Hybrid Cultural Identity: Understanding Identity in a Global Community

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization and blending of international borders due to technological and political advances are understood to be among the most significant changes of the last decades (Rigoni & Saitta, 2012). This article seeks to encourage a more active engagement within the field of international psychology in understanding the impact of globalization on immigrant identity formation. Arnett (2002) argues that the research in the field of psychology has not directly addressed the consequences of complexities of globalization despite the fact that increased intermixing of peoples and places has major implications for identity related issues. Several reasons may be behind this lack of interest, one of which may be attributed to the field’s emphasis on studying individual cross-cultural differences that are fixed and distinct. In contrast, Arnett and others highlight that globalization has ushered new social and cultural formations, which are continually shifting, dynamic, and established through global relationships. Another reason may be related to the non-questioning embrace of Western values and assumptions, commonly held in the field of psychology both in the U.S. as well as globally (Brock, 2006; Gergen, 2001).

Conceptualizing self as autonomous is a reflection of the essentialist premise within Western psychology (Demoulin, Leyens & Yzerbyt, 2006; Morton, Hornsey & Postmes, 2009; Rangel & Keller, 2011). Essentialist understanding formulated by modernist perspective of the times is instrumental to the construction of individual mind and rationalizing models of systematic psychology in the 19th century (Baird, 2010; Gergen, 2001). To date the modernist view of autonomous identity concept is the core of many clinical psychology theories, such as the developmental theories, which emphasize the individual need for continuity and unity (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Erikson, 1968; Piaget, 1976). Although this perspective allowed for human capacities to become observable and measurable, they also constructed them as inherited, trans-historical, and independent of cultural context (Gergen, 2001). The essential self is seen as governed by the universal laws, which allow generalization from research findings (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Therefore, theories that utilize this perspective on identity use distinct and fixed cultural differences in conceptualizing identities and experiences of international communities such as recent immigrants.

In contrast, postmodern, poststructuralist, postcolonial, or social constructivist theories argue against the notion of an essential self and conceptualize identity as relational and dynamic process (Childs & Williams, 1997; Gandhi, 1998; Gergen, 1991, 1992, 2009). In the relational world of postmodernist perspective, individual identity along with personal or cultural differences are always subjective and shifting; as new relationships between people and places occur, new ideas about one’s self and identity in relation to others emerge. This is an identity formation process, which does not have an end or a goal because it is a process of constantly becoming in relationship to others (Gergen, 2009). The relational perspective brings forth the concept of formation of identity in comparison with Other. According to the postmodern view, a representation of the other (especially foreign) person as “traditional” or “less developed” was only possible by contrasting that person to a self-representation as “modern” (Gandhi, 1998; Gergen, 1989; Loomba, 1998). However, this type of comparison highlights power differences. The postcolonial theory emphasized the impact of power relationships on identity, and claimed that the notions such as “civilized” or “savage” in the past and currently “developed” and “developing or Third world” have served as justifications for Western colonial rule (Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1978). Through highlighting the role of these power differences in the formation of identity of an individual, postcolonial theory researches how these individuals gain an agency or find their voice under dominance. This was done through emphasizing the significance of the non-Western perspective, while challenging and dismantling the authoritative and all-knowing representation of the Western knowledge (Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1985).

Research in psychology on immigration in relation to global currents can benefit from a relational focus.

Original Article

Hybrid Cultural Identity: Understanding Identity in a Global Community

Pelin Hattatoglu, PhD and Oksana Yakushko, PhD

ABSTRACT:

The paper challenges the essentialist conceptualizations of immigrant identity and stresses the need to consider immigrant identity from a broader perspective beyond generalizations of national identity in the midst of globalization. The postcolonial theory gives a helpful perspective in understanding identity formation as relational and shifting process that involves power dynamics and historical relations between cultures. The theory also highlights the right to speak for self beyond one sided textual conceptualization of a cultural identity. Especially, the concept of hybrid identity provides a constructive way to develop ideas for immigrant identity in psychology theory and research within an international context as well as inform clinicians what they can encounter in the therapy room working with immigrants.
with increased attention to power relations between home and host cultures in terms of current political, military, and economic dynamics between the two countries that can impact the identity formation of immigrants in the host country. For example, U.S. involvement in wars in the Middle East has direct impact on perceptions of and identity formation of immigrants from this area. Thus, there is a need in the field to understand immigrants’ attempts of political recovery processes from the identities assigned to them through labels and to analyze their methods of attaining an agency within this power dynamics. One way to achieve this goal is to study the hybridization process of identities, which calls into question the purity of identity based on essentialist subjectivities as formulated by modernist understandings of psychology and views identity as a relational process embedded in historic power relations.

In this contribution, postcolonial concept of hybridity as a cultural form is extended to analyze the impact of globalization on immigrant identity. Based on the premises of postcolonial theory and the concept of hybrid identity, we explore the possibility of understanding the immigrant self that is not based on cultural notions of national identity. We also argue that identity formation is a process, which involves the act of recovering the self from homogenizations and stereotyping as well as resisting these impositions. This theoretical lens brings a new perspective to understanding, where the forms are separated from the shared meanings of cultures. Furthermore, for Inda and Rosaldo (2007) validate this hybridity is an essential notion beyond borders and boundaries, hence transforming and religion. Inda and Rosaldo (2007) validate this hybridity is an essential notion beyond borders and boundaries, hence transforming the self from homogenizations and stereotyping as well as resisting these impositions. This theoretical lens brings a new perspective to understanding the complicated entanglement. Differences” (p. 148) and hybridity is an essential notion to understand the complicated entanglement. Different cultures interchange ideas and goods within complex systems, and thereby new identities emerge from the relationships of their differences. Chan (2003) defined a balance in these intermingling of differences as “one culture slips into another culture, half forgetting and remembering itself, and half changing the other” (p.139). Adebayo and Adesina (2009) argued that globalization, previously perceived as mainly political, economic, and technological, has had significant implications to socio-cultural issues, such as identity, citizenship, migrations, gender, race, and religion. Inda and Rosaldo (2007) validate this idea by stating that the spread of commodities and ideologies facilitates the movement of cultures beyond borders and boundaries, hence transforming the shared meanings of cultures. Furthermore, for Pieterse (2009), cultural hybridization implies an understanding, where the forms are separated from existing structures and reunited to form new practices.

