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How Shall we all Live Together?

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Abstract

There is probably no more serious challenge to social stability and cohesion in the contemporary world than the management of intercultural relations within culturally plural societies. Successful management depends on many factors including a research-based understanding of the historical, political, economic, religious, and psychological features of the groups that are in contact. The core question is “How shall we all live together?” In this paper, we seek to provide such research by examining three core psychological principles in 17 culturally plural societies. The main goal of the project is to evaluate these three hypotheses of intercultural relations (multiculturalism, contact, and integration) across societies in order to identify some basic psychological principles that may underlie intercultural relations. The eventual goal is to employ the findings to propose some policies and programmes that may improve the quality of intercultural relationship globally. The empirical findings in these 17 societies generally support the validity of the three hypotheses. Implications for the development of policies and programmes to enhance the quality of intercultural relations are discussed.

How Shall we all Live Together?

Achieving social stability, cohesion, and mutual accommodation are goals that citizens and policymakers in most culturally diverse societies are now seeking (Berry & Sam, 2012). This paper reports on a project “Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies” (MIRIPS; see Berry, 2017, and <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/cacr/research/mirips>). This project was carried out as a basis for attaining these goals. This was done by proposing and then empirically examining three core psychological principles of intercultural relations: multiculturalism, contact, and integration. This research was carried out across 17 culturally plural societies: Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and Switzerland. The first goal of the project was to evaluate these three hypotheses of intercultural relations across these 17 societies. The second goal was to examine the findings to see whether they constitute some ‘universal’ principles of intercultural relations that may be applied in many societies. If they do, it may be possible to propose some policies and programmes to improve the quality of intercultural relationships globally.

The design of the project is an exercise in replication across contexts in order to discern what may be culturally universal and what may be culturally specific in how diverse groups of peoples engage in their intercultural relations. Across the whole project, these replications were carried out with a shared conceptualisation and research instrument. However, the project employed culturally-appropriate operationalisations of the concepts and methods with highly varied samples. It thus represents a multi-trait/multi-method/multi-cultural approach, providing a robust examination of the three principles. The three principles that are evaluated in the MIRIPS project are:

- (1) **Multiculturalism hypothesis:** When individuals feel secure in their place in society, they will be able to better accept those who are different from themselves; conversely when individuals feel threatened, they will reject those who are different.
- (2) **Contact hypothesis:** When individuals have contact with and engage with those who are culturally different from themselves, under certain conditions, they will achieve greater mutual acceptance.
- (3) **Integration hypothesis:** When individuals identify with and are socially connected to, both their heritage culture and to the larger society in which they live, they will achieve higher levels of adaptation (psychological, sociocultural and intercultural) than if they relate to only one or the other culture, or to neither.

Psychological Approaches to Intercultural Relations

The MIRIPS project focuses on the psychological aspects of intercultural relations but takes into account some of the social and political contextual features of the larger societies and of the interacting groups within them. The study is situated within the broad field of cross-cultural psychology, which seeks answers to the question: are individual human behaviours

shaped by the cultural context in which they develop? (Berry et al., 2011). The eventual goal is to achieve a set of universal psychological principles that underlie human behavior globally. In this study, universal is defined as: (i) a phenomenon that shares a common, species-wide substrate of psychological processes and functioning, and (ii) a phenomenon that also exhibits behavioural variations across cultures as this substrate is differentially developed and expressed in daily life.

The project is also situated in the field of intercultural psychology (Sam & Berry, 2016). This field deals with the question: “If individual behaviours are shaped in particular cultural contexts, what happens when individuals who have developed in different cultural contexts meet and interact within another society?” There are two domains of psychological interest here: (i) *ethnocultural group relations* and (ii) *acculturation*. The study of ethnocultural group relations has usually examined the views and behaviours of the dominant group(s) toward the non-dominant ones, using concepts such as ethnic stereotypes, attitudes, prejudice, and discrimination. These views are often assessed with regard to a number of non-dominant groups, such as specific ethnocultural groups and immigrants. This ‘one-way’ view of examining ethnocultural relations misses the understanding of the important reciprocal or mutual views held by non-dominant groups towards dominant group(s). The MIRIPS study has examined the intercultural views of both kinds of groups in contact, using the same concepts and measures with both dominant and non-dominant groups.

