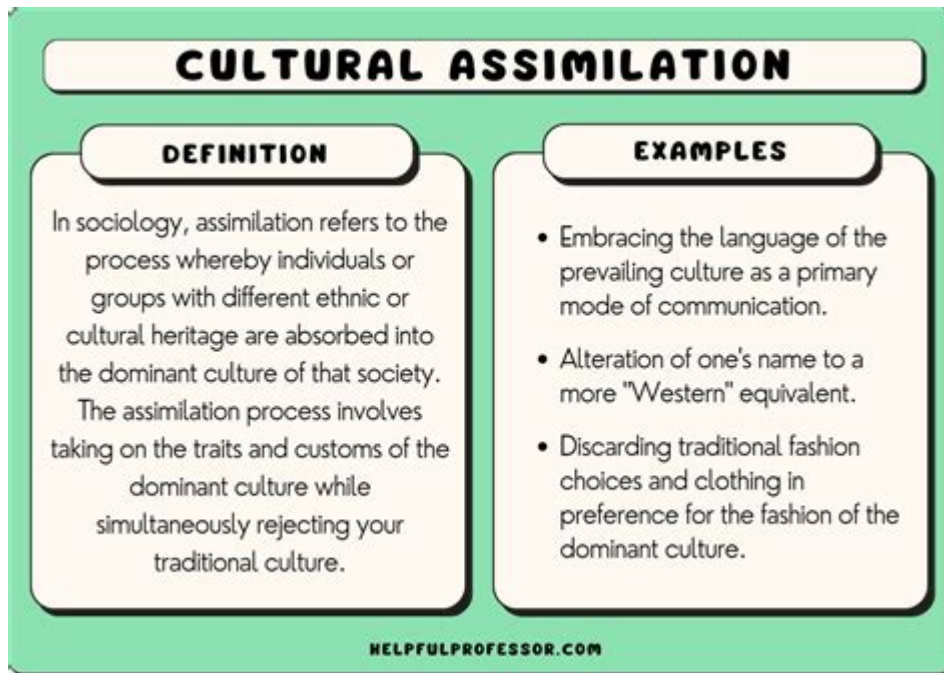


Definition Of Assimilation In Sociology



The Definition of Assimilation in Sociology: A Comprehensive Guide

Introduction:

Have you ever wondered how different groups of people interact and integrate within a larger society? The sociological concept of assimilation offers a powerful lens through which we can understand this complex process. This comprehensive guide dives deep into the definition of assimilation in sociology, exploring its various forms, impacts, and the ongoing debates surrounding it. We'll dissect the nuances, examine contrasting perspectives, and provide you with a clear understanding of this crucial sociological concept. Get ready to unravel the complexities of assimilation and its role in shaping our diverse world.

What is Assimilation in Sociology?

The definition of assimilation in sociology goes beyond simple integration. It refers to the process by which individuals or groups of a different culture, ethnicity, or nationality merge into and become part of the dominant culture of a society. This involves adopting the language, values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms of the majority group, often at the expense of their own cultural identity. It's a multifaceted process that can occur gradually over generations or more rapidly through deliberate

policies or social pressures. Importantly, assimilation isn't necessarily a voluntary or equal exchange; power dynamics often play a significant role.

The Spectrum of Assimilation: From Complete to Marginal

Assimilation doesn't operate on a simple "yes" or "no" scale. Sociologists recognize a spectrum of assimilation levels:

Complete Assimilation: This represents the complete absorption of a minority group into the dominant culture, to the point where distinct cultural traits are virtually indistinguishable. This is a rarely achieved ideal.

Cultural Assimilation: This focuses on adopting the dominant culture's language, values, and behaviors, while potentially retaining some aspects of one's original culture.

Structural Assimilation: This involves integration into the social institutions of the dominant culture, such as schools, workplaces, and political organizations.

Marital Assimilation: This refers to intermarriage between members of the dominant and minority groups.

Psychological Assimilation: This represents the internalization of the dominant culture's values and beliefs, leading to a sense of belonging and identification with the majority group.

Marginalization: This represents a failure to integrate, leaving individuals or groups feeling alienated and excluded from both their original and the dominant culture.

Factors Influencing the Assimilation Process

Several factors contribute to the pace and nature of assimilation:

1. Government Policies:

Governments can actively promote or hinder assimilation through immigration policies, education systems, and social welfare programs. Policies promoting integration often accelerate the process, while restrictive policies can create barriers.