For Bhabha (1994) hybridity is a process that emerged in the liminal space where the two cultures interact and eventually lead to a third identity that is distinct transnationally, “drawing upon the increasingly integrated resources of the global economy” (Spybey, 1996, p. 3). Hall (1991) termed this new era as a “new globalization” that shapes the identity formation of people in the 21st century. Hall suggested that “This new kind of globalization is not English, it is American. In cultural terms, the new kind of globaliza-

Hybrid Cultural Identity in the Global Community

The postcolonial theory introduced the term “hybrid identity” to resists essentalist representations of identity (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007). Bhabha (1994) claims that cultural differences created by essentialist understanding are assigned notions to claim superiority over the Other, which was used to justify colonization. For him, hybridization of identity is an attempt to rebel against or speak back to the colonial domination by disputing the purity of identities and knowledge. Although originally formulated within the understanding of colonized and colonizer relationships of the 19th century, the notion of hybridity is also used to understand the current dynamics of identity formation within the context of power relations and hierarchies of the modern times.

After the Second World War, the United States replaced the political, economic, and cultural control associated with imperialism with its international policies (Nkrumah, 1996; Sarte, 2001). Its trademark features mass production, communication, and consumption, which have come to characterize the global world during the late 20th and 21st centuries (Blanchard, 1996). American social life has expanded
from the previous two. According to Bhabha, in the liminal space negotiation, interface, and exchange of cultural identities across boundaries is cultivated; it is an ambivalent by nature, which does not have a fixed cultural meaning and representation. Rutherford (1990) claims that in this liminal space a “cutting edge of translation and negotiation” (p.207) occurs in between cultures in all types of interaction. Papastergiadis (1997) similarly asserts that the “hybrid identity is positioned within a third space as a lubricant in the conjunction of cultures” (p.265). Anzaldúa (1987) also talks about a space in “hybridized cultural borderlands,” where the individual witnesses a cultural collision as reflective of a “synergy of two cultures” and “cannot hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries” (pp. 78–79). She asserts that the continuous pressure to reconcile multiple cultures creates a new consciousness that overtops with Bhabha’s notion of hybridity. Anzaldúa’s concept of border consciousness is not hyphenated as the two components of identity become a whole; a new consciousness arises out of a struggle and creates a non-dualistic way of thinking and being. The concept of third space by nature is packed with potential that makes it impossible for the production of another static or pure identity to take place. Despite contradictions and ambiguities that this space can create, Bhabha also mentions that it “initiates new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation” (p. 1). In this article, hybridity is referred to this “third space, which enables other positions to emerge” (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211).

It is important to mention that, a cultural hybrid has no negative connotation in the globalized world as it had in earlier times. For example, Taylor (1991) mentions that the hybrid has an innate ability to communicate, exchange, and mediate between cultures. Marotta (2008) claims that the cultural hybrid is a person who blends the traits and values from different cultures, can produce innovative and creative identities, is able to look from a wider perspective, and can have an interpretative stance on the social world. He also claims that, like any other social self, hybrid self also searches for foundations and utilizes social, cultural, and political boundaries as a part of contemporary life (Marotta, 2008). He follows Park’s (1974) insight on hybridity, which is expressed as the desire for universality brings about two opposing tendencies: feelings of not belonging and longing for universality. Here the feelings of not belonging bring a sense of homelessness, whereas longing for cosmopolitanism is the desire for “profound critical judgment, cosmopolitan sentiments and an objectivism, which extends beyond a particular culture” (Marotta, 2008, p. 305). According to the author, a cultural hybrid that has to contain these two desires within them will also have deal with the ambivalence. This new understanding equates the hybrid with the ability to negotiate across cultural barriers, which is regarded as an asset in the globalized world.

Changing Perspectives on Immigrant Adaptation and Hybrid Integration:

The world continues to experience transformation brought on by globalization (Rigoni, 2012). Therefore, it is important that the psychologists understand, theorize, and study the impact of globalization on self and identity (Arnett, 2002). Papastergiatis (2010) proposed that "migration is one of the driving forces and products of globalization” (p. 249), and immigrants as individuals and community show significant influences of globalization on identity. For example, Espin (1997) showed that lesbian women sought to migrate to the U.S. from countries that held homophobic cultural standards precisely because of their awareness of greater support for gay and lesbian rights. Despite these facts, research in psychology has focused on more static reasons for migration and on articulations of immigrant identity only in relation to static forms of home and host culture. Yakushko and Morgan-Consoli (2013) discuss that research on immigration, specifically related to acculturation, often fails to address dynamic and contextual factors related to adaptation to a new culture. Moreover, Bhabha (1994) argued against viewing immigrant adaptation as a process of acculturation because of its reliance on the essential self, fixed, and stable cultural differences as well as limited attention to cultural zeitgeist and historic dynamics between nations. Bhabha claimed that “the time for assimilating minorities to holistic and organic notions of cultural value has dramatically passed” (p. 251).

