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*Field Notes
from the Quest
for the
First Use of
Acculturation*



FLOYD W. RUDMIN
TROMSØ, NORWAY

Quests begin in a vague way, as an interest or an orientation, and maybe as a collection of skills. I was probably bent towards this quest at Queen's University, where I was mentored in cross-cultural psychology by John Berry, where I served as a TA in Milt Suboski's statistics and research methods courses, and where I learned the lore of history of psychology with David Murray. Quests often begin unplanned, by happenstance, one thing leading to another. In this case, it was my taking a position at the University of Tromsø, in Norway, arriving just when the first graduating class was seeking supervisors for their thesis research.

Marie-Christine Merametdjian (1995), a French woman of Armenian descent, asked me to help with her research on Somali refugees. She had already collected the data, using acculturation scales developed by David Sam (Sam & Berry, 1995), modeled on those of Uichol Kim, (Berry, Kim, Power, Young & Bujaki, 1989), all under advisement from John Berry. This student's study was my first time to handle acculturation data, and I was very puzzled to see that people could agree to more than one of the acculturation constructs, which are defined to be mutually exclusive. That is, YES, NO answers to the question of first-culture maintenance and YES, NO answers to the question of second-culture contact define the four constructs such that agreeing to one scale should weigh against agreeing to any of the others:

		First-Culture Maintenance	
		Yes	No
Second-Culture Contact	Yes	Integration	Separation
	No	Assimilation	Marginalization

Nevertheless, one Somali respondent agreed to all four, and everyone who agreed to Marginalization (NO, NO) also agreed to Integration (YES, YES). That should be impossible since these constructs are contrary to one another.

A closer examination of other acculturation research showed psychometric anomalies to be common, and I prepared a conference paper criticizing the paradigm (Rudmin, 1996). When Vali Ahmadzadeh, an Iranian refugee student, proposed a term paper on the acculturation of Iranians in Norway, we designed the study to find out how it happens that acculturation psychometrics can go so astray. We found that fourfold acculturation data were contaminated by acquiescence effects and by respondent self-contradictions (Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001). From my statistics background, I sought to find the cause of these faults in the questionnaire items and the constructs that underlie them. For example, acculturation items tend to be double-barreled or worse, and the construct of Marginalization had been operationalized as distress, not as a decided withdrawal from both cultures.

How could it happen that a host of competent scholars who use the fourfold acculturation paradigm, plus ... the entire community of cross-cultural psychologists, all have failed to notice the paradigm's many psychometric faults over a period of 30 years?

The research question now was how could it happen that a host of competent scholars who use the fourfold acculturation paradigm, plus the many editors, review readers, dissertation committees who approve the paradigm, plus the entire community of cross-cultural psychologists, all have failed to notice the paradigm's many psychometric faults over a period of 30 years? From my history background, I sought to attribute the cause of this broad collective failure to the social and historical context of the research rather than misattribute it to the individuals doing the research (MacCoun, 1998). History is one way to escape the confines of the contemporary research community in order to get some distance and perhaps see the degree to which contexts cause bias (Myrdal, 1998). I had written biographies on Gustav Ichheiser (1897-1969) and Alexander Chamberlain (1865-1914), both of whom were scholars of acculturation (Rudmin, Trimpop, Kryl & Boski, 1987; Rudmin, 1990), and in writing the Iranian study, I had found seven acculturation taxonomies developed prior to, or independently of, Berry's. With that base, I researched and wrote a "Critical History of the Acculturation Constructs of Assimilation, Separation, Integration, and Marginalization" (Rudmin, 2003), going back as far as Babylon and finding the first psychological theory of acculturation to be by Plato. The focus, however, was on 68 fourfold acculturation taxonomies between 1918 and 1984 and on their common faults.