The second domain of psychological interest in intercultural psychology is that of acculturation, defined as “the process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between cultural groups and their individual members” (Berry, 2005). Four kinds of changes have been identified: changes in the *customs and repertoire* of groups and individuals that can be relatively easy to accomplish (such as the food, dress, and language); more problematic and challenging changes leading to the phenomenon of *acculturative stress*; the development of a set of *strategies and expectations* about how to deal with living intercultural; and some longer-term *adaptations* as people settle into their intercultural lives.

As in the case of research on ethnocultural group relations, research on acculturation has also typically been a “one-way” approach. When examining the changes, stress, strategies, and adaptations of non-dominant peoples, research has usually missed examining those of members of the dominant group(s) regarding how they think that non-dominant groups and individuals *should* acculturate and live in the plural society. These views of the dominant groups (their attitudes) and of the larger society in general (public policies) have come to be known as *acculturation expectations* (Berry, 2003). In addition, the acculturative changes of the dominant group are also examined.

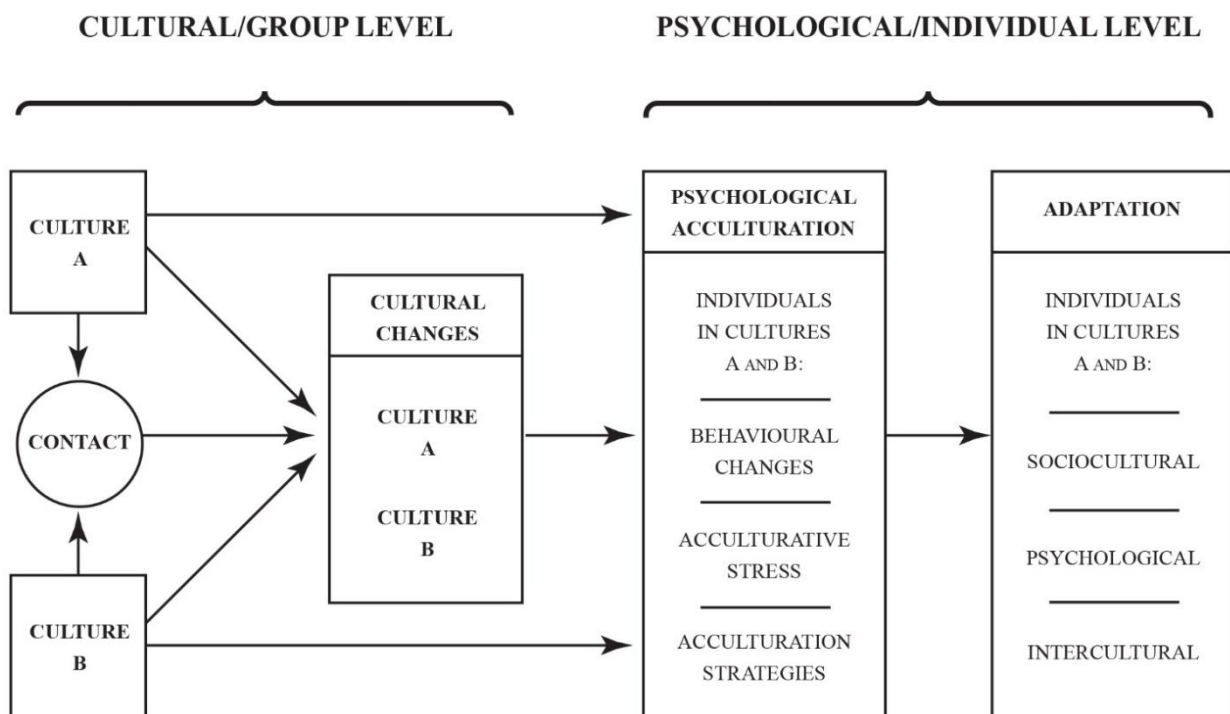
General Framework for the MIRIPS Project

The MIRIPS project is guided by a framework that identifies the main concepts and variables and suggests their inter-relationships (see Figure 1). This figure shows five kinds of acculturation and intercultural relations phenomena:

- (1) the characteristics of the two or more cultural groups (A and B) prior to contact;
- (2) the nature of the contact between them;
- (3) the cultural changes that are taking place in both groups;
- (4) the psychological changes experienced by individuals in both groups in contact, and;
- (5) the longer-term adaptations that may be achieved.

