor encapsulate many of the themes in bicultural development. Both of these individuals grew up in racially diverse environments with meager resources and single parents who were determined to get their children ahead through education and hard work. Obama and Sotomayor both struggled through a process of cultural identity development, but eventually were able to navigate within and across complex institutional settings, engaging disparate groups of people with their sophisticated communication skills and insight into complicated social issues. Having succeeded in meeting the many challenges inherent in the acculturation process (e.g., learning new languages, coping with discrimination, adopting norms and behaviors to meet the needs of different cultural situations), Obama and Sotomayor serve as examples of the twenty-first-century bicultural American Dream that is characterized by maintaining one's cultural roots while successfully meeting the demands of the larger sociocultural system.

Although Barack Obama and Sonia Sotomayor are currently two of the most famous biracial, bicultural people in the United States, they represent millions of other bicultural people. U.S. Census data from 2000 show that 1.9 percent of whites; 0.6 percent of African Americans, American Indian/Alaskan Natives, and Asians; 0.2 percent of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders; and 1.1 percent of people reporting other racial heritages claim a
heritage of more than one racial group (U.S. Census Bureau 2007). These percentages sum to 14,168,760 people in the United States who claim a mixed racial heritage (5,470,349 combination with white; 1,761,244 combination with African American; 1,643,345 combination with American Indian/Alaskan Native; 1,655,830 combination with Asian; 475,579 combination with Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; and 3,162,413 combination with some other race). Moreover, these numbers include only those individuals who report biracial heritage. Many people may be bicultural but not biracial. These people are likely to affiliate with one racial or ethnic group but adopt perspectives from both their minority cultural group and the larger host culture within the United States. Given that nineteen million immigrants obtained legal resident status from 1990 to 2008 and approximately twelve million undocumented immigrants are trying to adjust to life within the U.S. cultural system (Department of Homeland Security 2008), it is clear that becoming bicultural is a common theme for many people throughout the United States.

Demographic Change in the United States

The racial and ethnic makeup of the U.S. has changed more rapidly since 1965 than during any other period in history. The reform in immigration policy of 1965, the increase in self-identification by ethnic minorities, and the slowing of the country’s birth rates, especially among non-Hispanic White Americans, have all led to an increasing, and increasingly diverse, racial and ethnic minority population in the United States. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2001, 56)

As the surgeon general’s report Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity cited above indicates, the United States is currently experiencing the largest growth of racial and ethnic minority populations in its history (see also Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001). As shown in figure 1.1, during the eighteen years between 1990 and 2008, nearly nineteen million immigrants obtained legal resident status in the United States. The only other decade that approaches the highest immigration rates from 1990 – 2000 (9,775,398) or 2000 – 2008 (9,168,612) was at the turn of the twentieth century, when 8,202,388 immigrants obtained legal resident status from 1900 to 1910.

National statistics illustrate dramatic demographic changes. In July 2006, the U.S. minority population reached 100.7 million, which equates to one in three residents of the nation having minority status (U.S. Census Bureau 2007a). The nation’s overall minority population on July 1, 2008, was 104.6
Hispanics or Latinos are the largest and fastest-growing minority group, which reached 46.9 million in 2008, an increase of 3.2 percent from 2007. In 2008, nearly one in six U.S. residents was Hispanic. Asians were the second fastest-growing minority group from 2007 to 2008, increasing by 2.7 percent to 15.5 million persons in 2008. Following the Asian population in growth were Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders (increasing 2.4 percent to 1.1 million), American Indians and Alaska Natives (increasing 1.7 percent to 4.9 million) and blacks or African Americans (increasing 1.3 percent to 41.1 million). In 2008, 5.2 million people were recorded as being biracial or multiracial, which was a 3.4 percent increase from 2007. The population of non-Hispanic whites who indicated no other race showed the smallest growth, increasing by 0.2 percent to 199.5 million. Table 1.1 highlights United States demographic shifts from 2000 to 2008 by race and ethnicity (U.S. Census Bureau 2009).

Dynamic demographic changes are occurring across the nation, specifically in the majority-minority balance. A population is defined as having majority-minority status when more than half the population is a group other than single-race, non-Hispanic whites. The most recent report on the shift in the majority-minority status of counties, issued by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2009, showed that as of July 1, 2008, nearly 10 percent (309) of the nation’s 3,142 counties were majority-minority status; of that total, 56 have become majority-minority status since April 1, 2000. Taking a wider perspective, four states had majority-minority status in 2008: Hawaii (75
percent), New Mexico (58 percent), California (58 percent), and Texas (53 percent). The District of Columbia was 67 percent minority. No other state had more than a 43 percent minority population.

The Pew Research Center estimates that by 2050, Latinos will make up nearly one-third of the U.S. population and that non-Latino whites will become a minority constituting 47 percent of the U.S. population. African Americans will continue to make up 13 percent of the population, and the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islanders will increase from 5 percent in 2005 to 9 percent in 2050. Foreign-born immigrants will rise from 12 percent of the U.S. population in 2005 to 19 percent in 2050. According to the Pew Research Center projections, immigrants who arrive after 2005, and their U.S.-born descendants, may account for up to 82 percent of the increase in the national population during the 2005–2050 period (Passel and Cohn 2008).

### Table 1.1

**Cumulative Estimates of the Components of Resident Population Change by Race and Hispanic Origin for the United States: April 1, 2000, to July 1, 2008 (Census Data)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Hispanic Origin</th>
<th>Total Population Change</th>
<th>Natural Increase</th>
<th>Vital Events</th>
<th>Net International Migration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Births</td>
<td>Deaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POPULATION</strong></td>
<td>22,635,122</td>
<td>14,124,166</td>
<td>34,126,003</td>
<td>20,001,837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>21,365,815</td>
<td>12,959,248</td>
<td>32,834,262</td>
<td>19,875,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>3,353,963</td>
<td>2,701,399</td>
<td>5,120,493</td>
<td>2,419,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>419,583</td>
<td>352,629</td>
<td>449,702</td>
<td>97,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2,959,942</td>
<td>1,112,783</td>
<td>1,444,513</td>
<td>331,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>99,585</td>
<td>68,966</td>
<td>79,274</td>
<td>10,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two or more races</strong></td>
<td>1,269,307</td>
<td>1,164,918</td>
<td>1,291,741</td>
<td>126,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race alone or in combination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>15,676,516</td>
<td>9,789,154</td>
<td>26,911,834</td>
<td>17,122,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>4,021,799</td>
<td>3,332,564</td>
<td>5,786,367</td>
<td>2,453,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>636,842</td>
<td>549,936</td>
<td>718,034</td>
<td>168,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3,473,602</td>
<td>1,563,097</td>
<td>1,933,511</td>
<td>370,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>205,500</td>
<td>159,214</td>
<td>184,568</td>
<td>25,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HISPANIC</strong></td>
<td>11,637,235</td>
<td>7,257,703</td>
<td>8,159,060</td>
<td>901,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHITE ALONE, NOT HISPANIC</strong></td>
<td>3,914,462</td>
<td>2,248,702</td>
<td>18,421,528</td>
<td>16,172,826</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Hispanic origin is considered an ethnicity, not a race. Hispanics may be of any race. The original race data from Census 2000 are modified to eliminate the “some other race” category. For more information, see http://www.census.gov/popest/archives/files/MRSF-os-US%20.html.