Although attention to immigrants as a demographic population has grown within psychology (American Psychological Association, 2011), globalization as a sustained topic of research remains limited (Arnett, 2002). However, the two social realities have direct and observable impact on each other. Scholars highlight that immigration no longer means leaving one's home permanently and becoming fully assimilated to another culture, as was possible and encouraged in the past (Portes, 2003). Tremendous increase in communication technologies and advances in transportation have resulted in immigrants' ability to maintain close contact with their home cultures and communities (Rigoni & Saitta, 2012). The erosion of differences between local and global, between host and home culture may contribute to significant drop in what has been termed the acculturation stress (Giddens, 2000). Giddens (2000) further argued that globalization alters or erodes traditional communal ways of being, resulting in identities created actively, with less dependency on social roles and more influenced by individual choices. Moreover, Arnett (2002) points to the emergence of a new form of bicultural identity that emerged as a result of the acceleration of globalization in recent decades, wherein identities have become rooted in both local and global culture at the same time. He argues that biculturalism used to be discussed only in relation to immigration and ethnic minorities but can be applied to everybody who is influenced by globalization. Arnett also acknowledges that immigrant identities have become more complicated in that they combine host, home, and global cultures, leading to forms of hybrid identi-
It is important to note here that with globalization the term "transnationality" has introduced to the immigration literature. Transnationality emphasizes that nationality no longer refers to a shared culture bounded by land borders, but rather persons fluidly cross borders and continue to engage politically, economically, socially, and culturally with their home and host cultures wherever they live (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995). Schiller, Basch, and Blanc use the term transmigrants to define immigrants who create and sustain multiple social relations that link their home and host countries and transcend national boundaries. Thus, transmigrants are distinct from immigrants, who in a traditional sense leave behind the home country and are destined to assimilate to the new one. For transmigrants, "home" could refer either to a country of origin or to where they migrate to reside; it could also refer to a state of mobility between two or more locations (Levitt & Schiller, 2006). Transnationalism captures the dynamic nature of identity and recognizes migration as a reciprocal process (Colic-Peisker, 2002). With the impact of globalization, immigrants are crossing national and cultural boundaries of home and host countries by building transnational social, economic, and political networks that continually influence their identity.

Transnationality is recognized by a growing amount of immigration researchers (Carling, 2008; Castles, 2002; Conway & Cohen, 1998; Guarnizo & Diaz, 1999; Itzigsohn, & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005; Olwig, 2003; Portes, 2003; Vertovec, 2003, 2004). These researchers emphasize the emergence of a social paradigm in which immigrants engage in new relations that are beyond geographic, cultural, and political borders. Nevertheless, current research is primarily concentrated with economic and social ramifications of transnational connections rather than personal and psychological implications, such as those related to identity formation.

Similarly, postcolonial studies acknowledge the forces of the transnationalism and globalization on cultures. For example, Bhabha (1994), one of the foremost post-colonial scholars, utilizes terms such as transnationalism and cosmopolitanism——"ways of thinking, feeling, and acting beyond one’s particular society" (Breenridge, Pollock, Bhabha, & Chakrabarty, 2002, p.1), in explaining how hybrid identities form in the globalized world. It is hypothesized that transnationalism takes on a cultural character that makes possible for different forms of identification with the home country when the immigrant is well integrated to the host country (Aksoy & Robins, 2000; Carstens, 2003). Similarly, for the reason that immigrants have to operate in multiple and often divergent views of their national origins, immigrants may form multiple identities that fit in different contexts such as employee, community member, neighbor, or citizen both in the host and home culture (Hall, 1991; Moorti, 2003). This cultural convergence ultimately opens up the possibility of emerging hybrid cultural identities.

Although some authors like Cuninghame (2008), differentiate the two concepts by suggesting that transnationalism is related to economic or political spheres and refers to collective identity whereas hybrid identity is specific to individual experience, the postcolonial theory, which introduced the notion of hybridity, is similarly focused on global power relations and the impact of world’s cultural and political “superpowers” on communities. However, it is accurate that the postcolonial theory distinctly emphasizes how historical and current international relations between immigrants’ home and host culture influence their experiences of migration and their identity development (Grewal & Kaplan, 2001). Grewal and Kaplan (2001) further argue that concepts of postcolonial theory such as Orientalism (i.e., stereotyped views of Asia and Asian individuals) and subalternity (i.e., being subject to domination) influence both internal and external perceptions of immigrants.

People have been crossing borders for centuries however contemporary immigrants live in a world where technological advances, especially in transportation and communication, are connecting them with their home countries, making their adaptation process completely different from that of earlier immigrants. Hannerz (1996) views globalization as giving impetus to migration that fosters transnational connections that will eventually give birth to new ideas about self. Today, cultures are integrating in fast fusion, making hybridization of cultures an integral outcome of globalization (Pieterse, 2009). Thus, to understand how contemporary immigrants integrate to their new country, one needs to analyze the changes occurring in the societies as a result of globalization. For immigrants, hybridity has a completely different stance from the traditional concept of diaspora that assumes separateness of cultures and from multiculturalism that assumes togetherness-in-difference, or from assimilation that assumes absorption of all differences into a plane of sameness and homogeneity (Ang, 2003). Furthermore, Kuran and Sandholm (2008) articulated hybridity as different from the concepts of multiculturalism and social integration, where multiculturalism tries to maintain the diversity of existing cultures and the social integration model tries to promote interactions among class, ethnicity, religion, and national origin concepts. Authors describe hybridization as “cross-cultural contacts that generate behavioral adaptations to improve interpersonal coordination” (Kuran & Sandholm, 2008, p.206).