At the cultural group level (on the left of Figure 1), the project seeks to understand key features of the two (or more) original cultural groups prior to their major contact, the nature of their initial and continuing contact relationships, and the resulting dynamic cultural changes in the groups as they emerge as ethnocultural groups during the process of acculturation. These cultural changes can range from being rather easily accomplished (such as evolving a new economic base), to being a source of major cultural disruption (as a result of becoming colonized or enslaved).

Figure 1
General Framework for MIRIPS Project



At the individual level (in the middle of Figure 1), we consider the psychological acculturation that individuals in all groups in contact undergo several changes. Identifying these changes requires sampling a population and studying individuals who are variably involved in the process of acculturation. The figure shows three kinds of psychological changes resulting from contact: behavioural, stress, and strategies. Behavioural changes can be a set of rather

easily accomplished changes (e.g., in ways of speaking, dressing, and eating) or they can be more difficult to accomplish (e.g., changes in identities, self-concept, and values). Second, are changes that result from acculturation experiences that are challenging, even problematic, in which *acculturative stress* manifests. Third, individuals also develop and engage in *acculturation strategies* and *expectations* (Berry, 1980) as their preferred way to acculturate and relate to each other.

Following these three kinds of psychological changes, are some longer-term outcomes, referred to as *adaptations* (on the right of Figure 1). Three kinds of adaptations have been discerned: psychological, sociocultural, and intercultural. The first refers to adaptations that are primarily internal or psychological (e.g., sense of personal well-being and self-esteem, sometimes referred to as 'feeling well'). Ward (1996) distinguishes between *psychological adaptation* and *sociocultural adaptation*. The second type sociocultural and are sometimes called 'doing well'. This form of adaptation is manifested by competence in carrying out the activities of daily intercultural living (such as in the community, at work, and in school). The third is *intercultural adaptation* (Berry, 2005), which refers to the extent to which individuals are able to establish harmonious intercultural relations, with low levels of prejudice and discrimination ('relating well').

Intercultural Strategies and Expectations

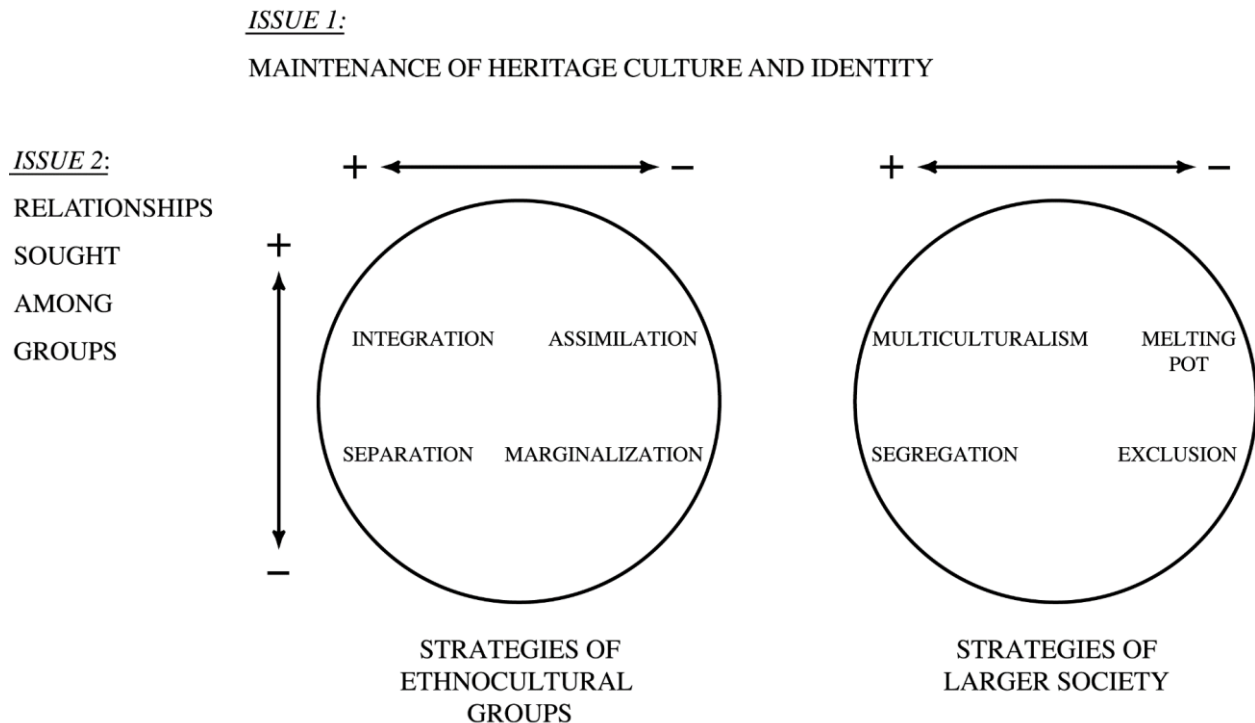
One concept that is central to, and underlies all aspects of acculturation and intercultural relations phenomena, is the way in which people seek to relate to each other in culturally plural societies. As noted above, these are the strategies and expectations that all groups and their individual members have, whether acknowledged explicitly or just implicitly, when they acculturate and engage in intercultural relations. These strategies and expectations can be held by both the dominant and non-dominant individuals and groups that are in contact.