This came to press at the same time Berry and Sam's (2003) criticisms of Rudmin and Ahmadzadeh (2001) came to press. Also, the APA had just published a conference proceed-

ings on acculturation, which by happenstance I had been asked to review for the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Rudmin, 2003). Subsequently, I wrote my reply to Berry and Sam (2003) as a lead article for *Applied Psychology* so that it could be a focus of critical commentary (Rudmin, under review). I argued that acculturation research has been enwrapped in the political ideology of liberalism, and I presented more examples of faulty scholarship, including showing how authors in the new APA book had miscited research results. I sent draft copies of this to the authors I was criticizing. Joseph Trimble responded, eventually agreeing with my concerns and then arranging for me to write an encyclopedia article on the origins and definition of "acculturation" (Rudmin, in press). That is how this quest began.

The *Oxford Dictionary* identifies the first use of "acculturation" to be in an 1880 ethnography field manual for the *Study of Indian Languages* by John Wesley Powell, who was then director of the Bureau of Ethnography at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.:

The force of **acculturation** under the overwhelming presence of millions of civilized people has wrought great changes. Primitive Indian society has either been modified or supplanted, primitive religions have been changed, primitive arts lost, and, in like manner, primitive languages

ANOTHER MYSTERY IN OUR HISTORY: WHO WAS SARAH EMMA SIMONS?

Last year, I prepared a "Catalogue of Acculturation Constructs" describing 126 theories between 1918 and 2003. See: <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~culture/rudmin.htm>.

While researching this article, I discovered a 1901 review of social assimilation theories. This was published in five installments in the *American Journal of Sociology* (Vol. 6: 790-822; Vol. 7: 53-79, 234-248, 386-404, 539-556). The scholarship was high calibre, including clear coverage of difficult Russian and German sociological theories of acculturation. For example, Russian sociologist J. Novicow's 1893 book on *Les luttes entre sociétés humaines* included a theory of "denationalization," which we now call "deculturation."

The author of this review was noted to be Sarah E. Simons. No academic affiliation was listed, just the identification that she was writing from Washington, D.C. Who was she? The U.S. Library of Congress shows that her full name was Sarah Emma Simons, born in 1867. The Library credits her with 9 books. She co-authored with, or edited, such famous men of the day as William Cullen Bryant, Thomas Huxley, Lester Ward, and Thomas Bulfinch. Her last listed publication was in 1928, at the age of 61, a collection of readings in American literature.

It was not easy, at the turn-of-the-century, to be a woman in academics, as shown, for example, by the career of Mary Whiton Calkins. From the quality of Simons' review of 19th century acculturation theory, she was evidently a well-educated and capable scholar. It is unfortunate for our field that we did not welcome her in, nor appreciate her contributions.

By Floyd Rudmin, Tromsø, 16 May 2004

have not remained unmodified (Powell, 1880, p. 46).

Powell did not define "acculturation" nor did he give any indications that this was a new or unfamiliar word. Thus, there probably was an earlier usage of it. A footnote mentioned that Sagard's 1632 *Dictionnaire de la langue Huronne* had discussed how "new words were invented or brought in fashion" (Powell, 1880, p. 63). So maybe "acculturation" came from Canada, from early French studies of Native languages? But, no, Sagard (1632/1865) did not use the word.

Still, a French connection was plausible considering that France had an early interest in the transformation of ethnic minorities into citizens of the nation state. However, *Trésor de la langue française* identifies "acculturation" as coming from English and to be first used by Powell in 1880. *Le grand Larousse* reports the first use in French to have been a 1938 translation of an American text. Using *Poole's Periodical Index*, I discovered an 1893 article by Gustave LeBon, translated from French, on "The Evolution of Civilization and the Arts." LeBon discussed acculturative phenomena, but did not use the word "acculturation." This all rules against a French origin.

