Paper

Human Development

Rethinking 'Acculturation' in Relation to Diasporic Cultures and Postcolonial Identities

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Abstract
In this article, we reexamine the concept of 'acculturation' in cross-cultural psychology, especially with respect to non-western, non-European immigrants living in the United States. By drawing primarily on postcolonial scholarship, we specifically reconsider the universalist assumption in cross-cultural psychology that all immigrant groups undergo the same kind of 'psychological' acculturation process. In so doing, (1) we consider some of the historical and political events related to immigration in the United States; (2) we question the conflation of nation with culture that emerges in many theories of acculturation; (3) we use the notion of diaspora as theorized in postcolonial studies to rethink the concept of 'integration strategy' as developed in cross-cultural psychology. Our article has implications for general issues of culture and self in human development, and particular issues in the area of acculturation.

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Given the fact that currently 20% of all children in the United States are immigrant children [Hernandez, 1999], questions related to acculturation and migrant identity are central to human development. Much of the psychological research on the development of immigrant identity has been studied under the topic of 'acculturation' in cross-cultural psychology. Scholars working with this body of research have been primarily occupied with developing universal, linear models to understand the various stages of identity that an immigrant might experience.

Recently, however, Hermans and Kempen [1998] have argued that in a period of increasing globalization, the rapid creation of multinationals, massive flows of transmigration, and border crossings, acculturation becomes increasingly complicated. Rather than thinking of immigrants as moving in a linear trajectory from culture A to culture B they suggest we think of cultures as 'moving and mixing' [p. 1117]. Their comments provide us with a point of departure as we reconsider the process of acculturation in the context of hybrid histories, borderland and diasporic cultural practices. In order to accomplish our task we draw upon the growing body of work termed as postcolonial studies.

Over the last two decades, scholarship undertaken in fields such as critical/cultural anthropology, and postcolonial studies have emphasized the continuous and ongoing process through which immigrants reconstitute and negotiate their identity. In particular, scholarship undertaken from a postcolonial perspective has had a significant impact on both the humanities and social studies. However, psychology as a discipline has only recently started paying attention to the advancements in postcolonial and diaspora theories [e.g., see Hermans and Kempen, 1998].

Postcolonial studies incorporate the study of 'all the effects of European colonization in the majority of the cultures of the world' [Sagar, 1996, p. 423]. For instance, postcolonial scholars study social phenomena spurred by Euro-American colonization such as the 'Third World' diasporas in 'First World' communities, construction of novel cultural practices under imperialism, transportation of indentured labor and slavery, representation of the colonized subjects by the colonist in terms of power, race, gender, ethnicity, creation of nations and nationalism in relation and opposition to the influential discursive practices of Europe and United States [Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1995].

We believe that postcolonial research, with its emphasis on understanding the construction of self and identity in terms of colonial histories and present day transnational migration, has tremendous relevance for understanding issues related to acculturation and immigrant identities in the field of human development. It is relevant for the field of human development because there is an urgent need to address the various challenging developmental issues (e.g., self-identity, parent-child communication, emotions, language, peer relationships) that children and families face during the process of migration and displacement.

Furthermore, we contend that taking a postcolonial perspective to understand acculturation allows us to consider the distinct experiences of non-western, non-European immigrants. Race has always played a key role in U.S. state-sponsored immigration, naturalization and citizenship laws [López, 1996; Mohanty, 1991]. Moreover, given the existence of racial prejudice in American society, non-European/non-White immigrants have been more likely to face exclusion and discrimination than their European counterparts. Subsequently, through personal and collective remembering, tales of discrimination, hardships and sheer exploitation are kept alive in most non-European, non-White immigrant communities. Such narratives have played a large part in constructing and maintaining what are known as diasporas.

Diasporic communities distinctly attempt to maintain (real and/or imagined) connections and commitments to their homeland and recognize themselves and act as a collective community. In other words, people who simply live outside their ancestral homeland cannot automatically be considered diasporas [Tölöyan, 1996]. Examples of diasporic immigrants in the United States are Jewish Americans, Armenian Americans,

Japanese Americans, Asian Indians, Latino/a and Chicano/a communities in the U.S., and so on. These non-European/non-White diasporic communities bring into sharp relief the sense of constantly negotiating between here and there, past and present, homeland and hostland, self and other. Such negotiations have not been adequately recognized or understood in many of the existing acculturation models. Motivated by our own experiences as non-European immigrants, we seek to extend and elaborate on current cross-cultural theories of acculturation in psychology in order to encompass some of the contradictions, complexities, and the local specificities involved in present day migrant experiences.