These are based on three underlying issues: (i) the degree to which there is a desire to maintain the group's culture and identity; (ii) the degree to which there is a desire to engage in daily interactions with other groups in the larger society, including both dominant and non-dominant one(s); and (iii) the relative power of the groups in contact to choose their preferred way of engaging each other (Berry, 1980).

Four strategies have been derived from the first two issues facing all acculturating peoples (see Figure 2). There are two sets of concepts, one for the *strategies* of non-dominant groups and their individual members (how do they wish to live interculturally?), and another for the *expectations* of dominant groups in the larger society and of their individual members (how do they think that non-dominant groups and individuals should live interculturally?). The power relations between these two sectors of the population in a plural society are present in the differences between these strategies and expectations. Typically, the dominant group has more power than the non-dominant group to decide on the policies and practices that are operating in the plural society.

Figure 2.

Acculturation Strategies and Expectations Among Ethnocultural Groups and the Larger Society



These issues can be responded to on attitudinal dimensions, on which generally positive or negative orientations to these issues intersect, to define four ways of acculturating. Preferences for these ways carry different names, depending on which groups (the non-dominant or dominant) are being considered. From the point of view of non-dominant ethnocultural groups (on the left of Figure 2), when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the Assimilation strategy is defined. In contrast, when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the Separation alternative is defined. When there is an interest in both maintaining one's original culture, while also having daily interactions with other groups, Integration is the option. In this case, there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time seeking, as a member of an ethnocultural group, to participate as an integral part of the larger society. Finally, when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss) and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) then Marginalization is defined.

Different (but parallel terms) are also used to refer to the four expectations held by members of the larger society (on the right of Figure 2). Assimilation, when sought by the non-dominant acculturating group, is termed the *Melting Pot*. When separation is forced by

the dominant group it is *Segregation*. Marginalization, when imposed by the dominant group, is called *Exclusion*. Finally, for integration, when cultural diversity is a feature of the society as a whole, including all the various ethnocultural groups, it is called *Multiculturalism*. With the use of this framework, comparisons can be made between individuals and their ethnocultural groups, and also between non-dominant peoples and the larger society within which they are acculturating.

Of course, non-dominant individuals and groups do not have the freedom to choose how they want to live interculturally. When the dominant group enforces certain forms of acculturation or intercultural relations, or constrains the choices of non-dominant groups or individuals, then the third element of the framework becomes necessary: the power of the dominant group to influence the strategies available to, and used by, the non-dominant groups (Berry, 1980). As a result, there is a mutual, reciprocal process through which both groups arrive at strategies that will work in a particular society and in a particular setting. For example, integration can only be chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity (i.e., a form of multiculturalism; Berry, 1988; Safdar & van de Vijver, 2019). Thus, a mutual accommodation is required for integration to be attained, involving the acceptance by both groups of the right of all groups to live together as culturally different peoples. This strategy requires non-dominant groups to adopt the basic values of the larger society, while at the same time, the dominant group must be prepared to adapt national institutions (e.g., education, health, labor) to better meet the needs of all groups now living together in the plural society.

Hypotheses

Three hypotheses are evaluated in this project: the multiculturalism hypothesis; the contact hypothesis; and the integration hypothesis. These hypotheses have been derived from the multiculturalism policy advanced by the Federal Government of Canada (1971). This policy promotes both the maintenance of groups' cultural heritages, as well as social interaction and sharing among groups.