On the other hand, Papastergiadis (2010) points to changing global migratory patterns for the modern men and women in the last century. There is no longer a unidirectional, go-west mentality in migration (Zlotnik, 1998). Men and women from all statuses are on the move across the world, and their reason for migration can no longer be explained only by eco-
nomics (Papastergiatis, 2010). Immigrant identities are shaped by their new choices, different necessitating circumstances and contexts; and examined how they worked to resist to the labels imposed on them. Moreover, the contemporary immigrant experiences challenges the conceptualizations that are built onto unidirectional experiences of immigration, the freedom of going back defies the assumptions of static immigrant adaptation theories where the hybrid identity interrupts the link between time and place of the existing immigrant adaptation literature (Chan, 2003; Papastergiatis, 2010; Zlotnik, 1998). This fact also complicates the assumptions of modernist literature that differentiates people based on culture with stable psychological and cultural dimensions (Childs, 2000; Gergen, 2001). Freedom of leaving and returning to home country also reflects the historic, social, economic, and political ties between the host and home nations. According to the postcolonial lens, looking at historical and political dynamics is essential to identify the formation of various hybrid selves in the globalized world. Although the impact of historic and political dynamics on identity was examined by indigenous, cross-cultural, and evolutionary psychology as well as activity theory and discourse analysis (Ratner, 2011), a perspective from postcolonial theory helps identify the emergence of an ambivalent space as it relates to identity formation with the possibilities enabled historic, political, and other power relations between countries.

Although the globalized world exposes everybody to multiple cultural realms, immigrants apparently have more emotional investment and associations in both worlds and therefore are exposed to more challenges in negotiating multiple states of selves. These dynamic, relational, and shifting construct of hybrid identity of immigrants helps understand the multiple facets to identity that is based on the context of immigrants’ localized experiences (Bhabha, 1994; Childs & Williams, 1997). This view also highlights that there is neither a single way of forming a hybrid identity nor a single definition of hybrid self existed (Bhabha, 1994). Therefore, the concept of hybrid cultural identity frees the self from the restrictions of homogenizing conceptualizations, imposed identities, and assigned meanings (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007). In this light, it is possible to observe how the identity becomes hybridized as individuals are exposed to different cultures, diverse world views, and ideas, which gave them multiple roles and less consistent concepts of self. Today, immigrants might value one part of their home culture and appreciate another part of their host culture and thereby express a hybridity, which blur the boundaries of defining oneself by belonging to only one culture. Immigrants’ exposure to different places, practices, and their localized knowledge allowed them to compare nations and identify with the pieces that are more suitable to them, which in essence the basis for their hybridization. The complex set of ongoing dynamic relationships among people and nations have implications for understanding contemporary experiences and stories of globalization. According to postcolonial theory, a cultural identity can only form in relation to accepted and not accepted traits of Others (i.e., Gandhi, 1998; Gergen, 1989; Loomba, 1998). The attempt to create a binary opposition of cultural differences helps shape one’s identity. Akhtar (1995) has viewed this opposition something akin to an infant’s individuation and the process of being “vulnerable to splitting of self and object representations” (p.1058).

According to postcolonial view, these relational dynamics are also reflections of historic national interdependences and power relations (Bhabha, 1994; Gandhi, 1998; Okazaki, David, & Abelmann, 2007). Postcolonial framework allows capturing how people develop the agency in their attempts to neutralize the imbalance of this power dynamics that may have been embedded within them since their childhood. Bhabha (1994) proposed that colonized engage in mimicry to cope with the power difference. He described mimicry as an act of rebellion or speaking back that exposes the artificiality of all expressions of power by the colonized. The mimicry of the colonizer blurs the boundary between colonized and the colonizer, undermines the claims of the colonizer for justification of colonization, and makes it impossible to isolate the colonized in an essentialist sense. For Bhabha, mimicry is more than an emulation of the language, manners, and ideas of the one in power; it is a way of mocking and undermining colonizers’ ongoing pretensions and a response to their stereotypes. It is a type of resistance that opens up a model of agency for the colonized by undermining the identity of the colonizer. Resisting the fixed conceptualizations of self are not only shaped through mimicking, colonized also used Orientalizing others, denying responsibility, silencing resistance, acting oppositional, and normalizing the outcome in order to correct the power imbalance (Bhabha, 1994; Lorenz & Watkins, 2003). Lorenz and Watkins (2003) also assume that individuals who carry the internal colonization may develop the habit of silencing their or others’ suffering, resistances, and creativity in the culture that normalizes the colonization acts. However, it is shaped, hybridity is a resistance to power imbalance within a relationship and analyzing the historical layers of hybridity can help understand how contemporary immigrants integrate to their new country (Ang, 2003; Bhabha, 1994; Garcia-Canclini 1995; Hannerz, 1996; Smith & Leavy, 2008).