2. Social Networks and Community Support:

Strong social networks within the minority group can act as a buffer, slowing assimilation and preserving cultural identity. Conversely, lack of social support can hasten assimilation as individuals seek acceptance within the larger society.

3. Economic Opportunities:

Economic incentives and opportunities can drive assimilation. The desire for better jobs or housing can motivate individuals to adopt the dominant culture's norms to enhance their economic prospects.

4. Prejudice and Discrimination:

Prejudice and discrimination can significantly impact the assimilation process. Experiencing rejection and hostility can create barriers to integration and lead to the formation of tight-knit minority communities that resist assimilation.

Criticisms and Alternatives to Assimilation

The concept of assimilation has faced considerable criticism from sociologists. Critics argue that it often leads to the loss of valuable cultural diversity and can perpetuate inequalities by imposing a dominant culture's values on minority groups. The focus on assimilation can overshadow the importance of multiculturalism and integration models that celebrate cultural diversity while fostering social cohesion.

Multiculturalism as an Alternative:

Multiculturalism emphasizes the value of preserving and celebrating cultural differences within a society. It advocates for policies that support the maintenance of diverse cultural identities while promoting equal rights and opportunities for all.

Conclusion:

The definition of assimilation in sociology reveals a complex process shaped by a multitude of factors. While assimilation can lead to social cohesion, its potential to erase cultural diversity and perpetuate inequalities demands critical consideration. Understanding the complexities of assimilation allows us to develop more inclusive and equitable policies that promote both social harmony and the preservation of cultural richness. The ongoing debate between assimilation and multiculturalism highlights the challenges and opportunities inherent in navigating a diverse and increasingly interconnected world.

FAQs:

1. Is assimilation always a positive process? No, assimilation can have negative consequences, leading to the loss of cultural heritage and potentially exacerbating existing social inequalities.
2. What is the difference between assimilation and integration? While both involve the incorporation of minority groups, assimilation emphasizes the adoption of the dominant culture, whereas integration allows for the preservation of cultural identity alongside participation in society.
3. How does globalization affect assimilation? Globalization's increased interconnectedness can accelerate assimilation by exposing minority groups to dominant cultural influences, but it can also strengthen transnational communities that resist assimilation.
4. Are there examples of successful assimilation? Many societies have experienced varying degrees of successful assimilation, but the concept of "success" is often subjective and influenced by the perspectives of those involved.
5. What role does education play in the assimilation process? Education plays a crucial role, shaping individuals' understanding of the dominant culture and providing access to opportunities that facilitate integration, but its effectiveness depends heavily on its inclusivity and responsiveness to diversity.

definition of assimilation in sociology: Remaking the American Mainstream Richard D. Alba, Victor Nee, 2009-06-30 In this age of multicultural democracy, the idea of assimilation--that the social distance separating immigrants and their children from the mainstream of American society closes over time--seems outdated and, in some forms, even offensive. But as Richard Alba and Victor Nee show in the first systematic treatment of assimilation since the mid-1960s, it continues to shape the immigrant experience, even though the geography of immigration has shifted from Europe to Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Institutional changes, from civil rights legislation to immigration law, have provided a more favorable environment for nonwhite immigrants and their children than in the past. Assimilation is still driven, in claim, by the decisions of immigrants and the second generation to improve their social and material circumstances in America. But they also show that immigrants, historically and today, have profoundly changed our mainstream society and culture in the process of becoming Americans. Surveying a variety of domains--language, socioeconomic attachments, residential patterns, and intermarriage--they demonstrate the continuing importance of assimilation in American life. And they predict that it will blur the boundaries among the major, racially defined populations, as nonwhites and Hispanics are increasingly incorporated into the mainstream.

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public sphere may be self-subverting. To flesh out this insight, Jansen draws on the paradoxes of assi

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challenges to each. Important conclusions include a keen reminder that identities are often formed along borders both external and internal, that structure and culture operate dialectically, and that national identity is hardly a monolithic, static formation.

