

Acculturation

Acculturation is a process through which a person or group from one culture comes to adopt the practices and values of another culture, while still retaining their own distinct culture. This process is most commonly discussed regarding a minority culture adopting elements of the majority culture, as is typically the case with immigrant groups that are culturally or ethnically distinct from the majority in the place to which they have immigrated.

However, acculturation is a two-way process, so those within the majority culture often adopt elements of minority cultures with which they come into contact. The process plays out between groups where neither is necessarily a majority or a minority. It can happen at both group and individual levels and can occur as a result of in-person contact or contact through art, literature, or media.

Acculturation is not the same as the process of assimilation, though some people use the words interchangeably. Assimilation can be an eventual outcome of the acculturation process, but the process can have other outcomes as well, including rejection, integration, marginalization, and transmutation.