The sum of the components of change may not equal total population change due to reconciliation of quarterly and monthly data in the processing. See National Terms and Definitions at http://www.census.gov/popest/topics/terms/national.html.

Net international migration includes the international migration of both native and foreign-born populations. Specifically, it includes: (a) the net international migration of the foreign born, (b) the net migration between the United States and Puerto Rico, (c) the net migration of natives to and from the United States, and (d) the net movement of the Armed Forces population between the United States and overseas.
While approximately 44 percent of Latinos live in the western United States (Current Population Survey 2002), the impact of Latin American immigration is becoming widespread. From 1990 to 2000, the Latino population in seven states increased by 200 percent or more. At least twenty-five additional states had increases between 60 percent and 199 percent. Although Texas, California, and New York saw increases below the national average of 60 percent, these states already had large Latino populations. Some of the states, such as Georgia and North Carolina, where the growth of the Latino population was largest between 1990 and 2000, are not traditional areas for this type of immigration. North Carolina is one example of the seven states where the Latino population burgeoned during the past decade, increasing nearly 400 percent from 76,726 individuals in 1990 to 378,963 individuals in 2000. In contrast, during the same time, North Carolina's overall rate of population growth was only 15 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2001a). In 2000, Latinos constituted 4.7 percent of North Carolina's total population (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). With an increase of 655 percent, Mexican immigrants are the largest subgroup driving this trend in North Carolina. The remarkable growth of the Latino population, and the movement of this population into diverse geographic areas of the United States, is illustrated by the fact that between 2000 and 2007, the number of Latinos grew in all but 150 of the 3,141 U.S. counties. That is, 2,991 U.S. counties reported an increase in the Latino population between 2000 and 2007.

These trends are even more pronounced for children. Children and adolescents represent significant proportions of the growing racial and ethnic minority populations (U.S. Census Bureau 2007a). Currently, one-fourth of the U.S. population is younger than eighteen years old. In contrast, youth younger than eighteen years comprise a third of the Latino population, nearly a third of the Asian/Pacific Islander population, and slightly more than a fourth of the American Indian/Alaskan Native population. Foreshadowing anticipated results for the 2010 Census, the Census Bureau (2009) has estimated that nearly half (47 percent) of the nation's children younger than five years were a minority in 2008, with 25 percent being Hispanic/Latino. For all children under eighteen years, 44 percent had minority status and 22 percent were Hispanic/Latino. Latinos are not only driving U.S. population growth, but they are the only demographic group producing families large enough to sustain the population (the population is sustained when two parents have two or more children). Recent Census Bureau figures report the average number of children for Asian couples as 1.7 children, 1.8 for non-Latino whites, 2.0 for African Americans, and 2.3 for Latinos (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). Societies that have an average of
less than two children per family become dependent on immigration to maintain social stability and the labor force.

The Hispanic/Latino population is much younger than the population as a whole, with a median age of 27.7 years in 2008, compared with 36.8 years for the total U.S. population. Thirty-four percent of the Hispanic/Latino population was younger than eighteen years and 6 percent age sixty-five or older, as compared to 24 percent and 13 percent, respectively, for the total population (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). The combination of rapid growth and young age of the Hispanic/Latino population suggests that this group will have a profound impact on the future of the United States. As the aging non-Hispanic white workforce retires, they are likely to be replaced by young Latino workers. Considering the rapid growth and relative youth of the minority population, it is critical that we focus attention on promoting the health, well-being, and academic achievement of minority children, particularly Latino youth, given their substantial role in the future of the United States.

The rise in the U.S. Latino population is the result of immigration of youth and families born in other countries as well as high birth rates among Latino families. In 2004, approximately a quarter of the U.S. Latino population reported non-U.S. nativity, with the largest percentage coming from Mexico, followed by Puerto Rico and other Central American countries (U.S. Census Bureau 2007b). A majority of Latino immigrants have come to the United States since 1990, clearly demonstrating that a large segment of the Latino population is still adjusting to life in this country. Of the nearly three-quarters of the Latino population who are U.S. citizens, approximately 61 percent are U.S. born and are associated with the significantly higher birth rate among Latino women relative to non-Hispanic white women (U.S. Census Bureau 2007c). Given the number of these young Latino workers who are also recent immigrants, these statistics also underscore that a substantial group of adolescents is likely to be wrestling with acculturation-related issues during formative stages in their development.

From 1986 to 2006, Mexico had been the country-of-origin for the most foreign-born immigrants admitted to the United States for legal permanent residence, with more than double the number of immigrants compared to the next country-of-origin on the list (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2008). During 2008, the top countries-of-origin for immigrants obtaining permanent legal residence were Mexico (188,015); Caribbean nations such as Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica (134,744); all of Europe (121,146); all of Africa (100,881); all of South America (96,178); China (75,410); India (59,728); the Philippines (52,391); and Russia (45,092).
In addition to these authorized immigrants, the Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Immigration Statistics estimates that there were about 11.5 million unauthorized migrants in 2006, of which 6.6 million, or 57 percent, were Mexican born.