**Hybrid Identity in the Therapy Room**

Before exploring how hybrid identity immigrant issues present itself in the therapy room, it would be beneficial to take a closer look at how immigration related issues have been researched and applied in the field of psychology. Among the constructive views on the effect of immigration on identity related issues, we find Akhtar’s (1995) positioning the immigration as a transformative inner experience, which he equated immigration process to individuation. A transformation can be experienced as an inner, psychological growth, enlargement in perspective by being exposed to different views, and through an opportunity
by being in a space that helps the evolution of a true identity. However, Jung reminds us that the individuation is possible when we are faced with difficulties in his statement of “There is no coming to consciousness without pain,” (Jung, Baynes, and Baynes 1928, p.193) and for him this pain is a necessary force to reassess our values and self-esteem. The field of psychology has always been interested in this painful aspect of immigration because the nature of the immigration experience is viewed as challenging with significant implications to the social, cultural, and emotional life of immigrants. Therefore, immigrants are primarily researched under two main topics in the areas of psychological case conceptualization and intervention. One of them is the grief and loss experienced in the immigration process that eventually led to a relational construct of ambiguous loss (Arredondo-Dowd, 1981; Boss, 2007; Garza-Guerrero, 1974; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989; Nwoye, 2009). The other is under widely contested but popular topic of acculturation and acculturation stress (Berry, 1997; Birman & Taylor-Ritzler, 2007; Birman et al., 2005; Oppedal, Roysamb, & Sam, 2004; Shen & Takeuchi, 2001).

As highlighted in these studies, an immigrant was conceptualized as a person who experiences multiple losses that include language, social, and support networks, attitudes, and values as well as one who needs to adapt to the host country by re-creating his or her identity. Consequently, the clinical work is mainly focused on the accepting or making meaning of these losses, and processing the unresolved feelings around the adaptation to a new country. Although some research argues that there is no significant difference in the prevalence of mental health problems among immigrants (Alegria, Canino, Stinson, & Grant, 2006), the loss of the familiar is long acknowledged in the immigration process that eventually led to the development of a consciousness is not fixed but is formed by therapists using the “right” cultural dimensions, yet this understanding poses additional problems of whose rights or whose assumptions have defined these cultural norms. Moreover, this understanding of treatment also suggests the maintenance of ethnic or home culture while concurrently assimilating to some degree into larger host culture (Bodnar, 1987; Handlin, 1941; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918). The American Psychological Association (2011) has recommended these culturally competent treatment approaches guided by an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). The ecological perspective considers individuals’ interaction with their environment in designing multicultural intervention strategies and addressing mental health problems of immigrants (American Psychological Association, 2011). In an ecological perspective, these actions are taken by the macro system of the individual in consideration. A macro system contains everything about the environment where the person is situated, which encompasses “the culture, subculture, or other extended social structures whose members share value or belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunities, structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange” (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p. 25). Macro-level interventions are provided on a large scale that affects entire communities and systems of care. In this context, it is important to note that mezzo-level interventions happen on an intermediate scale, involving neighborhoods, institutions, or other smaller groups. Micro-level intervention is the most common in the clinical practice, and happens directly with an individual or family. Although emphasis on ecological perspective shows that the field of psychology is trying to find better ways to address multicultural problems from a wider perspective, this recommendation is also lacking the deeper examination of complexities that is created by globalization, including new ways of encounters between people in the world, identities formed in in-between places, identities shaped by power relations and historical realities.

The postcolonial assumptions could be a good resource to address these missing components of contemporary immigrant identity formation for the field of psychology. Most importantly, this theory emphasizes the right to speak about the self for the immigrant by questioning the terms under which representation and knowledge of immigrants has taken shape in the therapy room. It allows for an understanding that the development of a consciousness is not fixed but is.
still evolving in the space made available through our clients’ immigration experience. Anzaldua (1987) calls this process a “third consciousness” that emerges out of a process and “sustains contradictions and embraces ambiguity at the expense of habitual formations.” (p. 101). This is the space that allows for multiple selves formed by individual experiences and eventually integrated into a hybrid self. This is the space where Bhabha (1994) believes that negotiation, interface, and exchange of cultural identities across boundaries occur. For Bhabha, this is an ambivalent space that does not have a fixed cultural meaning and representation. People inevitably suffer from the contradictions and ambiguities that this third space would create, but in the end Bhabha believes that it initiates new signs of identity to emerge as people find innovative ways of collaboration and debate differences.

Challenging the fixed identity concept and understanding the identity is a process created in this space though interaction with the people, perspectives, and places, means challenging the ethnic immigrant concept where nationality represents the culture. It also means incorporating an understanding of the contextual movement of people, ideas, knowledge, and practices to better understand the identity formation of immigrants. These facts disrupt the set of ideas that the field has been describing the identity of immigrants for more than a century and create a complicated challenge for the field of psychology—to examine this new information in a useful way. Clinicians in the field need to be able to work from the assumptions that the immigrant self is not unitary but a multiple, not settled but ever evolving, not necessarily moving toward an order but in a constant flux. When therapists are more informed about the importance of relational and contextual dimensions of identity with the help of postcolonial theory, they take into consideration what belongs to the collective and what belongs to a person from a different angle, as well as work with the realities of culture that are not nationally-dependent but relationally dependent to an individual’s environment. Furthermore, when clinicians are more open to the fact that identity formation is an ever-evolving process, they would also accept the fact that clinical evaluations would be provisional and incomplete. Acknowledging this fact requires bringing together complex experiences through dialogue without fitting the immigrants into normative categories.