Multiculturalism hypothesis

In the policy statement, the *multiculturalism hypothesis* is expressed as that confidence in one's identity will lead to sharing, respect for others, and to the reduction of discriminatory attitudes. That is, confidence is rooted in the cultural maintenance component of the policy, and will lead to the mutual acceptance goal. We have considered this confidence to involve a sense of security (or conversely a sense of threat) to one's person or ethnocultural group. The multiculturalism hypothesis (first advanced by Berry et al., 1977, p.192) is that such a sense of security in one's identity is a psychological precondition for the acceptance of those who are culturally different. Conversely, when one's identity is threatened, people will reject others.

Three kinds of security have been conceptualized by Berry et. al. (1977): *cultural*;

economic; and *personal*. Cultural security refers to a sense that aspects of one's culture (such as identity and language) have a secure status in the society. Economic security refers to the sense that one's economic status (such as job security and house prices) is not going to be diminished in culturally diverse settings. Personal security refers to the sense that one is free to move around without being accosted or attacked. The MIRIPS project assess all three forms of security

In sum, the multiculturalism hypothesis proposes that a high sense of security will predict a preference for the strategies that engage in contact and participation in a larger society: Integration and Assimilation. In addition, this hypothesis proposes that secure individuals will achieve a higher level of intercultural adaptation, including higher scores on Multicultural Ideology and Tolerance. Conversely, when individuals are threatened, especially by acts of discrimination, they will prefer the Separation and Marginalization strategies, and exhibit low levels on the Multicultural Ideology and Tolerance scales.

Contact hypothesis

The *contact hypothesis* derives from the second link in the policy framework, which proposes that intercultural contact and sharing will promote mutual acceptance. The contact hypothesis asserts that "Prejudice... may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals" (Allport, 1954). Allport proposed that the hypothesis is more likely to be supported when certain conditions are present in the intercultural encounter. The effect of contact is predicted to be stronger when there is contact between groups of roughly equal social and economic status. However, in most intercultural situations, equal status is rare. A second condition is that the contact should be voluntary (sought by both groups, rather than imposed). A third condition is that contact should be supported by society, through norms and policies promoting contact and laws prohibiting discrimination.

In sum, the contact hypothesis proposes that under certain conditions, more intercultural contact will be associated with more mutual acceptance. Specifically, more contact will predict higher intercultural adaptation (both Multicultural Ideology and Tolerance), and should also predict a preference for the two strategies of Integration and Assimilation.

Integration hypothesis

The *integration hypothesis* proposes that when individuals and groups seek integration (by being doubly or multiply engaged in both their heritage cultures and with other groups in the larger society) they will be more successful in achieving a higher level of adaptation than if they engage only one or the other of the cultural groups. Various research has demonstrated that the integration strategy is usually associated with better psychological wellbeing (e.g., Berger et al., 2018; Berry et al. 2006; Berry & Hou, 2016). Based on a review of numerous studies, Berry (1997) made the generalization that integration was the most successful strategy for both psychological wellbeing and sociocultural adaptation. This generalization has been examined in a meta-analysis by Nguyen and Benet-Martinez (2013) who concluded that integration ('biculturalism' in their terms) was associated with the most

positive outcomes for migrants' wellbeing.

In sum, the integration hypothesis proposes that when individuals prefer the integration strategy, or have the multiculturalism expectation (when they are doubly or multiply engaged), they will achieve higher scores on psychological, sociocultural, and intercultural adaptation than when they prefer any of the other three strategies. Conversely, especially when individuals are marginalized (when they have no, or few engagements), they will achieve lower adaptations. Preference for the assimilation and separation strategies should result in mid-levels of adaptation.

Method

Samples

The project sought to include a wide range of culturally-plural societies. These included: those that are 'settler societies', with both new migrants and settled ethnocultural groups; those that are experiencing migration relatively recently; those with return migrant flows of 'co-nationals'; and those that have residual populations of non-dominant groups following political realignment. The samples are also diverse, including adults and school children, community groups, online forums, and both snowball and random samples. The total numbers of participants were 7485 members of the dominant group in a society, and 5888 members of the various non-dominant groups.