The remarkable growth of the Asian/Pacific Islander population is also fueled by both recent immigration of Asian individuals and greater-than-average birth rates of both Asian and Pacific Islander families (U.S. Census Bureau 2007d). For instance, approximately 33 percent of the current Asian population came to the United States during the 1990s, and an additional 17 percent immigrated since 2000. A majority of these immigrants originated in either China or Japan, and became residents in Hawaii. In contrast, 78 percent of Pacific Islanders are native. In addition, Asian/Pacific Islander women are significantly more likely to have children than their non-Hispanic white counterparts (U.S. Census Bureau 2007e).

Although Latinos and Asians dominate the foreign-born U.S. population, these are not the only minority groups showing significant growth. Currently, there are more than 550 federally recognized American Indian tribes and Alaskan Native groups (U.S. Department of the Interior 2007). In 2004, approximately 2.2 million persons identified themselves as American Indian/Alaskan Native and an additional 1.9 million self-identified as being mixed heritage of American Indian/Alaskan Native and another race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007f). Further, the American Indian/Alaskan Native population continues to grow at a relatively higher rate than the general population, as evidenced by the 65 percent increase that was experienced from 1990 to 2007 (Indian Health Service 2007). In part, this rate of growth is a result of American Indian/Alaskan Native women having relatively higher birth rates than non-Hispanic white women. In addition, American Indian adolescent mothers aged fifteen to nineteen years have the second highest birth rate (67.8 per 1,000) compared with African American (63.1 per thousand) and Hispanic (82.6 per thousand) adolescent mothers (Martin et al. 2006).

The minority population in the United States is important not only because it is growing rapidly but also because of the risk factors this heterogeneous group faces. Compared to non-Latino whites, Latinos are more likely to be younger than eighteen years, unemployed, residing in large family households, and living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau 2001b; Ramirez and de la Cruz 2003). In addition, Latinos have a lower median age (twenty-five years compared to twenty-seven years for African Americans and thirty-one years for non-Latino whites), lower educational attainment, and lower income levels than non-Latino whites. In 2000, the median income for Latino men was $19,833, compared to $21,662 for African American men and
$31,213 for non-Latino white men (U.S. Census Bureau 2001a). Similarly, Latino women had the lowest median incomes ($12,255) in 2000, compared to $16,805 for non-Latino white women (U.S. Census Bureau 2001a). Considering that the 2000 federal poverty threshold for a family of four was $17,463, many Latino families are coping with socioeconomic disadvantage. Official estimates report the Latino poverty rate at 22 percent, which is identical to the rate for African Americans, but nearly three times the non-Latino white rate of 7.8 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2001a). In 2007, the poverty rates were 21.5 percent for Latinos, 24.5 for African Americans, 10.2 percent for Asians, and 8.2 percent for non-Hispanic whites (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). With many minority families experiencing socioeconomic disadvantages and challenges associated with recent immigration, it is important to turn our attention to the ways in which these demographic changes are fueling cultural changes throughout the United States.

Demographic Change Prompts Cultural Change

Although the United States has always been a nation of immigrants, the recent demographic shifts resulting in burgeoning and youthful Latino and Asian populations have literally changed the face of the nation. The current wave of massive immigration has led to the country’s struggle with the necessity of becoming bicultural. Becoming bicultural, both for immigrant families and for the larger host society, is a difficult and sometimes painful process, requiring the integration of multiple, often conflicting messages concerning stability and change from different people and social systems. Consequently, there are abundant signs indicating that the ethnic mosaic of the U.S. population is both rapidly growing and becoming more diverse. Today, a sign on the Montgomery County library door in Silver Spring, Maryland, welcomes patrons in ten different languages because the library’s consumer base is so diverse. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district in North Carolina’s largest city serves 133,664 students who come from 161 different countries with 140 native languages. On a smaller scale, a trip to nearly any grocery store makes it obvious that an increasing amount of space and prominence is devoted to Mexican and Asian foods. It is commonplace to see product labels and instruction manuals written in Spanish and English. Now, when calling a customer service line, it is more the rule than the exception to hear “Para proceder en Espanol, pulse el numero dos.” These small examples show that daily life in the United States is slowly becoming bicultural. Despite the scramble for interpreters
and cultural-competence training in businesses, schools, social services, and health care agencies, an even more intense process is occurring for immigrant individuals and families who are trying to fit into the host society as welcome or unwelcome guests.

This book examines the process of becoming bicultural. We explore the individual psychology and family dynamics behind bicultural development and delineate what factors lead to positive or to negative consequences for immigrant youth. This book was written for developmental psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, human and family development scholars, and other social scientists, students, and practitioners who study or work with immigrant families experiencing cultural changes. It has been fashioned to meet the needs of readers interested in risk and resilience within the acculturation process. We combine reviews of quantitative research studies on the different dimensions of biculturalism with discussion of qualitative findings on cultural experiences.

Importantly, many of our examples are drawn from the Parent-Teen Biculturalism Project and the Latino Acculturation and Health Project. We conducted these research projects from 2001 through 2008, collecting surveys and interviews from more than four hundred Latino adolescents and their parents in North Carolina and Arizona. North Carolina and Arizona were selected in order to further our understanding of cultural change within new immigrant communities with little cultural capital or influence, such as those in North Carolina, and established communities with large Latino populations that go back generations in Arizona. We conducted extensive qualitative interviews and followed immigrant families for three years, measuring changes in acculturation and health indicators every six months. We also designed and tested a prevention program to help immigrant families cope with acculturation stress and develop bicultural skills. Reflecting national demographics for the Latino population, approximately two-thirds of the families in our studies were from Mexico. Twenty percent of adolescents were born in the United States and the rest immigrated from Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, Brazil, Chile, and a number of other Caribbean, Central American, and South American countries. Cuban and Puerto Rican families were not represented in our studies because these groups are not well represented in North Carolina or Arizona. We note what other scholars have found when researching Cuban and Puerto Rican families.

It is important to remember that Latinos are a heterogeneous group with many different variations in language, customs, and culture. Although we try to be as specific as possible when discussing research findings, many studies do not have enough participants to evaluate differences between distinct Latino subgroups (for example, Mexicans versus El Salvadorians).
In this book, we have sought to identify common challenges and cultural assets across Latino subgroups. These common risk and resilience factors should be broken down by subgroup in future research. Further, although we believe that we have delineated widely applicable themes, much more research has been done with Latino families, particularly Mexicans, compared to Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American families. Although we highlight findings for other minority groups, Latino families are our primary focus. Latino families are the largest and fastest-growing demographic group in the United States and, in comparison to Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American/Alaskan Native families, we have a stronger research foundation upon which to draw conclusions about Latino families. Studies of Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American/Alaskan Native families are included in our discussions of research findings in chapters 5 and 6; however, our qualitative examples of immigrant family adaptation after immigration in chapters 2 through 4 are drawn from Latino families.