Specifically, as clinicians become more sensitive to the relational aspect of identity formation, they will have a wider perspective in acknowledging that individuals use others to define their identities. It will at least increase curiosity to the historical relations and power dynamics among cultures that might have a role in understanding client’s identity formations. Multicultural and cross-cultural psychology has already been criticized for following an ahistorical approach to understanding relational identities (Gjerde & Onishi, 2010, p. 216). The current literature does not adequately represent the power differences and historic relationships between cultures in regard to their impact on identity (David, 2008; Teo, 2005; Okazaki, David, & Abelmann, 2007). These interrelated factors further complicate conceptualizations of immigrant identity and make it impossible to view them under the umbrella of a unitary cultural identity. As mentioned through this article, our current highly integrated world requires conceptualizations of self that are relational, hybrid, and ever-evolving in a process shaped by complexities and contradictions in the continuous intermingling of cultures. An understanding of these realities will lead the field of psychology move beyond convergence-divergence dichotomies and guide it to a more comprehensive investigation of immigrants’ experiences.

When clinicians are aware of the fact that power dynamics between cultures, religions, genders, and position of immigration shapes the identity-formation process, they will also be more attuned to assessing how a person normalizes, resists, or denies these power differences. We not only need to address transference-countertransference issues in relation to these power dynamics, but also be knowledgeable about basic global relations to be effective in our profession. This does not mean that therapists will need to be historians but rather signifies the point that pursuing an ahistorical or apolitical approach to psychology may always be insufficient to understand our clients. There is a definite need for clinicians to find ways to produce assessments and interventions that would include not only the individual but also the relational dynamics in his or her life, multi-contextual experiences of a global life, and historic power relations between cultures.

Furthermore, clinicians will need to be aware of that the transformative experiences of immigrants have another interpretation in light of postcolonial awareness. This awareness will lead the psychology field to seek a new understanding of forms of attachment pertaining to postmodern citizenship to include the emotional experiences of one’s life lived across continents as well as the experience of having citizenship in one place by birth and in others by immigration and of having allegiances to different places. Clinicians now need an understanding of affective experiences of relational dynamics, socio-historical processes, and power relations of the individuals who are living in a highly integrated world. We are more and more in need of an understanding that prevail in a contemporary global world, which will encourage us to give an agency to immigrants to describe their sense of citizenship, belonging, and attachments as well as their sense of self. This knowledge could be translated to case conceptualization and treatment formulation, especially in the areas of disorders of personality, understanding immigrant mental health, and multicultural practices. Especially, with this knowledge we can infer the impossibility of talking about the macro and meso levels of care, as these arguments prevent understanding the full complexity of immigrant identity formation by generalizations.
In addition, with the help of this awareness, it would be hard for clinicians to accept a progress-based approach to identity, i.e. the progression towards self-actualization, as it contradicts the postcolonial assumptions of an identity that never settles, especially in the world of continuous intermingling of people and places. Bhabha (1994) proposes that cosmopolitanism is an end point for the immigrant who is destined to be in an ambivalent place. However, he also proposed that even the cosmopolitan self does not guarantee an inner sense of settlement as postcolonial theory insists on ever-evolving self with a potential of continuous fragmentation. The implications of this knowledge would be varied; for example, in the therapy of immigrants who are at the forefront of global encounters, there is a need to focus on multiple parts of selves rather than one core Self, created in the places of raptures that were created by their immigration experience. Clinicians can no longer hold on to rigid ideas around the self that have defined boundaries, subjective, and individually based experiences for case conceptualizations and treatment plans. The formulation of cases derived from the evidence accumulated from sessions with individual patients and a clinician’s own philosophical and cross-cultural views may no longer be sufficient. When immigrants tend to over-personalize their subjective needs and sufferings, clinicians and researchers would need to be the ones to recognize their patients’ or subjects’ position within the context of their relationships in their wider environment and the impact of power dynamics in their environment. In this sense, the postcolonial view reminds clinician and researchers that they may miss a lot of relevant information about the immigrant.

Conclusion

In contrast to the modernist notions of fully formed essential self, where immigrants have been assigned an identity based on nationality, the postcolonial notion of hybridity allows individuals to narrate much more complex intersections of identity and culture (Bhabha, 1994). The hybrid position offers no truth but rather makes conceptualizing individuals as products of a specific cultural community impossible, as this stance presupposes that such cultural communities are assumed to have no or little contact with others. Bhabha has proposed that this position eventually introduces difference and transformation, which lead to cosmopolitanism: “ways of thinking, feeling, and acting beyond one’s particular society” (Breckenridge, Pollock, Bhabha, & Chakrabarty, 2002). This is the ideal state of “ours,” a true multiculturalism, as Akhtar (1995) explains. The stable repositories of identity and culture can no longer be assumed in the globalized world, the resolution to seek an identity in cosmopolitanism, which they defined as global self or world citizenship.

However, it is not clear that the cosmopolitan Self offers an inner resolution to immigrants in the globalized world. As according to Bhabha (1994), the hybrid self cannot claim a cultural home or a secure epistemological place to speak from; it is fragmented and stands in stark contrast to the stable notions of self and identity. Akhtar (1995) also describes a split between perceptions by use of “us” and “them,” vacillations between devaluing and idealizing the country of origin, and between ethnic associations and counter-phobic assimilations. He regards these fragmentations as developmental stages of identity for immigrants whereas Bhabha defines them with the notion of the uncanny. The uncanny life leaves traces of a half-life like the partial presence and leads to a repeat life lived in the country of origin, where the repetition is not identical. Yet, we can assume that the transformation experienced with immigration is the birthplace of a hybrid self, which can be expressed above mentioned terms of cosmopolitanism or global self that has a privileged place in our contemporary globalized world.

