HOW TO DEAL WITH CULTURAL SHOCK? – THE CASE OF BOSNIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE USA

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Abstract: Question of overcoming the cultural shock and assuming the position in relation to the new culture is very important, not only for a great number of modern societies coloured by multicultural elements and need to most adequately answer the demands of minority groups, but it is also important for understanding the problems of immigrants and IDP groups within a society. Seen from the perspective of the sociology of education and sociology of family but also culturally sensitive pedagogy, understanding the stages of cultural shock is therefore applicable in working with minority groups, immigrants and IDP families and individuals but also in understanding the needs of a large number of Bosnians who have fled Bosnia in recent decades and found a refuge and a chance for a new life in some of the countries of the EU, the USA or Australia. In our researches, by using Questionnaire of Cultural Sensitivity with members of two generations, and applying the systematic observation of behaviour and communication in natural conditions, we came to a number of interesting conclusions. Specifically, it is obvious that the first generation (today's parents) experienced a cultural shock when faced with the norms of the new society in which they had to integrate, but for their children, due to the absence of stronger ties with the country of origin, the cultural shock began the moment they opened up the process of familiarization with the culture of origin, culture of their ancestors. The logical consequence of such strategies of facing the new culture, especially because of the lack of sense of emotional and intellectual capital regarding parents' generation, seeks to compensate with the increased activities in the area of creating social capital. This capital is most easily achieved through forms of association in a jam, cultural clubs and the like. Unfortunately, social capital which is not followed by the accumulation and production of appropriate emotional and intellectual capital, with a number of immigrants has resulted in placing the position of assimilation on one or seclusion on the other side as stereotypical strategies to find an outlet in situations of intellectual encounters.

Key words: cultural shock, enculturation, acculturation, Bosnian immigrants

The experience of culture shock

The process by which we come to know that there is a "proper" way of thinking, expressing, acting, etc, or, in other words, the process through which we learn our culture, is called *socialization*. It is a process through which individuals learn what is required of them to be successful members of certain groups, regardless of which group is concerned. The socialization process is unique in that it is simultaneously directed to the future and the past. It is directed forward in the sense of a man as he should be compared to expectations of a socio-cultural community, and backwards in terms of determining what are the important behaviours, values, and beliefs which we should continue to preserve. The socialization process is so powerful that people socialized in a particular socio-cultural context, are hardly aware that there are different realities. This results in culturocentrizam, a tendency to evaluate other people from the perspective of their own culture, believing in the fact that it is the only right and proper way of perceiving the world. This has also resulted in, among other things, occurrence of culture shock in situations when an individual comes into contact with new and unfamiliar cultural patterns. In the process of socialization, or enculturation, there is a greater variety of various influences that formatively affect the behaviour and thinking patterns of individuals (for example, their sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, etc). Cultural shock in the recent literature is most often defined as a process of adjustment to a foreign and unfamiliar culture and environment. Psychological and sociological understanding of culture shock is used to describe the process of emotional, cognitive and physiological impact on the individual. In a multicultural context, the cultural shock is a kind of immersion in the non-specific conditions under which an individual is unsure of the expectations of others around him, but the uncertainty also

applies to his / her own actions. The term culture shock was introduced by Oberg Klaver (1960, according to Pedersen, 1995) to describe the distress caused by ignorance about a new culture and behaviour patterns of the same. In this state, the individual becomes aware of the fact that previously enacted symbols become invalid or acquire new meanings, resulting in a wide range of reactions, from the foggy and vague discomfort to profound disorientation. More recent literature suggests that understanding the process of culture shock is applied in every new situation in which a person can find himself/herself, such as changing jobs, establishing new relationships with others, or taking adequate social and emotional positions, as well as taking roles in each new environment. So over the past several decades, from Oberg to date, elucidating the process of cultural shock, spread from a mere encounter with a new culture on every situation where an individual is forced to adapt to an unfamiliar social system in which previously learned patterns of behaviour are no longer of any use.

Experiencing culture shock is too often unpleasant (and unexpected) experience in which the individual simultaneously re-evaluate the old - a domestic, but also a new - a visiting culture. Until recently, researches have suggested that cultural shock involves only negative experiences. Thus, the Oberg originally cited only the negative aspects of this process:

- the tension and pressure caused by psychological adjustment,
- a sense of loss and deprivation increased by the loss of previously close people, friends, roles, etc.,
- rejection of newcomers by a new culture and new society, confusion in terms of defining new roles, expectations, feelings, self-concept and self-determination,
- unexpected nervousness, indignation towards new cultural forms, and
- a sense of helplessness and discouragement after possible failures in the new environment.