What Is Biculturalism?

Bicultural individuals may be immigrants, refugees fleeing war or oppression, sojourners (e.g., international students, expatriates), indigenous people, ethnic minorities, those in interethnic relationships, and mixed-ethnic individuals (Padilla 1994; Berry 2003). As illustrated above, many people considered bicultural fit into several of these categories. For many children and grandchildren of immigrants, affiliation and involvement in their ethnic cultures, as well as mainstream U.S. culture, is the norm (Phinney 1996). Consequently, biculturalism is hard to define and even harder to label. Biculturalism commonly has components from the psychological domain (e.g., identifying with values from multiple cultural groups), behavioral domain (e.g., speaking more than one language), and social domain (e.g., affiliating with peers from different cultural backgrounds). Loosely defined, bicultural identity is based on self-identification of group affiliation (e.g., “feeling Asian American”). However, researchers are often interested in a more strict definition that focuses on individuals who have internalized more than one cultural system (Benet-Martínez et al. 2002). Because this definition is less inclusive, students who have studied abroad for limited amounts of time or individuals in a mixed-race marriage who remain monolingual are not usually considered fully bicultural under this strict definition. Fully bicultural individuals have the ability to switch between cultural schemas, norms, and behaviors in response to cultural cues in any given situation (Hong et al. 2000).
Our discussion of biculturalism focuses on individuals who are developing this ability to navigate between ethnic cultures (not work or institutional cultures, geographic cultures, subcultures, or different cultures between generations or age groups). Perhaps most important for our purposes, bicultural individuals have been immersed in the acculturation process of adjusting to a new cultural system. The acculturation process has two critical dimensions, culture-of-origin involvement (also called "enculturation") and host cultural involvement (also called "assimilation"). Biculturalism is the integration of or navigation between these two dimensions. We provide important definitions and opposing theories of cultural change in the next section.

Cultural Adjustment: Acculturation, Enculturation, Assimilation, and Biculturalism

Acculturation: The Overarching Process of Cultural Contact

Acculturation was first defined as "phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits 1936, 149). This original definition stressed continuous, long-term change and allowed the process to be bidirectional, wherein both of the interacting cultures could make accommodations.

A historical example may make this acculturation concept more transparent. The continuous process of bidirectional accommodation is illustrated in the early interactions of Massasoit’s Wampanoag tribe with the early English settlers. The United States has been an immigrant nation from its inception. Every elementary school child in the United States learns that the Native Americans of Chief Massasoit’s Wampanoag tribe taught the Plymouth pilgrims to grow corn, helping the pilgrims survive the harsh northeastern winter. The subsequent first Thanksgiving in 1621 was a celebration of a harvest that flowed directly from bicultural collaboration. Chief Massasoit’s warriors could have easily wiped out the immigrant pilgrims the year before when half of the new settlers had died from disease, hunger, or exposure. Instead, a workable, though tenuous, alliance arose out of the cultural brokering of Massasoit and a young Pilgrim named Edward Winslow. Both Massasoit and Winslow grew to become moderately bicultural, learning parts of the other group’s language, norms, and behaviors, and understanding how cooperation could promote the goals of
both groups. Unfortunately, subsequent waves of British immigrants would trample such bicultural cooperation, and as the Anglo-Saxon immigrants increased in number and power, they adopted policies characterized by assimilation or elimination. The earliest stages of acculturation are focused on the contact between the two cultures. Pilgrims clearly benefited from learning Native American ways of planting while Wampanoag tribe members were pleased to receive European supplies, such as metal pots, knives, and steel drills that made their lives easier. Jill Lepore, a noted historian, described this early contact, saying,

Those peoples [Native Americans and English settlers in the 1620s] become more and more dependent on one another, and exchange more and more goods, and ideas, and people—children, wives, families—have more and more contact with one another. In a sense, the two peoples come to share a great deal. The English come to be more like Indians in many ways. They dress more like Indians. They use Indian words. They’re familiar with Indian ways. And the Indians come to be more like English. A lot of Indians speak English. They wear English clothes. They build houses that are English. There’s a reciprocity of exchange that actually turns out—we might think, “Oh how lovely. What a nice multicultural fest that is.” But actually it makes everyone very, very nervous. (“We Shall Remain” 2009, 9)

From Contact to Conflict

John Berry (1980) characterized the course of the acculturation process as flowing from contact between dominant and nondominant cultural groups to conflict or crises between those groups that eventually results in adaptations by one or both of the conflicting groups. These acculturation phases characterize not only large-scale sociological group dynamics over long periods but also cultural interactions between social groups during different eras as well as individual psychological and social processes that affect a person’s adjustment to a new cultural situation. For example, this problematic flow of events from contact to conflict is readily seen in relations between the Native Americans and the English as the fragile mutuality seen initially in the 1620s was supplanted by questions concerning who controlled critical tangible resources (e.g., land rights) and who had the “true” religion or “civilized” way of behaving. Cultural conflict may develop gradually and extend continuously over generations, as it did for Native American people, or it may be quite abrupt and intense, such as the unsettling immersion experienced by a newly immigrated Latino or Asian child who speaks no English when he or she enters a U.S. school for the first
time. Although acculturation phases describe a sociological phenomenon that occurs between groups, a parallel interpersonal process is thought to occur among immigrant individuals and families.

Two criteria determine the end point of acculturation adaptations: whether the acculturating individual or group retains cultural identity and whether a positive relationship to the dominant society is established (Berry 1998). Juxtaposing these two criteria makes it possible to pursue four different types of acculturation adaptations: separation/enculturation (e.g., remaining solely affiliated with one’s ethnic culture), assimilation (e.g., affiliating with the national or host culture), integration or biculturalism (e.g., balancing between ethnic and national cultures), and marginalization (e.g., having no cultural affiliation). These two criteria and four adaptation styles are charted in figure 1.2. We discuss each of these adaptation styles below and examine how each fits into the acculturation phases throughout this book.