In conclusion, it is hard to disagree with Watkins (1992), who has stated that “our attempts to experience ourselves as self-determining, self-actualizing, and free, blind ourselves to the forces that construct our notion of the self” (p. 59). The problem of reductionist theories of understanding self was also voiced by Hillman (1975), who believed the need to look at the system and society that the individual is in to understand his or her psychology. With globalization, the difference, fusion, multiplicity, and history among cultures became more apparent, and holding on to such conceptualizations of fixed, unitary, core, or essentialist self became more and more difficult. It is through engaging with more research on the cultural perceptions of people who are at the forefronts of globalization; the field of psychology may shed a light to contemporary identity issues within an international context.

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Original Article


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Is a Higher Dose of Fluoxetine needed to Treat Depressive Disorders in Adults with History of Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)?

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ABSTRACT:
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) is a topic that has gained a lot of recognition recently. A number of papers have been written on the subject of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), some papers have also commented on the likelihood that those individuals with ACE exposure are more prone to depressive symptoms and even Depressive Syndromes later in life. It has been our experience that patients coming in for treatment of their depression who have had exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences were requiring higher than average doses of anti-depressant medications to achieve stability. The authors did a chart review to study if any correlation exists between ACE and the anti-depressant dosage requirement to treat depressive syndromes in adults. The study was a retrospective chart review of those patient who were treated for their Depressive Disorders in an outpatient basis. Those charts were included in the study which indicated a Positive Adverse Childhood Experience (PACE), for the purposes of this study Depressive Disorders, included major depressive disorder, dysthymia, premenstrual dysphoric disorder, other specified depressive disorder, and unspecified depressive disorder. Fluoxetine (Prozac) was chosen as the anti-depressant medication to study. All subject charts meeting inclusion criteria were matched with age and gender equated charts; the only difference being that the control group was Negative for Adverse Childhood Experiences (NACE). The dose required to treat depression (DRTT) of Prozac was compared in the two groups. The DRTT was defined as the dose at which the patient’s depression stabilized as noted in patient charts, and that remained unchanged for at least three months. The results were surprising because two distinct groups appeared based on the ages of the patients. Those subjects who were between 18 and 21, had no significant difference in their DRTT in relation to the control group, whereas subjects over the age of 21 years required a higher DRTT Prozac dose as compared to the control group. Obviously further studies are needed to ascertain the reason for the shift in DRTT for older adults.

INTRODUCTION:
Adverse Childhood Experience is not a diagnosis recognized by the DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2014), however it has been studied and researched as an entity for many years, the most notable robust study was the first phase of the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study conducted by Kaiser Permanente and the CDC from 1995 to 1997. Approximately 17000 members of the HMO Kaiser Permanente were asked to participate in a survey by responding to a questionnaire during their routine physical examinations. The survey questions attempted to capture information about their childhood adverse experiences such as abuse, trauma, maltreatment and family dysfunction, along with their current health and behaviors. (Center for Disease Control, 2014). A prospective study is currently said to be underway.

In that survey Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) included; neglect, household dysfunction, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, traumatic experiences, economic hardships, conditions such as mental illness in family, parental divorce, incarcerated relative, substance use issues, maltreatment of a parent, siblings or self etc. When the data was analyzed, the incidence of ACE was noted to be quite high. Vanessa Sacks reported that approximately 46 percent of respondents reported experiencing at least one adverse childhood experience. In her report Vanessa Sacks cites economic hardship as the number one ACE, followed by divorce of parents. (Vanessa Sacks, July 2014). Johnstone et al, have hypothesized that rates of ACE among adults diagnosed with depressive disorders may probably be higher (Jeanette M. Johnstone, 2009). Based on clinical observations of the past decade, the authors concur with the above citations, and stipulate that even if these rates are not higher as contended by Johnstone et al, they still could be recognized as being at least at the same rates as cited by Vanessa Sacks.

Sacks et al also reported an important observation from the ACE study stating that higher scores on ACE correlated with increased risk of depression and suicide attempt (Center for Disease Control, 2014), (Vanessa Sacks, July 2014).

There can be many reasons for the hypothesis that higher ACE score would be correlated with higher incidence of depressive symptoms. Stahl reports in his textbook “The Essentials of Psy-
chopharmacology”, that chronic exposure to stressors in childhood leads to stress sensitization in the brain circuits, which predisposes to depression in response to future stressors (Stahl, 4th ed. 2013.). Stahl also hypothesizes that chronic stress causes hippocampal atrophy which means less inhibition on Hypothalamic–Pituitary–Adrenal axis (HPA axis) and higher Cortisol level which may also increase the risk of developing Psychiatric illnesses. (Stahl, 4th ed. 2013.)

Rinne et al have studied patients with childhood adverse experiences and the reduced responsiveness of the HPA axis to anti-depressant medication (such as fluvoxamine), indicating that there may be difficulties in managing these symptoms (Thomas Rinne, 2003 ) Boij et al report that stress leads to changes in the Hippocampal volume and circuits, as well as neurotransmitter transporter genes (Linda Booij, March, 2015).

Observations by van der Meij el al, have hypothesized that childhood maltreatment may be a significant predictors of elevated C - Reactive Protein (CRP) levels during adulthood (Annemarie van der Meij a, May 2014) Lua et al, also observed increased cytokines in major depressive disorder (Shaojia Lua, 2013). Van der Meij et al, report stress also turns off the genes for BDNF (brain derived neurotrophic factor) which may lead to brain atrophy.