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definition of assimilation in sociology: *The New Second Generation* Alejandro Portes, 1996-05-10 The children of the past decade's influx of immigrants comprise a second generation far different than any this country has known before. Largely non-white and from the world's developing nations, these children struggle with complex problems of racial and ethnic relations in multicultural urban neighborhoods, attend troubled inner city schools, and face discriminatory labor markets and an economy that no longer provides the abundant manufacturing jobs that sustained previous

generations of immigrants. As the contributors to *The New Second Generation* make clear, the future of these children is an open question that will be key to understanding the long-range consequences of current immigration. The *New Second Generation* chronicles the lives of second generation youth in Miami, New York City, New Orleans, and Southern California. The contributors balance careful analysis with the voices of the youngsters themselves, focusing primarily on education, career expectations, language preference, ethnic pride, and the influence of their American-born peers. Demographic portraits by Leif Jensen and Yoshimi Chitose and by Charles Hirschman reveal that although most immigrant youths live at or below the official poverty line, this disadvantage is partially offset by the fact that their parents are typically married, self-employed, and off welfare. However, the children do not always follow the course set by their parents, and often challenge immigrant ethics with a desire to embrace American culture. Mary Waters examines how the tendency among West Indian teens to assume an American black identity links them to a legacy of racial discrimination. Although the decision to identify as American or as immigrant usually presages how well second generation children will perform in school, the formation of this self-image is a complex process. M. Patricia Fernandez-Kelly and Richard Schauffler find marked differences among Hispanic groups, while Ruben G. Rumbaut explores the influence of individual and family characteristics among Asian, Latin, and Caribbean youths. Nativists frequently raise concerns about the proliferation of a non-English speaking population heavily dependent on welfare for economic support. But Alejandro Portes and Richard Schauffler's historical analysis of language preferences among Miami's Hispanic youth reveals their unequivocal preference for English. Nor is immigration an inevitable precursor to a swollen welfare state: Lisandro Perez and Min Zhou and Carl L. Bankston demonstrate the importance of extended families and ethnic community solidarity in improving school performance and providing increased labor opportunities. As immigration continues to change the face of our nation's cities, we cannot ignore the crucial issue of how well the second generation youth will adapt. *The New Second Generation* provides valuable insight into issues that may spell the difference between regeneration and decay across urban America.

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definition of assimilation in sociology: *Oxford Textbook of Migrant Psychiatry* Dinesh Bhugra, 2021-02-04 Migrant psychiatry is an evolving subdiscipline within cultural psychiatry that deals with the impact of migration on the mental health of those who have migrated and those who work with these groups and provide services to them. Stress related to migration affects migrants and their extended families either directly or indirectly. The process of migration is not just a phase, but leads on to a series of adjustments, including acculturation, which may occur across generations. Factors such as changes in diet, attitudes and beliefs, and overall adjustment are important in settling down and making the individuals feel secure. This period of adjustment will depend upon the individual migrant's pre-migration experiences, migration process and post-migration experiences, but also upon an individual's personality, social support and emotional response to migration. Socio-demographic factors, such as age, gender, educational, and economic status will all play a role in post-migration adjustment. In order to understand the impact on individuals, not only the type of migration and different stressors, but also the types of psychological mechanisms at a personal level and the resources and processes at a societal level need to be explored. Despite the number of refugees and asylum seekers around the world increasing at an astonishing rate, the mental health needs of migrants are often ignored by policy makers and clinicians. The *Oxford Textbook of Migrant Psychiatry* is designed to serve as the comprehensive reference resource on the mental health of migrants, bringing together both theoretical and practical aspects of the mental health needs of refugees and asylum seekers for researchers and professionals. Individual chapters summarise

theoretical constructs related to theories of migration, the impact of migration on mental health and adjustment, collective trauma, individual identity and diagnostic fallacies. The book also covers the practical aspects of patient management including cultural factors, ethnopsychopharmacology, therapeutic interaction and therapeutic expectation, and psychotherapy. Finally, the book will examine special clinical problems and special patient groups. Part of the authoritative Oxford Textbooks in Psychiatry series, this resource will serve as an essential reference for psychiatrists, mental health professionals, general practitioners/primary care physicians, social workers, policy makers and voluntary agencies dealing with refugees and asylum seekers.

