THE EMERGENCE OF BICULTURALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE CULTURE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

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Abstract: In the context of relations between the cultures of deafness and non-deafness, people find the word "biculturalism" less controversial because the distinction between spoken language and sign language commonly seems like a genuine binary distinction—transcending the distinctions between various spoken languages.Biculturalism in sociology describes the co-existence, to varying degrees, of two originally distinct cultures.

Key words: Biculturalism Cultural identity, Cultural integration, Multiculturalism, Cross-cultural adaptation, Identity formation, Cultural diversity, Acculturation, Cultural hybridity.

Official policy recognizing, fostering, or encouraging biculturalism typically emerges in countries that have emerged from a history of national or ethnic conflict in which neither side has gained complete victory. This condition usually arises from colonial settlement. Resulting conflicts may take place either between the colonisers and indigenous peoples (as in Fiji) and/or between rival groups of colonisers (as in, for example, South Africa). A deliberate policy of biculturalism influences the structures and decisions of governments to ensure that they allocate political and economic power and influence equitably between people and/or groups identified with each side of the cultural divide.

Examples include the conflicts between Anglophone and Francophone Canadians, between Anglophone White South Africans and Boers, and between the indigenous Māori people and European settlers in New Zealand. The term biculturalism was originally adopted in Canada, most notably by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963–1969), which recommended that Canada become officially bilingual.

Because the term biculturalism suggests, more or less explicitly, that only two cultures merit formal recognition, advocates of multiculturalism (for which biculturalism formed a precedent) may regard bicultural outlooks as an inadequate

descriptor by comparison. This was the case in Canada where Ukrainian Canadians activists such as Jaroslav Rudnyckyj, Paul Yuzyk and other "third force"[further explanation needed] successfully pressured the Canadian government to adopt multiculturalism as official policy in 1971.

In the context of the United States of America, bicultural distinctions have traditionally existed between the US and Mexico, and between the White and the African-American population of the US.

Regions which formally recognize biculturalism include:

Belgium, divided basically between speakers of French and of Dutch

Vanuatu, formerly a condominium with both French and British politico-administrative traditions the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, retrospectively termed "The Commonwealth of Both Peoples"

Switzerland, overwhelmingly German and French in language (though with recognition of Italian and Romansch)

Paraguay, with a population 90% of which speaks Guaraní and 99% of which speaks Spanish

New Zealand, where the Treaty of Waitangi forms the basis of a relationship between the Crown and Māori iwi (tribes) through which te reo Māori is recognised as an official language, and Māori have protected representation in Parliament through the Māori electorates

Hong Kong, where both Chinese and English are official languages[1]

Biculturalism refers to the ability of a person to function effectively in two different cultures. This can mean a deep understanding and appreciation of two different cultural identities, often resulting from growing up in or being exposed to multiple cultural environments.

Bicultural individuals can move seamlessly between the customs, languages, social norms, and behaviors of both cultures. They are able to move freely between cultural contexts and can incorporate elements of each culture into their own identity, creating a unique blend of cultural influences.

Biculturalism can be seen as a form of cultural competence because bicultural individuals are often adept at bridging cultural differences and facilitating communication and understanding between people of different backgrounds.

It should be noted that biculturalism is not limited to individuals who grew up in two different countries or regions. People can become bicultural through a variety of means, such as immigration, intercultural relationships, or extensive exposure to different cultures through travel, education, or work experience.

Biculturalism can enrich people's lives by providing them with diverse perspectives, opportunities for personal growth, and opportunities to connect with a wider range of people. At the same time, it can present challenges such as managing conflicting cultural expectations or feeling like you don't quite belong in a particular culture.

Biculturalism is a dynamic and complex phenomenon that reflects the increasingly interconnected nature of the modern world. It represents the ability of people to embrace and develop in different cultural environments.

In conclusion, biculturalism can enrich people's lives by providing diverse experiences, perspectives, and opportunities for personal and social growth. However, it can also present challenges such as navigating cultural identity conflicts or feeling like you don't quite belong in any culture. Ultimately, the impact of biculturalism on one's lifestyle will vary based on individual experience, cultural background, and personal preference. These characteristics enable bicultural individuals to navigate the complexities of living in a multicultural world and contribute positively to diverse communities and societies.

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