**Enculturation: The Relationship to the Culture-of-Origin**

There are several important underlying concepts within the overarching acculturation process. In contrast to acculturation, which occurs between cultural groups, *enculturation* is the adoption and maintenance of behaviors, norms, values, and customs from a person’s culture-of-origin. Every culture indoctrinates children by exposing them to, or socializing them
with, specific ideas, beliefs, routines, rituals, religious practices, languages, and ways of being in the world. The resulting cluster of beliefs and behaviors culminates in a person’s ethnic identity. This sense of ethnic identity is a person’s self-definition based on membership in a distinct group derived from a perceived shared heritage (Phinney and Ong 2007). The broad concept of enculturation encompasses the individual’s level of involvement in his or her culture-of-origin, which is nurtured through early childhood exposure to cultural symbols and messages transmitted primarily through family interactions. By early adulthood, consistent exposure to these cultural beliefs and behaviors leads to an individual’s working sense of ethnic identity (e.g., an affiliation with a cultural group and an understanding of how that cultural group expects its members to be in the world). The enculturation process both defines the characteristics of the group and secures its future by indoctrinating new members.

Retaining enculturation or culture-of-origin identity alone without establishing a positive relationship to the dominant culture would indicate separation and unwillingness to assimilate. The Separation quadrant in figure 1.2 represents strong enculturation and low assimilation into the dominant or host society. Separation is the adaptation style that characterizes most immigrant parents who cling strongly to their culture-of-origin identity and who find the acculturation process particularly stressful. Individuals and families using this Separation coping style may structure their lives to live within ethnic communities with little contact with the larger or dominant culture. For example, if Asian immigrants conduct their business in San Francisco’s Chinatown and do not venture out, it is quite possible to remain highly involved in Chinese culture without adopting, or adapting to, what we would consider mainstream U.S. culture. The same dynamic holds for Little Havana, which is widely known as a center of social, cultural, and political activity for Cuban immigrants in Miami, Florida.

Enculturation is an important factor in the three phases of acculturation given above. During intercultural contact, differences in enculturation between the two groups become apparent. For instance, Native Americans believed that land was a gift from the Creator, and no individual owned this gift. In contrast, the pilgrims, indoctrinated in the European currency economy and believing that they were God’s chosen people, saw no difficulty in buying, trading for, or taking land for personal ownership. Differences between worldviews like this example make groups wary of outsiders, triggering an urge to close ranks and defend the way of life the group understands. It is easy to see how conflict may arise. With the future at stake, enculturation prompts individuals to choose us versus them—our beliefs
and ways of doing things or theirs. Although this is a simplistic introduction to enculturation and ethnic identity, these concepts are discussed in depth in chapter 2.

Assimilation: Involvement in the Dominant or Host Culture

The central issue after contact becomes who has power and control, and how the dominant group will use that power. Usually, the nondominant group is strongly influenced to take on norms, values, and behaviors espoused by the dominant group. The intensity and negativity associated with this process are largely contingent upon the receptivity of the dominant group in welcoming, respecting, or stigmatizing the nondominant group (Berry 1998). Further, the attitudes held by the dominant group influence the adoption of policies for relating to the nondominant group. For example, dominant group attitudes towards immigrants that influence policy are reflected in the debate in the United States regarding whether English should be declared the country’s official language, in the question of whether school districts support English immersion or bilingual education programs, and in restrictions requiring certain forms of identification that are difficult for some immigrants to obtain in order for them to receive a driver’s license.

During the conflict and adaptation phases of acculturation, antagonistic attitudes from the dominant group towards immigrants often prompt calls for assimilation or elimination. The term *acculturation*, which denotes the bidirectional process of cultural contact and change, is often erroneously used interchangeably with the term *assimilation*, which captures unidirectional adaptations made by minority individuals to conform to the dominant group.

During the decades since acculturation was first defined, a number of alternative definitions have been offered that stress unidirectional, rather than bidirectional, change. For example, Emily Smith and Nancy Guerra (2006) refer to acculturation as “the differences and changes in values and behaviors that individuals make as they gradually adopt the cultural values of the dominant society” (283). These unidirectional assimilation trends suggest that cultural change results from interactions between dominant and nondominant groups, and such change is commonly characterized by nondominant groups taking on the language, laws, religions, norms, and behaviors of the dominant group (Castro et al. 1996; Berry 1998). Consequently, the original Redfield (1936) definition captures the bidirectional notion of acculturation whereas the description offered by Smith and Guerra (2006) denotes the unidirectional assimilation approach. These
competing unidirectional and bidirectional approaches dominate acculturation research, influencing conceptualization, measurement, analytic strategies, and results of empirical studies in this area (Cabassa 2003). We explore these issues further in chapters 5 and 6.

The common notion of assimilation entails persons losing their culture-of-origin identity so as to identify with the dominant cultural group. That is, a movement in figure 1.2 from separation to assimilation, which a person completes by swapping the positive relationship with his or her culture-of-origin for a positive affiliation with the dominant culture. The assimilation model assumes that an individual sheds her or his culture-of-origin in an attempt to take on the values, beliefs, behaviors, and perceptions of the target culture (Chun, Organista, and Marin 2003). The individual perceives the dominant culture as more desirable whereas the culture-of-origin is seen as inferior. In this model, change is “directional, unilinear, nonreversible, and continuous” (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001, 8).

The experience of European immigrants appeared to fit the unidirectional assimilation framework that has been the dominant way of conceptualizing acculturation change (de Anda 1984; Feliciano 2001; Padilla and Perez 2003). In the earliest days of the United States, colonists saw the new republic as the beginning of a utopian society where immigrants from different nationalities, cultures, and races blended into an idealized American “new man.”

[W]hen came all these people? They are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. . . . What, then, is the American, this new man? He is neither a European nor the descendant of a European; hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. . . . The Americans were once scattered all over Europe; here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared. (J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, 1782)

The concept of the great American melting pot was popularized in the era spanning 1890 to 1910, which was the height of a large wave of European immigrants that flooded into the United States. After the premiere of the play *The Melting Pot* by Israel Zangwill in 1908, the term “melting
“Melting Pot” came into general use. In the play, Zangwill’s immigrant protagonist declares, “Understand that America is God’s Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming! A fig for your feuds and vendettas! Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.”

