



## Remote Acculturation

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### What is it?

**Acculturation** is cultural change resulting from firsthand contact between individuals and a new cultural environment. Remote acculturation results from indirect exposure to distant cultures through media, trade, or digital communication rather than migration or in person contact. Globalization is a driving force behind this process, expanding access to consumer goods and media from different countries, leading to the indirect transfer of cultural norms, values, and behaviors between geographically distant groups.

### Who uses the concept?

While proximal acculturation primarily applies to migration contexts, remote acculturation mostly addresses cultural change among non-migrants. Individuals can experience acculturative change due to indirect intercultural contact with geographically distant cultures—those in which they have never lived. Therefore, the concept is relevant not only to migration studies, but also to research on globalization, cultural identity, sociology, psychology, and media studies.

### Fit with intercultural dialogue?

Intercultural dialogue assumes direct, face-to-face interaction. However, remote acculturation challenges this view by showing that dialogue can occur indirectly—through global media or digital platforms—between groups that have never met in person. This redefines the scope of intercultural dialogue, introducing new opportunities as well as challenges. The widespread sharing of knowledge

and cultural symbols facilitated by globalization—and the resulting remote acculturation—may reduce cultural misunderstandings and enhance the quality of intercultural dialogue in the future.

### What work remains?

Existing studies have examined how remote acculturation affects well-being, family relationships, and identity, however, the gender dimension remains underexplored. Some findings suggest that women may experience acculturation at a different rate or way than men, adopting values such as education and independence during migration. This raises a question: could female migrants experience a form of remote acculturation even before undergoing proximal acculturation in their destination cultures? Exploring this possibility would offer valuable insights into gendered patterns of cultural change in our globalized world.

### Resources

Ferguson, G. M., & Bornstein, M. H. (2012). Remote acculturation: The “Americanization” of Jamaican Islanders. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 36(3), 167-177.

Soubra, N., Tavitian-Elmadjian, L., & Adams, B. (2024). The proximal distant: How does remote acculturation affect wellbeing in the multicultural context of Lebanon? *Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology*, 6, 100183