We begin this paper by discussing the universalist assumptions that guide much research on acculturation in cross-cultural psychology. We then draw upon postcolonial theory to develop a case for re-thinking about the development of the immigrant self as mediated, contested and contextual. We focus on three themes that have been highlighted and emphasized by recent scholarship on postcolonialism and the diaspora. First, we consider some of the historical and political events related to immigration in the United States in order to illustrate how any discussion about migrant identity must be situated and contextualized in historical terms. Second, we interrogate the conflation of nation with culture that emerges explicitly and implicitly in many theories of acculturation in cross-cultural psychology. We demonstrate why nation and culture cannot be used interchangeably and that home and host cultures are not hermetically sealed or mutually exclusive spaces. Third, we use the notion of diaspora as theorized in postcolonial studies in order to reexamine and question cross-cultural psychologists' definitions of 'bicultural competency' and 'integration strategy' as ideal developmental end states of acculturation for all immigrants. Instead, we suggest a process-oriented approach to acculturation research – where the focus is on understanding how immigrants living in hybrid cultures and diasporic locations are constantly negotiating their multiple, and often conflicting histories and subject positions.

The Concept of Acculturation in Cross-Cultural Psychology

Within the field of psychology in general and cross-cultural psychology in particular, there have been several models that explain acculturation related issues. Cross-cultural researchers have studied topics such as acculturation and acculturative stress [Berry, 1998], socialization and enculturation [Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre, 1997], intergroup relations across cultures [Gudykunst & Bond, 1997], cross-cultural differences in work values [Hofstede, 1980], individualism and collectivism across cultures [Kagitçibasi, 1997], and bicultural identity [Lafromboise, Coleman, Gerton, 1998]. We do not intend to undertake a comprehensive review of all the different concepts associated with the topic of acculturation within cross-cultural psychology literature. Rather, we will engage in a selective discussion of only those concepts that are directly relevant to the goals and purposes of the paper outlined above.

Prominent in acculturation research is the model of acculturation strategies proposed by Berry and his colleagues [e.g., Berry, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1997; Berry and Sam, 1997; Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok, 1987; Berry, Kim, Power, Young and Bujaki, 1989]. Their prolific output and the fact that several major introductory books on psychology [for example, see Halonen and Santrock, 1996; Tavris and Wade, 1998; Westen, 1997] cite them extensively, indicate that their model of acculturation strategies is one of the

most influential on the subject of acculturation as developed in cross-cultural psychology. Acculturation strategies refer to the plan or the method that individuals use in responding to stress-inducing new cultural contexts. A fourfold classification is proposed which includes 'assimilation', 'integration', 'separation', and 'marginalization'. Berry and his colleagues suggest that the *assimilation* strategy occurs when the individual decides not to maintain his or her cultural identity by seeking contact in his/her daily interaction with the dominant group. When the individuals from the non-dominant group 'place a value on holding on to their original culture' [Berry and Sam, 1997, p. 297] and seek no contact with the dominant group, then these individuals are pursuing a *separation* strategy. When individuals express an interest in maintaining strong ties in their everyday life both with their ethnic group as well as with the dominant group, the *integration* strategy is defined. The fourth strategy is *marginalization* in which individuals 'lose cultural and psychological contact with both their traditional culture and the larger society' [Berry, 1998, p. 119].

The optimal acculturation strategy for immigrants is integration which 'appears to be a consistent predictor of more positive outcomes than the three alternatives' [Berry and Sam, 1997, p. 318]. Integration implies both the preservation of home culture and an active involvement with the host culture. Central to the theory of integration strategy is the assumption of universality. Berry and his colleagues take up the position that although there are 'substantial variations in the life circumstances of the cultural groups that experience acculturation, the psychological processes that operate during acculturation are essentially same for all the groups; that is we adopt a *universalist perspective* on acculturation' [emphasis in original, Berry and Sam, 1997, p. 296]. In other words, immigrants' acculturation strategies reveal the underlying psychological processes that unfold during their adaptation to new cultural contexts. Such a position dominates current research on acculturation and also provides an important theoretical basis for much research carried under the larger rubric of cross-cultural psychology [see Segall, Lonner and Berry, 1998]. Drawing and developing upon previous research, Berry and his colleagues maintain that other psychological processes such as 'behavioral shifts', 'culture shedding', 'culture shock', and 'acculturative stress' are also experienced in varying degrees by an individual undergoing acculturation [Berry, 1998; Berry and Sam, 1997].

So what are these universal psychological processes? What does it mean to say that all groups manifest the same kind of 'psychological' thinking during the acculturation process? What is the basis for analytically separating the psychological from the cultural? Are the 'psychological processes' similar for individuals who migrate to the U.S. from Western European countries such as England and Germany as opposed to say individuals who migrate from previously colonized countries such as India and Kenya? What does 'culture' in acculturation stand for? One can find answers to these questions by examining how notions of culture and self are defined in the larger body of literature on cross-cultural psychology.