Educational model as opposed to medical, describes cultural shock as a process that takes place in several stages, which are developed and through which an individual passes - from the lower, more painful and more loaded with adaptive problems, to the higher stages, where the individual finally exceeds the initial problems and at the same time benefits psychologically, emotionally and socially. Each person in the new culture is going through at least five stages of culture shock (Pedersen, 1995):

1. Stage "honeymoon" or the first contact. On this stage differences intrigue, person research and inspect, select; emotional extent is desrcibed as excitement, stimulation, euphoria, everything is a game; on interpretation level person and groups noticing the difference, differences and similarities still work together, rationalization.
2. On stage of disintegration in person's perception of the environment differences collide and begin to bother, while common emotional reactions are confusion, disorientation, loss of empathy, isolation, loneliness. Besides depression and withdrawal, differences begin to bother crisis of confidence, seeking support and cultural ties.
3. Stage of reintegration is stage where differences are discarded, person's emotions fulfilled by anger, fury (conflict?), nervousness, and frustrations. As a result, some might behave rebelliousness, suspicion, hostility, opposition, and afterwards, this is the stage of the birth of the concept of "I like-i do not like", and rebellion as a way of searching for the confidence.
4. Stage of autonomy is the stage when differences and similarities are starting to legitimize. Person feels presumption, relaxation, re-occurring of empathy, and behaves safer, controlled, autonomous, and confident. On this stage the individual is negotiating with other cultures, and feel confidence that one can survive there.
5. Interdependent stage is the final stage on which differences and similarities are evaluated, and given the significance, person feels trust, humour, elements of the initial emotional response, expressiveness, creativity, updating, and starting to enjoy in some differences through discovering the benefits of new experiences.

Experience and research of this problem points to the fact that the social frame of reference, specific cultural traditions, but also specific (idiosyncratic) learned patterns and strategies to cope with the phenomenon of culture shock, may lead to different outputs, particularly important in the understanding of cultural sensitivity.

As previous findings suggest, strategies and stereotyped patterns of confrontation with the diversity also belong to common uniform strategies of raising children, which with the next generation can cause, not just a lack of sensitivity toward a new culture, but also distancing from the culture of origin. This phenomenon could be called the "boomerang effect" in which the younger generation often opts for a new culture in which they socialize on their own, while also standing up against the culture of origin of their parents. Comparing the social, emotional and intellectual resources and capital offered by a new society, children recognize inferiority of the culture of origin of their parents and are rebelling against the inefficiency of solving everyday problems suggested by

parents. This rebellion is often manifested in the refusal to communicate in their native language, in order to send a symbolic message of abolition of attachment to the culture of origin. If one adds the fact that circles in which the immigrant parents move, mostly belong to lower socio-economic strata of the new society (often the consequence of a lower educational culture), the impression of inferiority of the parents' culture gains in intensity.

Research methods and results

In this study, we combined qualitative and quantitative methods, with the obtained results derived from the semi structured interviews with members of two generations, the systematic observation of behaviour and communication in natural conditions, using the scale of intercultural sensitivity and scale of family relations in a sample of 40 children aged between 12 and 15, gathered in the Bosnian Cultural Centre in Phoenix, Arizona. We felt that the degree to overcome the culture shock towards other cultures can be established by examining the dimensions of intercultural sensitivity, and thus determine the relationships between the generations that represent the culture "in itself". This is especially important due to the fact that to the second generation in the Diaspora cultural shock is actually meeting with the culture of origin. To make that connection possible it is of great importance to take into account factors such as environmental background of parents, current family situation, family composition, parents' personal characteristics and personal characteristics of the child. This means that the issues on which it was possible to understand the context of the family treated the level of parental education levels and different socio-economic factors, family life, socio-psychological characteristics of family relations and communication between parents-children, and that would help to identify specificity of such influences on the level of intercultural sensitivity and overcome the culture shock, arose from the characteristics of families that are directed to the parent function: strategy for disciplining children, pedagogical logic on which parents insist, and perceptions of family circumstances and characteristics of relations parents - children. Application of intercultural sensitivity scale enabled us to connect information about family circumstances with scores of five factors of IC: cultural integration, behaviour scale, intellectual interaction, attitudes toward others and the empathy scale.