The melting-pot theory of ethnic relations focused on American identity created by the assimilation and intermarriage of white immigrant groups. In the play, the Jewish Russian protagonist falls in love with a Christian Russian woman. The couple is able to overcome their differences and celebrate assimilation to new identities within their adopted homeland. The play captured a common drama during this historical period. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, large numbers of non-Protestant, Southern European, and Eastern European immigrants were immigrating to the United States, causing concern over how these new groups of Irish, Polish, Italian, and Jewish settlers would mix with the Northern European, often Anglo-Saxon, Protestant majority who no longer thought of themselves as newcomers. These new white settlers were eligible for naturalization under the racially restrictive Naturalization Act of 1790 and had to be integrated in some way. Non-Protestant European immigrant groups such as the Catholic Irish, Italians, and Jews suffered from forms of discrimination but were gradually accepted as “white” American citizens, enjoyed political freedom, and eventually assimilated through intermarriage into the white majority.

There has always been unequal access to the great American melting pot for non-White ethnic and racial minorities. These minorities, both immigrants and natives, have been barred from full participation in U.S. society as citizens, banned from immigrating, and subjected to oppressive assimilation policies and practices. Assimilation fervor has a long history, dating back to the earliest days of contact between the English settlers and Native Americans. In 1651, John Eliot, a Puritan minister, started the first “praying town” in Natick, Massachusetts, to convert American Indians to Christianity. “Praying towns” were settlements where American Indians moved to relinquish their native heritage and take on a Puritan way of life. Those who agreed to forsake their native religion, beliefs, and traditional ways of being in the world to live by Puritan moral codes were promised both eternal life and physical safety. The conversion experiences of Native Americans were chronicled in a publication called *Tears of Repentance*.

*Praying Indian #1*: I heard that Word, that it is a shame for a man to wear long hair, and that there was no such custom in the Churches; at first I
thought I loved not long hair, but I did, and found it very hard to cut it off; and then I prayed to God to pardon that sin also.

*Praying Indian #2:* When they said the devil was my God, I was angry, because I was proud. I loved to pray to many Gods. Then going to your house, I more desired to hear of God . . . then I was angry with myself and loathed myself and thought God will not forgive my sins.

*Praying Indian #3:* I see God is still angry with me for all my sins and He hath afflicted me by the death of three of my children, and I fear God is still angry, because great are my sins, and I fear lest my children be not gone to Heaven. ("We Shall Remain" 2009, 9)

By 1671, there were only a thousand members of the Wampanoag tribe remaining when Chief Massasoit’s son Phillip began to fight back against English assimilation pressure; nearly half were dispersed across fourteen different praying towns. However, assimilation adaptations and painful conversion experiences were often not enough to allow these cultural groups to peacefully coexist. During the subsequent Indian uprising led by King Phillip, Native Americans who were living a Christian life in praying towns were banished, taken to Deer Island in Boston Harbor, and left in the middle of winter without blankets or food.

Assimilation sentiments have underpinned cultural relations and prompted public policy throughout American history. During his presidency in 1801, Thomas Jefferson wrote,

> The American settlements will gradually circumscribe and approach the Indians, who will in time either incorporate with us as citizens of the United States, or remove beyond the Mississippi. Some tribes are advancing, and on these English seductions will have no effect. But the backward will yield, and be thrown further back into barbarism and misery . . . and we shall be obliged to drive them with the beasts of the forest into the stony mountains. ("We Shall Remain," chap. 2, 4)

Native Americans were enrolled in tribes and because they did not have U.S. citizenship until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, they were subject to government policies of enforced cultural assimilation, also termed “Americanization.” Native American children were taken from their families and placed in boarding schools to teach them how to interact in civilized society. African Americans were also excluded for not being white. Slave owners deliberately broke up families of African slaves so that they would be easier to control. Even after the Emancipation Proclamation banished slavery and made African Americans citizens, intermarriage
between whites and African Americans was illegal in many U.S. states under antimiscegenation laws, which continued from 1883 until 1967. Asian immigrants such as Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Filipinos were ruled to be nonwhite and banned from marrying whites in several states where existing antimiscegenation laws were expanded to include them. After a number of conflicting rulings in American courts, Punjabi people and others from British India were also deemed to be nonwhites. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act severely limited or banned immigration by Asians. The Immigration Act of 1924 severely restricted immigration from areas outside Northern and Western Europe.

Assimilation fervor peaks during times of national distress. There was a backlash against German immigrants during World War I. Many Japanese American adults who were imprisoned during World War II tried to discard their ethnic identity and assimilate after the end of the war, attempting to avoid any association, shame, or embarrassment that came from being imprisoned. Attitudes towards nonwhite immigrants and natives gradually improved after World War II in the second half of the twentieth century. Since the successes of the American civil rights movement and the enactment of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which allowed for a large increase in immigration from Latin America and Asia, intermarriage between white and nonwhite Americans has been increasing. However, after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, assimilationist rhetoric enjoyed a resurgence and remains central to the immigrants’ drama of adjusting to life in the United States.

Assimilation theory has been applied in a range of policies and practice situations. For example, English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in which instructors speak only English and policy proposals that declare English to be the state’s or country’s “official” language have deep roots in assimilationist ideology. In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 227, which requires that all public school instruction be conducted in English, by a wide margin (61 percent vs. 39 percent; now EC 300-340 of the California Education Code). Similarly, in 2000, Arizona’s voters passed Proposition 203, which mandates that school instruction must be in English and severely limits opportunity for bilingual instruction. Both propositions are examples of the assimilationist Structured English Immersion approach to educating immigrants who are not proficient in English. We examine assimilation in greater detail in chapters 3 and 5.
Integration or Biculturalism: Navigating between Two Cultures

While assimilation theory continues to be popular, a growing body of research has begun to question whether it is indeed adaptive for a person to give up his or her cultural identity to fit into the dominant culture (de Anda 1984; Feliciano 2001; Padilla and Perez 2003; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001). Critics of the assimilation model usually support the further development of alternation theory, a framework that rejects linear conceptualizations of acculturation and revisits the Redfield definition of acculturation that allowed for dynamic bidirectional change (Trimble 2003). Following figure 1.2, integration, or biculturalism, would ensue from both retaining ethnic cultural identity and establishing a positive relationship with the dominant culture. In contrast to the unidirectional approach of assimilation, the bidirectional approach considers enculturation (i.e., adoption and maintenance of behaviors, norms, values, and customs from a person's culture-of-origin), ethnic identity (i.e., a person's self-definition based on membership in a distinct group derived from a perceived shared heritage), and biculturalism (i.e., ability to integrate attributes of two cultures and competently navigate between cultural systems [Gonzales et al. 2002; LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton 1993]) as important aspects of the acculturation process.