Back to Powell in Washington, D.C. In an 1881 article, Powell twice used the word "acculturation," but always as though it were a known word:

1. But in pursuing these studies the greatest caution must be observed in discriminating what is primitive from what has been acquired from civilized man by the various processes of **acculturation** (Powell, 1881, p. 77).
2. The history of man, from the lowest tribal condition to the highest national organization, has been a history of constant and multifarious admixture of strains of blood; of admixture, absorption, and destruction of languages with general progress toward unity; of the diffusion of arts by various processes of **acculturation**; and of admixture and reciprocal diffusion of customs, institutions and traditions (Powell, 1881, pp. 81-82).

Powell's use here suggests that "acculturation" is related to, but different from, processes of "admixture and reciprocal diffusion."

At the 1881 meeting of the Anthropological Society of Washington, Powell argued that "the three stages of culture are: 1. **acculturation**; 2. education; 3. investigation" (Fifty-Seventh Regular Meeting, 1882, p. 13). In his 1883 presidential address to the Anthropological Society, Powell argued that the evolution of mind entails a reciprocal development of technology, language, and thought, all oriented towards action:

Objective activities arise from designs. The vast course of evolution through which the human mind has passed in its highest estate has been due to the reaction of activities upon the mind itself, i.e., the mind has grown through the exercise in objective activities. Man is impelled to this exercise by his desire for happiness, and thus he invents arts, institutions, languages, and philosophies. The initial steps in this process are original inventions, and these are taken by the leading minds. Then others follow in these steps by imitation, selecting such inventions as will increase happiness. By this process they re-invent for themselves and, to a large extent exercise their mind in the same psychic activities. This is **acculturation**. It is the subjective adjustment of the lower

to the higher. Finally, activities are objectively diffused by instruction. ... Psychological evolution, therefore, the evolution of the individual man, arises through the three agencies—invention, **acculturation**, and instruction (Powell, 1883, pp. 206-207).

Thus, acculturation is not the imitation process per se, but the changes in thinking induced by imitation.

Powell expanded these ideas in his 1886 presidential address:

In the vast commingling of peoples through the enormous development of means of transportation in later civilization, everywhere savage and barbaric peoples are associated more or less with civilized men. In this association, the lower races always borrow something of arts, institutions, languages, and also of philosophic opinions (Powell, 1888, p. 105).

But not all civilizing changes are acculturative. Referring to the large Asian empires, Powell (1888, p. 112) explained: "Dynasties were changed from within rather than from without, and progress was autogenous rather than by **acculturation**."

Powell seems to have been alone in using "acculturation" in the 1880s, but he never claimed it as his own idea and coinage, nor did he attribute it to anyone else. In the 1890s, the word came into common usage, but almost exclusively among scholars affiliated with the Bureau of Ethnography, e. g. William McGee (1895, 1898), Otis Mason (1895), and J. Walter Fewkes (1896). However, none these followers identified "acculturation" as Powell's concept, nor cited anyone else as its originator. Mason might have left a clue in his 1895 book *The Origins of Invention: A Study of Industry among Primitive Peoples*. Here he did not use the word "acculturation," but he did use the word "apperception" in describing how Nature "aroused the apperception [of Mankind] and stimulated him to those never ceasing changes which constitute the life of progress" (Mason, 1895/1966, p. 20). "Apperception" was a concept developed by the German psychologist Herbart, and then further elaborated by

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Since 1995, Floyd Rudmin has been professor psychology at the University of Tromsø in Arctic Norway. His degrees include a BA in philosophy from Bowdoin College, an MA in audiology from the University of Buffalo, and an MA and PhD in psychology from Queen's University in Canada. His cross-cultural experiences include field epidemiology in the Philippine Malaria Eradication Service, ESL teaching in Japan, and migrations from the USA to Canada and from Canada to Norway. His research topics have included dichotic auditory tests, hearing aid acoustics, psychology of ownership, cognitive history, and most recently the psychometrics and history of acculturation constructs.

