

Emotional acculturation

Prof. dr. Batja Mesquita (Leuven University, Belgium)

Abstract

People's emotional lives differ substantially across cultures. In each culture, emotional experiences and responses tend to be coordinated with the prevalent cultural models of relationships. Therefore, under normal circumstances emotions are functional to the relationships which they occur. But what happens when people change places? What happens when the culture for which emotions are socialized and the culture in which they are play out are discordant? Do their emotions acculturate? This is the topic of the current talk. I will present research suggesting that emotions do in fact acculturate, that emotional acculturation is a two-dimensional process, and that emotional fit with one's environment produces psychological wellbeing. Moreover, I will suggest that emotional acculturation is orthogonal to the traditional acculturation scales: Immigrants' self-reports of acculturation are unrelated to their (implicit measures of) emotional acculturation.