As we said before, it is noticeable that the first generation (today's parents) encountered a cultural shock when faced with the norms of the society in which they had to integrate, while for their children, due to the absence of stronger ties with the country of origin, the cultural shock began the moment when the process of getting acquainted with the culture of origin, the culture of their ancestors began. The logical consequence of such strategies of coping with a new culture, especially because of the lack of a sense of emotional and intellectual capital, seeks to compensate for the increased activities in the field of creating social capital on the level of the generation of parents, and that capital is most easily achieved through forms of associating in jams, cultural clubs or similar. Unfortunately, the social capital that does not follow the accumulation and production of appropriate emotional and intellectual capital, in a number of immigrants has as a result placing the position of assimilation on one or conflict on other side, as exits in situations of intercultural meeting. Communication between generations of Bosnian immigrants in USA is overloaded with doubts whether to assimilate or to acculturate into, so called, American culture. Adopting of value system is rather difficult psychological state in which immigrants have to choose appropriate strategy how to be the part of American society, but still preserve basic and core cultural elements of their own tradition. In that sense, members of two different generations within families prefer opposite strategies: generation of parents keeps fresh memories, attitudes, and values adopted in culture of origin, and try to adjust life dynamic to traditional beliefs; on the other side, younger generations experience culture shock while being introduced with their parents culture, and feel themselves much more comfortable if choose opposite way of acculturation – the process of enculturation they associate to American culture, which means that they acculturate with parents culture. Children of immigrants are in some case in a better position to see strengths and weaknesses both of American and Bosnian culture than the origin Americans and Bosnians can do – they still have another culture (at home or at school, etc.) with which they compare. Being somehow in-between seems to be for most of Bosnian immigrants an advantage, since they have opportunity to pick the better sides of living in American society. In list bellow, we offer both advantages and disadvantages of Bosnian families, as members of minority groups in American society:

STRENTGHS	CHALLENGES
Strong work orientation	Dealing with the opposite system of values and beliefs

Strong motivation to achieve	Being judged and as financially risk
Religious orientation	Building self-esteem
Caring parenting	Remaining family centred
Shift to concept of egalitarian marriages	Maintaining tradition
Familism	Overcoming the language barrier both between family, society, and generations
High family cohesion and adaptation	
Extended – family system	Acculturating and enculturation across generations
Traditional beliefs	
Bilingual language skills	
Adaptability into WASP culture	

Table 1. Strengths and challenges of Bosnian families in USA

For those who come from functional families, who take an advantage of adaptability of family system, it is much easier to adapt to society. It is obvious that being the part of majority provides speaking English language, to achieve higher educational achievement, mobility in job market, avoid discrimination, to prefer life style of majority having in mind that life style reflect the taste and values of social status. Yet, in the same time the younger generations of Bosnian immigrants, at the contrary to their American peers, still experience the advantages of extended families, collectivism, and emotional kinship bands etc.

As already indicated in the introduction, in this paper we describe our experiences and results of research methods. The following are basic observations with no intention of entering into the deeper nature thereof. We believe that the listed observations can be a good basis for future researches or future programmes work with communities in the Diaspora.

Analysis of the subscales revealed that the observed groups within the subscales of the cultural integration showed with the scores that the arithmetic mean is 42 compared to a maximum of 63, which represents a moderately high rank of the achieved scores of culture integration.

On the subscale of intercultural behaviour we also obtained moderately high scores. On the subscale of intellectual interaction the observed group achieved scores slightly above average. On a scale of empathy results may assess high. On a scale of attitudes toward others they achieve scores below average, and it could be used as a possible interpretation the earlier observations of parents who belong to immigrant cultures in which the transmission of distance to children was observed as a reaction to fears of a potential interruption of communication with the culture of origin. The total score on all five subscales showed a slightly above average score, as the arithmetic mean is 132.66.

We were interested in whether gender can be considered a significant criterion variable, and in this sense we have observed different styles of upbringing in conjunction with the five factors of intercultural sensitivity. For all observed subscales, the total score revealed no statistically significant differences in gender. This indicates that there is approximately a similar style of bringing up the boys and the girls in this immigrant culture.

Analysis of all five subscales of intercultural sensitivity in relation to domination of pedagogical logic that parents use showed no statistically significant difference in the observed sample. The only, but insignificant difference was noticed within the subscales of cultural integration, where it was shown that those children whose parents more often use praises and encouragements to raise their children achieve higher scores compared to children whose parents use more bans and punishments. Next interesting fact, worth of additional consideration, lies in the fact that unlike the previous, children whose parents use the bans and punishments achieve a bit higher scores on a scale of attitudes towards others in relation to children whose parents used more praise and encouragements. From this data we could draw the conclusion that a bit more authoritarian parental behaviour may, to some extent, result in the eventual escape from the culture of origin (the family milieu) in a new culture (especially in cases of immigrant cultures). Here it is important to remind you of the fact that the authoritarian behaviour in the domestic culture would probably have as a consequence conflicting results:

xenophobia, authoritarian submission, ethnocentrism ... This data suggests that identical behaviour in different cultural and socializing circumstances may result in different outcomes.