Variables

There are three categories of variables assessed in the study:

- (1) Socio-demographic variables: Age, Gender, Education, Religion, Socioeconomic Status, Languages known and used, and Ethnic Origin.
- (2) Intercultural variables: Social contacts; Cultural identities (ethnic/national): Security (cultural, economic, personal); Acculturation Strategies/ Expectations (Integration/Multiculturalism; Assimilation/Melting Pot; Separation/Segregation; Marginalisation/Exclusion)
- (3) Adaptation variables: Psychological (Self-esteem; Life satisfaction; Psychological problems); Sociocultural; Intercultural (Multicultural Ideology, Tolerance; Attitudes towards immigrants)

Data Collection and Analysis

Each country research team employed the MIRIPS instrument in a way that met their research needs and their social conditions. Thus, the findings are not strictly comparable across countries. Nevertheless, the core concepts and the three hypotheses remain common, even if they were operationalized somewhat differently. Because of these variations, the goal of the MIRIPS project has not been to place all the data collected in all the societies into one data base, and thereby to carry out pan-cultural analyses (as was done, for example, in the study of immigrant youth (Berry, et.al., 2006).

Each MIRIPS team chose to analyse their data in a way that met their particular

requirements, taking into account their selecting and operationalizing the variables, their local research issues, and the requirements of their funding sources. In some cases, simple mean differences, and bi-variate correlations were used to evaluate the three hypotheses. In other cases, multivariate statistics, such as factor analysis, profile analysis, and path analyses were carried out. In some cases, a combination of these methods was used to gain multiple perspectives on the validity of the three hypotheses.

Results

In the 17 country studies, based on all the samples, there was a maximum of 44 possible evaluations of the three hypotheses (making a total of 132 evaluations overall). These studies included samples of both dominant national and non-dominant ethnic groups in most of the countries; in some countries, there was more than one study, and more than one dominant and non-dominant sample. In some studies, not all hypotheses were evaluated, reducing the total number of possible evaluations to 112 across the three hypotheses.

Despite the lack of strict comparability in the operationalization of the variables across the 17 societies, when examining the findings across the three hypotheses, a fairly clear pattern emerged. First, for the multiculturalism hypothesis, in 36 of the 39 possible evaluations, there was support for the hypothesis. In 3 cases there was no support (in 2 cases there was no relationship between security and acceptance of others, and in the other case there was a contrary finding.) There were 5 cases where this hypothesis was not evaluated.

Second, for the contact hypothesis, in 28 of the 35 possible evaluations there was support for the hypothesis. In the 7 cases of no support, there were 6 cases of no relationship between intercultural contact and the acceptance of others, and 1 case of a contrary finding. There were 9 cases where the hypothesis was not evaluated.

Third, for the integration hypothesis, in 29 of the 37 possible evaluations there was support for the hypothesis, there were 8 cases of no support (6 cases of no relationship between preferring integration/multiculturalism and wellbeing, and 2 cases of contrary findings). There were 7 cases where the hypothesis was not evaluated.

This general result shows that these three hypotheses are supported much more often than not; 92%, 80%, and 78% of the evaluations are positive for the multiculturalism, contact, and integration hypotheses respectively. Of particular importance is that there are very few contrary findings: there is only one negative finding for the multiculturalism and contact, and two negative findings for the integration hypothesis.

Discussion

A summary of evaluations according to the type of sample (dominant or non-dominant) shows that there is a generally common level of support in these two types of samples across the countries in the study. That is, there is little variation in the level of support

between dominant national and non-dominant ethnic samples. This may be taken as evidence for the presence of commonality in intercultural relations in most of these societies.

We are interested not only in evidence of shared support, but also in the degree to which there is *agreement* about these issues between dominant and non-dominant people living in the same society. This is the core of the question of *mutual* intercultural relations: is there support (or not) for the hypotheses in *both* dominant and non-dominant groups within a society? The level of mutuality varied across the three hypotheses. For the multiculturalism hypothesis, there was agreement in the findings between the two kinds of samples in each country in 15 of the 17 societies. For the contact hypothesis, there was agreement in 11 of the 17 societies, and for the integration hypothesis, in 9 of the 17 samples, there was agreement. Overall, we found agreement in 35 of the possible 51 society evaluations (69% of cases).