The authors agree with van der Meij et al, that an increase in the risk of developing depression in adults with ACE can be related to brain atrophy and increased Cortisol. (Annemarie van der Meij a, May 2014). Klein et al report that early exposure to adverse experiences may be a negative determinant in efficacy of pharmacotherapy (Daniel N. Klein, 2009)

Therefore it is very likely that history of ACE may contribute to the stress which in turn may lead to above noted changes and consequently a changed response to medication efficacy. In other words patients who suffer from depression and have positive history of ACE are poor responders to anti-depressant medications (e.g. SSRIs).

Miniati et al have conceded that patients with depression and positive ACE history pose a challenge for treatment, as compared to those patients with Negative ACE (M. Miniati, 2010). Shamseddin et al documented in the TORDIA study, the difficulties and treatment resistance seen in adolescents who have been subjected to Adverse Childhood Experience (Dr. Wael Shamseddin, 2011 March). Resistance and difficulty in finding optimal treatment dosages might be due to numerous reasons, however Jurena et al suggest that stress may lead to changes in mineralocorticoid receptor functions which in turn may lead to difficulty in treating patients with depressive symptoms in documented by Jurena et al. (Mario F. Juruena, 2013).

It has also been observed that this group of patients need higher dose of medication to response to antidepressant and specifically SSRI. (Daniel N. Klein, 2009).

The authors conducted the chart review to document any patterns in treatment paradigms, that might become evident or noticeable in chart review.

METHOD:

A retrospective chart review was conducted. Charts of adult patients between the ages of 18 to 52, with documented Positive history of Adverse Childhood Events (PACE) were identified.

Those patients with a history of Depressive Disorders treated with Prozac were then selected for further review.

From these charts we reviewed the charts of those patients who were considered to have stabilized by their clinical report, and were at the same dose of Fluoxetine for over 3 consecutive months at the same dose.

Charts which had notations of current substance use, substance induced depressive disorders, other psychiatric disorders as the major focus of clinical concerns, personality disorders, chronic medical or neurological issues, and/or polypharmacy were excluded.

These charts were then paired/ matched 1:1 with regard to gender, age range and diagnosis comparable patient charts, who were also treated with Prozac and had stabilized, and were at the same dose of Fluoxetine for at least 3 consecutive months, but had not reported any Adverse Childhood Events.

Dose of Prozac, i.e. Dose Required to Treat (DRTT) Depressive Disorder in those patients who were (PACE) Positive ACE was compared to the DRTT for those patients who were (NACE) Negative for ACE.
RESULTS:

A total of 14 patient charts data were reviewed, seven with Positive Adverse Childhood Experiences (PACE) & seven with Negative Adverse Childhood Experiences (NACE). The age range of participants was 18-52 years with four males and three females in each group.

It was noted that for those patients under the age of 21, there was no noticeable statistical difference in the dosages. However for patients over the age of 21 the difference in dosages required...
to treat depressive symptoms was significant.

The mean dose required to treat (DRTT) depressive disorder in the PACE group was 41.43 mg QD vs. 18.57 mg QD for the NACE group. As depicted in the Figure 1, the distribution of the DRTT shows separation above the 21 year old age range. Therefore the mean DRTT was recalculated (Figure 2) to account for this separation. The mean DRTT for the PACE group under 21 year age was 23.33 mg QD and over the 21 year age was 55 mg QD; and for the NACE group was 16.67 mg QD for under 21 year group and 20 mg QD for the over 21 year age group.

The Mode DRTT for the PACE group was 40 mg QD, whereas mode DRTT for the NACE group was 20 mg QD. Median DRTT for the PACE group was 40 mg QD vs 20 mg QD for the NACE group.

The results clearly show that for patients with Positive ACE over the age of 21 years, the DRTT is almost three times the DRTT for Negative ACE patients.

**DISCUSSION:**

At the design stage of the study the authors kept in consideration the physiological and emotional differences between adults and children (including adolescents) by keeping the age cut off at 18 years. However the results reveal a clear difference in response between the PACE and NACE groups starting at age 21 years. The results indicate that even though on a technical level individuals over the age of 18 are technically adults, however their neuro-physiology and response stress and consequently to medication (PROZAC) did not follow the over 21 year age group. Therefore if it inferred that if we were to conduct a further study and only allow subjects over the age of 21 years to be represented then it is possible that the data could be more homogenous and predictable.

That in itself was not the only limitation that the authors encountered in this review.

Limitations of retrospective chart review in general are immense because we are not able to control variables that could potentially influence outcomes. However the retrospective chart review is a powerful tool that can help guide our future studies.

In this review we identified a number of weaknesses that we will rectify in the future prospective study, i.e. trying to recruit more subjects, by obtaining more detail information about the Adverse Childhood Experiences, and by studying the efficacy of more than just one antidepressant medication. Furthermore, additional studies are needed to understand the mechanisms of how and why positive history Positive ACE (PACE) affects treatment response. BDNF, Cortisol level, Cytokines, and other inflammatory factors such as CRP could be investigated for better understanding of nature of low response to treatment. (Linda Booij, March, 2015)

Despite the above noted limitations, the results of this review support the association between Positive ACE (PACE) in adult patient over the age of 21 years, and the need for a higher dose of PROZAC to treat their depressive disorders.

This data and findings of this study are not conclusive at this time to warrant a change in treatment protocols, however our study does appear to indicate that those individuals who had Depressive Disorders, and a positive history of Adverse Childhood Experience (PACE), need almost a three to four fold higher dose than controls who were Negative for ACE (NACE). If this finding is confirmed in a larger prospective study, then it might be prudent to contemplate that PACE patients suffering from Depressive Disorders, should have a higher target dose of antidepressants for better outcomes.

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