Alternation theorists believe that individuals can both retain cultural identity and establish a positive relationship with the dominant culture. Proponents of the alternation theory of cultural acquisition assert that there is great value in the individual maintaining her or his culture-of-origin while acquiring the second culture (Feliciano 2001). These theorists believe that the unidirectional change approach espoused by assimilationists may have fit prior groups of white European immigrants but does not adequately characterize adaptations made by subsequent waves of immigrants from Latin America or Asia (de Anda 1984; Padilla and Perez 2003). Prior groups of white European immigrants assimilated into the dominant Anglo majority through education and intermarriage, but new waves of immigrants from Latin America or Asia arguably have more obstacles in their path to integration because they will always remain racial minorities. Intermarriage no longer brings assimilation, but now creates a new generation of biracial youth.

In this alternation theory perspective, biculturalism, or having the ability to competently navigate within and between two different cultures, is the optimal end point for the process of cultural acquisition (LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton 1993). For the immigrant individual and her or his
family, alternation theory supports the integration of cognition, attitudes, and behaviors from both the culture-of-origin and the culture of acquisition. This integration may result in bilingualism, cognitive code switching, and the development of multiple identities (e.g., immigrant adolescents behaving “American” at school and “Latino” at home) to meet disparate environmental demands (Dolby 2000; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001; Trueba 2002).

Of course, the influence of the dominant or host culture plays an important role in the acculturation process. Just as assimilation ideology pushes immigrants to accept host culture norms and behaviors, environmental contexts that actively support and value multiculturalism can also prompt individuals and families toward integration or biculturalism (Berry 2001; de Anda 1984). The concept of cultural pluralism first emerged in the early decades of the twentieth century among intellectuals debating United States immigration and national identity (Kallen 1915; Bourne 1916). For example, Randolph Bourne (1916, 86) wrote in Trans-National America, “No reverberatory effect of the great war has caused American public opinion more solicitude than the failure of the ‘melting-pot.’ The discovery of diverse nationalistic feelings among our great alien population has come to most people as an intense shock.”

Beginning in the 1960s, multiculturalism gained traction, prompting melting pot metaphors to be replaced with references to a cultural salad bowl or cultural mosaic. In this newer multicultural approach, each “ingredient” retains its integrity and flavor while contributing to a successful final product. However, considering the backdrop of heated stress and tension, these ethnic relations are better characterized as a simmering stew than a salad bowl. In recent years, this multicultural approach has been officially promoted in traditional melting-pot societies such as Australia, Canada, and Britain, with the intent of encouraging more tolerance of immigrant diversity. Meanwhile, the United States continues to vacillate between assimilation and alternation (or multicultural) approaches to immigration and ethnic relations.

Alternation theory has been used in practice, but few macro policies have been based on this framework. English as a Second Language (ESL) and Two-Way Immersion programs that teach content in both English and Spanish are underpinned by alternation theory. Bicultural skills training programs are another reflection of the way alternation theory has been applied to practice (e.g., see Szapocznik et al. 1984; 1986; 1989; Bacallao and Smokowski 2005). Bicultural development and the integrative adaptation style are discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 6.
Deculturation

Finally, losing cultural identity without establishing a positive relationship to the dominant culture would be the hallmark of deculturation, or cultural marginality (Berry 1980; LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton 1993). Less common than the other three adaptation styles, deculturation may be a stressful stage experienced by many immigrants as they construct a new or integrated cultural identity. Some authors refer to deculturation as “cultural homelessness,” a state in which individuals do not feel an affiliation with any cultural group (Vivero and Jenkins 1999).

Conclusions

The size and political, economic, and social influence exerted by minority families, especially Latinos, in the United States is growing rapidly because of both immigration trends and the comparatively higher birth rates of these minority groups. One critical difference between the subgroups of Latino, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander adolescents and many of their peers from other minority and majority racial groups is that the adolescents in these subgroups have to cope with the complexities inherent in the acculturation process in addition to the stress of adolescence as a developmental stage. Considering that a quarter of the U.S. Latino population is foreign born and that a majority of these Latino immigrants have come to the United States since 1990, a large segment of the Latino population is still adjusting to life in this country. The same dynamic holds for the Asian population in the United States. Consequently, it is important to examine the roles that cultural factors, especially acculturation processes, play in promoting or inhibiting the social, educational, psychological, and physical well-being of minority adolescents.

Acculturation is the overall process of cultural involvement. Assimilation is generally associated with high levels of host culture involvement. A moderate-to-high level of involvement in both cultures marks integration or biculturalism. Separation or maintaining ethnic identity alone (enculturation) is associated with high levels of involvement in the culture-of-origin, whereas having no affiliation with either culture is the hallmark of deculturation or marginalization. These four cultural adaptation styles and two major theories of cultural change (assimilation and alternation theories) are depicted in figure 1.2. Revisiting Berry’s (1998) criteria, assimilation theory posits that a positive relationship to the dominant society is
established without retention of ethnic identity (see the right-hand quadrant), whereas in alternation theory, a moderate-to-strong positive relationship to the dominant society is established and a moderate-to-strong positive relationship to ethnic identity or culture-of-origin is retained (upper-middle quadrant). Neither theory has much to say about cultural marginality, which occurs when a positive relationship is not formed with either the new culture or the culture-of-origin (lower-middle quadrant). Cultural marginality can result in apathy, lack of interest in culture, or the formation of a negative relationship with both cultures.

William Flannery, Steven Reise, and Jiajuan Yu (2001) conducted the earliest direct comparison of the assimilation and alternation models. In a sample of 291 Asian Americans, they reported that both models had adequate predictive validity for use in acculturation research. They recommended using the unidirectional assimilationist model as an economical proxy measure of acculturation, and using the bidirectional alternation model for “full theoretical investigations of acculturation” (Flannery Reise, and Yu 2001, 1035).