On this basis, there is some the possibility of developing policies and programmes to improve intercultural relations in those societies. This is most likely to be successful where there is both support for the hypotheses, and mutual agreement between groups in their support. However, in those societies where there is limited support for such a hypothesis, and there is still a possibility of developing policies and programmes by working with that sector of the society where such limited support was found.

Implications of the Findings

Universals

The evidence produced by the research teams in these societies on the validity of these three hypotheses, while variable, has provided a large degree of general support for them. This leads to three questions: Do they qualify as universals of intercultural relations? Second, does this level of support provide a basis for claiming that these three hypotheses are likely to be global in their validity? And third, if so, can they provide a basis for advancing policies and programmes that will improve the quality of intercultural relations elsewhere in the world? The empirical findings do allow the promotion them as candidates for being universal psychological principles of intercultural relations.

Policy and Programme Implications

If the claim for some universality is accepted, we can ask the fundamental question: is such universality sufficient to serve as a basis for promoting these three principles as a valid basis for developing intercultural policy and programme in many societies? Although the three principles were drawn from extant intercultural policies (in Canada, Australia, and the European Union), and have been largely supported by empirical research in Euroamerican psychology, and in the present study in a variety of societies, do they provide a relevant basis for policy development in other plural societies?

In some of the societies just mentioned, there has been a policy transition over the past decades from attempts to assimilate non-dominant (indigenous, ethnocultural, and migrant) peoples into a homogeneous society, one that is more integrationist and multicultural (Berry & Kalin, 2000). Is it possible to emulate this transition in other plural

societies? The lesson here is that change in intercultural policy is possible; if this has been the case in these societies, what conditions may be required in other societies in order to move toward this more pluralist vision? In contrast, some societies appear to have transitioned away from multiculturalism, but this has been questioned (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013; Kymlicka, 2010).

One possible answer is that the kind of evidence provided by the MIRIPS project may be useful to persuade other culturally-diverse societies to move away from extant or emerging assimilation policies that are designed to achieve a culturally-homogeneous society, or policies that exclude those that are different, toward a more multicultural one. In my view, policies that are evidence-based are more likely to be successful than those based only on pre-conceptions or political expediency. However, evidence alone (such as that provided in this project) is unlikely to shift public policy towards more pluralist ways of living together. Other factors are also important, particularly public opinion, political ideology, and the availability of resources.

Public education is required in order to bring about any policy change from assimilation toward a multicultural way of living together. The benefits of the multicultural vision need to be articulated and advocated widely in ways that the general public can understand and accept this vision. Particularly important is the claim that life for everyone is enriched culturally and economically in multicultural societies (Berry, 1998; Berry & Sam, 2014).

These three principles of intercultural relations (of providing a secure and non-discriminatory social and cultural environment, of opportunities for equitable intercultural contact and participation, and of ways to be engaged in and identify with more than one culture) offer a clear basis for moving towards achieving a more harmonious plural society. If this goal of attaining more positive intercultural relations is valued by the general population of the larger society and by policy makers and leaders, then the path forward should be clear. Despite the obvious difficulties in many contemporary societies, these three psychological principles of intercultural relations examined in this project would be an auspicious place to start.

Conclusions

The MIRIPS project is situated in the disciplines of cross-cultural and intercultural psychology. The first main feature of these approaches is that cultural experiences shape the development and expression of human behaviour. The second is that these behaviours are brought to the intercultural arena by all groups and individuals that are in contact. The third main feature is that in order to discern which features of cultural experience shape behaviours in which way, the comparative method is required. And finally, by examining the evidence obtained by empirical research across cultures to identify any general patterns, there is the possibility of discovering some basic pan-cultural (universal or global) psychological principles of intercultural relations. In this project, we followed the steps on this path using the emic/etic strategy. We have sought to articulate these principles, first by conceptually defining some psychological processes that may be theoretically-related to intercultural behaviours, and then by empirically examining them across societies.

In a sense, the project is an example of extended replication. Current controversies about the reproducibility of psychological findings, even within the same society, suggest that our knowledge base is not as secure as previously thought. So, it will be useful to attempt to repeat the empirical examination of the same three MIRIPS hypotheses in a number of different societies in order to broaden our knowledge base. In this project, despite highly variable conditions (demographic, cultural, historical, and policy), there has been a modest degree of replication of psychological findings across contexts. However, more needs to be done to expand the conceptual and empirical basis for appropriate policy development.

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