Defining Culture and Self in Psychology

In an effort to distinguish cross-cultural psychology from cultural psychology and cultural anthropology, Segall, Lonner and Berry [1998, p. 1102] define culture as 'comprising a set of independent or contextual variables affecting various aspects of individ-

ual behavior'. Furthermore, the universalist assumptions about culture are based on the idea that there are

basic characteristics common to all members of the species (i.e., constituting a set of psychological givens) and that culture influences the development and display of them (i.e., culture plays different variations on these underlying themes called 'variform universals') [Segall, Lonner and Berry, 1998, p. 1104].

Separating culture from individual psychological operations or psychological processes is based on the notion that the self has some natural properties that are already assumed to be there even prior to culture. The 'psychological given' refers to a core, essential self that has an independent, objective, universal reality. The role of culture as a variable, then, is to shape or mold the psychological operations or the 'underlying variform universals' that are contained in the universal self. Elaborating on the different aspects of the universal self, Segall, Lonner and Berry [1998] suggest that cross cultural psychologists examine 'cultural variables very carefully (a process they call "peeling the onion") in order to reveal the "psychic" unity of mankind at the core of culture' [p. 1104]. They state that 'most cross-cultural psychologists whose ultimate concern is with individual behavior, use the concept of culture to identify contexts or to designate a set of antecedent variables' [Segall, Lonner, and Berry, 1998, p. 105].

   Classifying culture as an 'antecedent' variable and the properties of the self as universal, natural, and pregiven is a view that plays an important role in shaping acculturation research in cross-cultural psychology. To recall, we had noted that Berry and Sam's [1997] definition of acculturation basically assumes that all immigrating individuals and groups manifest the same kind of psychological operations during the acculturation process. The social and historical factors that influence an immigrant's acculturation are, at best, referred to as a 'broad class of variables' that are different and separate from psychological-individual level variables [Berry and Sam, 1997, p. 300]. To clarify, such a view emphasizes the point that although different immigrants are influenced by distinctive cultural 'variables' such as history, ethnicity, race and gender, the 'underlying' psychological operations involved in the acculturation process are not taken to be mutually constituted with those 'variables' or properties of culture. Thus, for Berry and his colleagues, culture and history are variables that enable the 'display' of the pre-given properties of the acculturating self but these very variables are not taken to be inextricably interwoven with the self. The historical and political aspects of immigration rarely enter the discussion, and when they do, they are classified as group variables. In contrast, in this paper, we advocate that to fully understand migrant identity we need to think of selfhood as firmly intertwined with socio-cultural factors such as colonialism, language, immigration and racially based laws.

   The position that culture and self are deeply intertwined with each other is by no means new in psychology. Within the field of sociocultural psychology, researchers and scholars such as Cole [1996], Rogoff [1990], Shweder [1991], Valsiner [1998], and Wertsch [1991] have presented important insights about the role of culture in human development. There are various differences in how each of these sociocultural psychologists analyze the relationship between culture and the development of self, but one belief shared by these scholars is that the world of culture and the world of self are not mutually exclusive empirical 'variables'. Rather, they believe that our meanings about self/other relationships are closely *mediated, structured and organized* through our partici-

pation in everyday sociocultural practices and the social relations that are embedded within these practices.

Similarly, other researchers and scholars working within the field of psychology have facilitated our understanding of the role of language-based discursive practices in the construction of self and identity [Shotter, 1993; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Harré & Gillet, 1994]. Such research has focused on demonstrating how individuals construct multiple meanings about their self/other relationship through discursive activities of narrative storytelling, conversations, and dialogue.

Postcolonial Theory and Acculturation: Identity in Colonial and Neocolonial Practices

The idea that the construction of self and identity is not a naturally occurring phenomenon that can be objectively studied but instead the notion of self is constituted by historical, political and social forces is particularly and forcefully maintained by postcolonial theorists such as Bhabha [1994], Said [1978], and Spivak [1993]. Postcolonial studies specifically contest Eurocentric meta-narratives of enlightenment, ideals of logic and linearity, and the orientalization of the 'other'.

In comparison to sociocultural and discursive psychology, postcolonial projects are specifically concerned with studying how colonial and neocolonial practices and policies are deeply intermingled with the present day migratory experience[1]. For example, Chambers [1994] writes that the postcolonial context of migrancy 'involves a movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation' [p. 5]. According to Bammer [1994] such movements of dislocation and displacement are the defining feature of the twentieth century. Much of this displacement has occurred and continues to do so in relation to imperialist and colonial legacies, 'for in some sense, the Third-Worldization and hybridization in the First World merely follow upon the prior flows of population, armies, goods, and capital that in the colonial era mainly moved outward' [Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996, p. 9].