Turning our attention back to the conceptualizations of acculturation, alternation theory is aligned with the original Redfield definition that allows for dynamic bidirectional adaptations to occur in either or both cultures. Assimilation theory is aligned with the modified definition of acculturation that assumes unidirectional change from the dominant to the nondominant group. Assimilation and alternation theories, and the various cultural adaptation styles introduced above, are fascinating sociological constructs; however, these ideas become ever more critical when linked to health and mental health. Throughout this book, we examine quantitative and qualitative research that tests the relationships between acculturation constructs and health behaviors in minority and immigrant youth and adults.

A Dynamic Model for Becoming Bicultural

Although acculturation is inherently a process that unfolds over time, few investigations have had sufficient longitudinal data to consider acculturation as a developmental process. It is more common for research studies either to examine differences between immigrants who have been in the United States for disparate amounts of time, or to compare differences between generations, and, in both cases, to ascribe discrepancies to temporal changes. Acculturation researchers have directed more attention to group differences (foreign born versus U.S. born; first generation versus subsequent generations) than to individual differences over time, with
It would be ideal to have a dynamic model of cultural adaptation after immigration. A dynamic model would help immigrants immersed in acculturation to grasp the turbulence and change inherent in the adjustment process. Such a model would also serve as a guide for social services providers and health care practitioners in targeting prevention, intervention, and public policy initiatives. Despite the significant attention the four cultural adaptation styles have received from the research community, these styles often become static categories when analyzed by researchers, failing to capture the chaos and complexity that characterizes cultural contact, conflict, and adaptation.

In order to move towards a dynamic, temporal model for becoming bilingual, we suggest that acculturation should be modeled as a circle, with culture-of-origin on one side and host culture on the other (see figure 1.3). The circle denotes a movement between ethnic and mainstream cultural contexts without assuming the linear, unidirectional flow of assimilation from culture-of-origin to the host culture. In our circle model of acculturation, movement is fluid and bidirectional depending upon the cultural situation. However, individual and family stress commonly occurs as immigrant adolescents move from the culture-of-origin context to the host-or dominant-culture context.

Shortly after immigration, the distance between the culture-of-origin and the host culture seems quite large, complex, and fraught with conflicts. This outer trajectory is characteristic of new immigrants who tend...
to perceive the acculturation process as difficult. As reviewed in the discussions in chapters 4 and 6, these individuals are particularly sensitive to the differences between the cultures, typically report that navigating between the two cultures is difficult and takes effort, and may lack proficiency in bicultural and bilingual skills. This diffuse stage of cultural adaptation has been associated with poor psychological and sociological adjustment (Berry et al. 2006). In addition, this diffuse stage may be a result, at least in part, of the brain’s sparsely connected, distant neural networks that lack sophistication in processing diverse cultural, cognitive, and linguistic information.

As environmental demands dictate increased movement from one cultural context to the other, the circle often becomes tighter, more coherent, spiraling in on itself, with each revolution traversed more and more quickly. Navigating this circular process with increasing speed and skill signifies increasing levels of bicultural identity integration. The two cultural systems are increasingly viewed as integrated rather than distant and conflicted. Bilingualism is heightened and navigation of cultural contexts is fluid. This integrated cultural adaptation style is associated with healthy psychological and sociological adaptation and may very well be the result of closely interconnected neural networks that have been formed in the brain for processing cultural, socio-cognitive, and linguistic information.

Using research evidence from extant studies, we have developed a model of the stages of bicultural identity development. Shown in figure 1.4, this model incorporates our knowledge of cultural adaptation styles (Berry et al. 2006), bicultural identity integration (Benet-Martínez and Haritatos 2005; Nguyen and Benet-Martinez 2007), and ethnic identity development (Phinney 1989). After immigration, young individuals who have already developed an ethnic identity within their culture-of-origin experience a crisis because of assimilation stress and perceived discrimination. Their cultural worlds are suddenly threatened by a two-pronged cultural context in which their ethnic cultural ties are placed in sharp contrast to the norms of the host or dominant cultural system. Regardless of their prior level of ethnic identity development, this acculturation dynamic places new immigrants in a state of diffused and bifurcated bicultural identity formation. For many, this experience is the first time that their cultural context has been divided into culture-of-origin and host-cultural contexts, requiring a shifting of cultural behaviors between home and school or work. Low levels of bicultural identity integration, which commonly make these intercultural transactions difficult and conflicted, characterize the diffused stage of cultural development experienced by new immigrants.
Over time, most immigrants move into an exploration and adaptation stage of cultural development; however, some youth and adults remain mired in a diffused or marginalized cultural adaptation style. These individuals may be older and more rigid, or may be isolated and lack access to ethnically mixed social networks (Berry et al. 2006). Other youth and adults choose to affiliate exclusively with their ethnic culture (e.g., separation), enjoying cultural protective factors and positive psychological adjustment. A third group of youth and adults assimilate to the host or national culture and report relatively poor adjustment and health behaviors (see chapter 5). Finally, what appears to be the largest group of immigrants passes through the exploration stage to the integration stage, in which they achieve a high level of bicultural identity integration. This bicultural group has been found to have the best profile of psychological and sociological adjustment (Berry et al. 2006; see chapter 6).

This book is structured into chapters that are devoted to major parts of these dynamic models of bicultural development shown in figures 1.3 and 1.4. In chapter 2, we focus on enculturation or culture-of-origin involvement, specifically examining how immigrant families maintain their ethnic identities. We discuss major changes in immigrant family systems that occur during the diffused, bifurcated stage of bicultural development. In chapter 3, we examine the relationship to the dominant or host culture as the second dimension of biculturalism. The relationship to the host culture is marked by a consistent undercurrent pushing adolescents toward assimilation. This assimilation pressure prompts adolescents and parents to explore and adapt to the host cultural system. Chapter 4 moves from
the outside edges of the model in figure 1.3 to the center as we consider qualitative data on how adolescents and parents view the integration stage of bicultural development. Next, in chapter 5, we shift the tone of our discussion to present research on how these two dimensions—enculturation and assimilation—are connected to mental health, health, and adjustment in immigrant adolescents and adults. This exploration of enculturation and assimilation research is followed by a review of biculturalism research in chapter 6. Finally, in chapter 7, we consider how psychologists, social workers, and social service providers can help intervene in this acculturation process and provide information on the *Entre Dos Mundos/Between Two Worlds* bicultural skills training model.