Comparing with the assessment of family relationships within the scale we find that respondents who believe their family is a source of comfort and satisfaction showed higher scores on all subscales of intercultural sensitivity. From this it can be concluded that a greater degree of openness towards others is based largely on coordinated and well-ordered family relationships.

Analysis of the item "When I grow up and I have a family it will be in many ways similar to my current family" shows that 37% disagreed with this statement, while 38% were not sure, which makes a total of 75% sample of those who do not identify with their family in terms of living in a foreign culture. This points to the fact that the Bosnian families in the U.S. (at least within the sample), do not represent an adequate working model of identification and intercultural integration into the culture of the United States. Evidence for this claim is found in data obtained by observation within family relationship, where it was noticed that the children of immigrants refuse to communicate with their parents in the Bosnian language as a symbolic act to break the culture of origin. Poorer language skills can be attributed to time spent together in everyday interactions because of the parents being too busy but also some other important criteria variables such as parental level of language production, socio-economic status, educational level, the development of receptive-expressive language, greater participation of lower auto and congrate language in relation to a higher literal and abstract language, etc.

At the level of understanding within the family, analysis of the item "In my family no one understands me" shows that the family itself has the potential to overcome the gap between generations and considering different circumstances of socialization. In this part, the recommendation to parents would be related to overcoming these kinds of problems by adopting a more suitable strategy for the overall pedagogical culture of parental behaviour.

Analysis of the items "I am proud of my family" and "Members of my family are good to each other," showed that there are still emotional attachments between parents and children, indicating a significant potential for the family as a place that is a source of emotional energy and the subsequent potential for intercultural sensitivity. These items showed that most respondents pointed to their family as a place to develop safe relations and adequate interaction which is reflected in high scores across all subscales. It is interesting that the analysis of beliefs and following religious practices proved to be a very important criterion variable. Specifically, respondents who claim that their families believe in religious values, and regularly practice religious customs, achieve higher scores across all five factors of intercultural sensitivity.

Conclusion

We see that most immigrants consistently idealize their own culture, the culture of origin, or subjective culture. This phenomenon is also evident when observing the emigrants during their stay in their own culture, but the process of idealizing is then reversed, i.e. during a visit to their homeland immigrants tend to idealize the culture of the country where they are currently living. Because of this contrary emotional reactions depending on the current physical positions, this could be marked as a notion of *two-way idealization*, with positive emotions obviously directed to the own, but also to the new, current culture. Just for the reason of super saturation with the phenomenon of *two-way idealization* in every conversation we find it appropriate to call this phenomenon *the phenomenon of binoculars*. Persistence in such a perception of reality shows that most members of these communities are certainly at the stage of autonomy, explaining the degree of their integration and overcoming the cultural shock of the previously elaborated model.

We observed that when introducing guests with the symbols of culture in which they reside expatriates express pride and satisfaction. They are very satisfied with showing the progress of culture, achievements, ordering, natural beauty, which could be considered as indicators of successful adaptation of most immigrants. This opinion clearly points to the fact that a number of immigrants are in a state of *disintegration*. It would be very important in future studies to examine the relationship between the length of residence in a new culture and the stage at which the subjects are, and what other variables significantly affect, within the branching of the observed sample, the inversely proportional idealization. It is evident that the stages in which are some respondents have a powerful impact on the cohesion within the immigrants organization. Belonging to a certain stage also produces attitudes towards community organizations. People who are on a level of disintegration propose greater community cohesion and a kind of prudence and closeness to the members of the new culture. People on a level of autonomy alleviate such proposals and explain the benefits of cooperation. It would therefore be very important to continue with strengthening the position of the people on the level of autonomy and the work of the subgroups in the community following the model of overcoming culture shock. In this regard we consider that it would be necessary to develop programmes for each stage of adjustment. Significant influence on overcoming culture shock is related to the functionality of the family system. Families that have

managed to balance the dimensions of adaptation and internal cohesion, but also change and stability, with its structurality and flexibility have much more successful encounter with another culture.

In this way, they more effectively respond to situations to reconcile differences between the system of family values (culture of origin) and wider social circles of a new culture that imposes a different value system. This is confirmed by the results of the analysis of the perception scales of family relations and all five dimensions of intercultural sensitivity, where it turned out that functional family relationships highly correlated with cultural integration, scale of behaviour, intellectual interaction, attitudes toward others, and scale of empathy. Total family relationships have proved to be, ultimately, the essential and with the ability to cope with cultural shock on both relations: family - new culture, but also generations of parents - generations of children. The functionality of family relationships is definitely a key criterion variable to reach the stage of reintegration and autonomy.

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