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their own culture and couldn't grasp that of their new society. Designed to detail a failure the author says is widely acknowledged but little examined, this book will be of interest to both specialists and general readers. Masterful. . . . McKee transports the reader back to the intellectual world in which the early sociologists worked and does not simply treat them as evil racists. His approach is informed by the sociology of knowledge. -- Lewis M. Killian, author of *The Impossible Revolution*, Phase 2: Black Power and the American Dream

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Psychology David L. Sam, John W. Berry, 2006-08-03 In recent years the topic of acculturation has evolved from a relatively minor research area to one of the most researched subjects in the field of cross-cultural psychology. This edited handbook compiles and systemizes the current state of the art by exploring the broad international scope of acculturation. A collection of the world's leading experts in the field review the various contexts for acculturation, the central theories, the groups and individuals undergoing acculturation (immigrants, refugees, indigenous people, expatriates, students and tourists) and discuss how current knowledge can be applied to make both the process and its outcome more manageable and profitable. Building on the theoretical and methodological framework of cross-cultural psychology, the authors focus specifically on the issues that arise when people from one culture move to another culture and the reciprocal adjustments, tensions and benefits involved.

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2004-05-25 Provides a coherent theoretical framework for the sociological analysis of ethnicity

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Laotian organization included refugees from different parts of Asia, a Japanese organization began to advocate for South Asian populations, and a Chinese organization opened its doors to Filipinos and Vietnamese. As Okamoto argues, the process of building ties between ethnic communities while also recognizing ethnic diversity is the hallmark of panethnicity. *Redefining Race* is a groundbreaking analysis of the processes through which group boundaries are drawn and contested. In mapping the genesis of a panethnic Asian American identity, Okamoto illustrates the ways in which concepts of race continue to shape how ethnic and immigrant groups view themselves and organize for representation in the public arena.

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Postcolonial Sociology

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What accounts for our tastes? Why and how do they change over time? Stanley Lieberson analyzes children's first names to develop an original theory of fashion. He disputes the commonly-held notion that tastes in names (and other fashions) simply reflect societal shifts.

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In *African American Pioneers of Sociology*, Pierre Saint-Arnaud examines the lasting contributions that African Americans have made to the field of sociology. Arguing that science is anything but a neutral construct, he defends the radical stances taken by early African American sociologists from accusations of intellectual infirmity by foregrounding the racist historical context of the time these influential works were produced. Examining key figures such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Edward Franklin Frazier, Charles Spurgeon Johnson, Horace Roscoe Cayton, J.G. St. Clair Drake, and Oliver Cromwell Cox, Saint-Arnaud reveals the ways in which many aspects of modern sociology emerged from these authors' radical views on race, gender, religion, and class. Beautifully translated from its original French, *African American Pioneers of Sociology* is a stunning examination of the influence of African American intellectuals and an essential work for understanding the origins of sociology as a modern discipline.

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Contains over 2,500 alphabetically arranged entries providing definitions of terms and ideas related to sociology, along with cross-references, and biographical sketches of key individuals in the field.

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Has multiculturalism failed? Is it time to move on? What is the alternative? Ali Rattansi explores the issues, from national identity and social cohesion to cultural fragmentation and 'political correctness'. Providing a balanced assessment of the truth and falsity of the charges against multiculturalism, he explores new ideas for the future. Multiculturalism appears to be in terminal crisis. It has been blamed for undermining national identity, diluting social cohesion, creating ethnic ghettos and cultural fragmentation, providing fertile ground for Islamic radicalism, encouraging perverse 'political correctness', and restricting liberal freedoms of expression, amongst other things. The public debate over multiculturalism has polarised opinion amongst the general public, policy makers, and politicians. But how much real evidence, beyond tabloid headlines and anecdotes, exists for these claims? In this Very Short Introduction, Ali Rattansi considers the actual evidence from social science research to provide a balanced assessment of the truth and falsity of the charges against multiculturalism. Dispelling many myths in the process, he also warns about the dangers that lurk in an uncritical endorsement of multiculturalism, and concludes by arguing that it is time to move on to a form of 'interculturalism'. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

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Twenty years since the publication of the Second Edition and more than thirty years since the publication of the original book, *Racial Formation in the United States*

now arrives with each chapter radically revised and rewritten by authors Michael Omi and Howard Winant, but the overall purpose and vision of this classic remains the same: Omi and Winant provide an account of how concepts of race are created and transformed, how they become the focus of political conflict, and how they come to shape and permeate both identities and institutions. The steady journey of the U.S. toward a majority nonwhite population, the ongoing evisceration of the political legacy of the early post-World War II civil rights movement, the initiation of the 'war on terror' with its attendant Islamophobia, the rise of a mass immigrants rights movement, the formulation of race/class/gender 'intersectionality' theories, and the election and reelection of a black President of the United States are some of the many new racial conditions *Racial Formation* now covers.

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