Norway:

frudmin@psyk.uit.no
+47 77 64 59 53

Canada:

frudmin@cgocable.net
+1 (613) 549-6538

Hymann Steinthal in his theoretical accounts of linguistic and mental evolution (Whitney, 1872). Steinthal was also a disciple of Wilhelm von Humboldt, whose 1836 treatise *On Language: The Diversity of Human Language Structure and its Influence on the Mental Development of Mankind* discussed acculturative processes, for example, Hinduism's influences in Java. If Powell encountered the concept of "acculturation" in the 1870s accounts of Steinthal's theories, then the word might have a German origin.

This quest seems to have established that the word "acculturation" ... was cast in concepts of progressive evolution, from savagery to barbarism to civilization.

However, when Franz Boas came to the USA from Germany in 1888, his first speech in New York City was an extended discussion of "acculturation," but he did not use the word. Boas thought acculturation was universal, and he opposed the prevailing concept that inferior cultures learn from superior cultures, but not visa-versa:

It is not too much to say that there is no people whose customs have developed uninfluenced by foreign culture, that has not borrowed arts and ideas which it has developed in its own way (Boas, 1888/1940, p. 631).

He used English as an example of a language arising through acculturative mixture, and he noted that "the steel harpoon used by American and Scotch whalers is a slightly modified imitation of the Eskimo harpoon" (Boas, 1888/1940, p. 632). Boas seemed to prefer the word "assimilation" and used it repeatedly, e.g. "New ideas are assimilated according to the culture of the recipient people" (Boas, 1888/1940, p. 638). Boas' first use of the word "acculturation" was probably in 1896, after he had become familiar with the writings of the scholars from the Bureau of Ethnography.

Thus, this quest so far seems to have well established that the word "acculturation" 1) came into usage via Powell and the Bureau of Ethnography, 2) described the psychology of intercultural imitation, 3) was possibly German in origin but probably not French, and 4) was cast in concepts of progressive evolution, from savagery to barbarism to civilization.

In the 1870s, progressive evolution was very much a part of the American *zeitgeist*. For example, in 1873, John Fiske wrote that "the integration of small tribes into larger and more complex social aggregates, which is the fundamental phenomenon in civilization, tends directly to heighten representativeness of thinking by widening and varying the experiences of the members of society" (Fiske, 1873, p. 277). In 1875, Hubert Bancroft argued that mental evolution requires intercultural communication:

[W]ithout intercommunication of ideas the intellect must lie dormant. Thus it is with individuals, and with societies it is the same (Bancroft, 1875, p. 58).

Lewis Henry Morgan also described the progressive evolution of the mind:

With the production of inventions and discoveries, and with the growth of institutions, the human mind necessarily grew and expanded; and we are led to recognize a gradual enlargement of the brain itself, particularly of the cerebral portion (Morgan, 1877/1958, p. 36).

Powell's first edition of his research guide for the *Study of Indian Languages* was published in 1877, and it did not use the word "acculturation." Thus, some place in the late 1870s, Powell probably encountered the word "acculturation." It may have come from some minor publication or speech by Lewis Henry Morgan, whom Powell (1879, p. 62) called "America's greatest anthropologist," from whom he took the evolutionary concepts of "savagery," "barbarism," and "civilization," and for whom he wrote a biography (Powell, 1881). Morgan's last manuscript was published in 1881, "by invitation of my friend Major J. W. Powell" (Morgan, 1881/1965, p. xxv). But Morgan did not mention acculturative processes in that book, nor did he use the word "acculturation" there. Although Morgan was very focused on the evolution of institutions, not on language and psychology, he remains a possible candidate for the first use of "acculturation."

Otis Mason, who used "acculturation" in the 1890s, had prepared 1879 and 1880 bibliographies on anthropology for the Bureau of Ethnography, and surely Powell would have contributed titles to those bibliographies. Thus, it is possible that the source of the first use of "acculturation" would be in those listings. In any case, the first use must have been in a prominent source, prominent to the degree that the word would be expected to be known to other ethnographers, but apparently was not. The quest continues.

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