As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin [1995] note, European imperialism came in many forms that unleashed itself over many different countries and continents, over hundreds of years through both 'conscious planning and contingent occurrence' [p. 1]. The term postcolonial mainly refers to the planned and deliberate colonization of the so-called 'Third World' nations and cultures in Asia, Africa, and the Carribean by modern European imperialists. Some critics extend the term postcolonial to include the 'surviving and indigenous non-European' minority populations in the 'European ex-settled colonies of Australia, New Zealand and North America' [Sagar, 1996, p. 224].

Furthermore, postcolonial critics have pointed out that the affix 'post' in postcolonial does not mean that there was a neat separation between the former European colonial powers and their colonized subjects. That is, colonization did not cease when

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[1] Although there is a diversity of theoretical positions in the ever-expanding field of postcolonial studies, there are common themes and issues that bind them together. For instance, postcolonial theorists challenge and question how dominant groups, particularly those from the 'First World', represent and construct meanings about groups with less power, particularly 'subjects' from the 'Third World'. In other words, postcolonial theories focus on cultural representations, discourses, positioning and power.

the European nations' flags came down and the colonized nations' flag went up. Most postcolonial critics argue that 'all postcolonial societies are still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neocolonial domination, and independence has not solved the problem ... Postcolonialism is a continuous process of resistance and reconstruction' [Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1995, p. 2].

We believe that postcolonial studies – with its emphasis on understanding the construction of self or selves as linked to colonial, neo-colonial and diasporic contexts – extends and elaborates on the arguments provided by sociocultural and discursive psychologists, and also adds a critical dimension to the work of cross-cultural psychologists. We have so far given a broad overview of the major ways in which the topic of acculturation has been theorized in cross-cultural psychology. The work of cross-cultural psychologists such as Berry and his colleagues has generated a large body of empirical research that has provided us with substantial awareness and understanding of migrancy and acculturation. However, we believe that treating culture and self as separate variables does not capture how issues of power and race are deeply interconnected with the development of an immigrant's identity. In what follows, we examine three themes related to acculturation and migrancy by incorporating insights from postcolonial studies. We begin by specifically discussing the role played by U.S. immigration laws in the acculturation of immigrant selfhood.

The Mutual Constitution of the History of Immigration Laws and the Acculturating Self

When referring to an immigrant's acculturation process, we need to be attentive to issues of race, gender, and power status of an immigrant both before and after migration to the host country. The acculturation process within the U.S. takes on a different developmental trajectory, if, say, the migrant was part of a powerful center or majority in his/her local milieu prior to migration, and after migration, he/she finds himself or herself to be a part of a minority living on the margins. As Frankenberg and Mani [1993] allege, race and gender are crucial signifiers that mark our locations and positions in the center or the margins. Through these signifiers we identify ourselves – our selfhood – and we get identified by others as well. In other words, our identities are both 'relational and situated' [p. 296]. Frankenberg and Mani describe several personal incidents that illustrate how modes of othering and racialization are inseparable from the everyday experiences of a non-European/non-White immigrant in the U.S.

Take gender for instance. In general, gender is rarely paid much attention when theorizing about the acculturation process. Cultural groups are often regarded in homogeneous terms and the specificity of women's experiences are ignored. If considered, it usually takes the status of a variable that is uniformly present across all cultures. Buijs [1993] observes that until the mid-1970s, women were invisible in studies of migrancy, and even in contemporary scholarship there have been few attempts to examine the specific experiences and responses of immigrant women as they deal with the dynamics of dislocation and displacement. Most of the literature in psychology that deals with immigration has been male-centered, and the guiding assumption generally has been that women's experiences are identical to those of men or simply not important enough to warrant inclusion. Espín [1999] remonstrates that gendered migrant experiences are understudied; her recent work is an attempt to redress this problem. By focusing on the

lived experiences of immigrant women, she provides a very localized, detailed and illuminating analysis of how immigrant women negotiate with their gender and sexual identity.

Thinking about gender in relation to migrancy forces us to abandon universal models of acculturation. Similarly, we need to recognize that old and new immigrants, whether they are labeled as Asian Americans, Europeans, Caribbeans, Latino/as, Chicano/as, are all socially and historically positioned to each other and to the dominant groups in the U.S. through vectors of 'similarity, continuity and difference' [Frankenberg and Mani, 1993, p. 297]. When we adhere to universal models of acculturation, we undervalue the asymmetrical relations of power and the inequities and injustices faced by certain immigrant groups as a result of their nationality, race or gender. Being othered or racialized is part of many non-European immigrants' acculturation experience, and these experiences are tightly knitted with their evolving conceptions of selfhood. These experiences are revealed both in everyday, routine intercultural encounters and in a government or a state's history of laws about nationality, citizenship and immigration.

Mohanty [1991] points out that the immigration and citizenship policies of the U.S. in the last 200 years fostered 'racial regimes' that were intended to keep 'slaves', 'indentured laborers' and non-European 'foreigners' as aliens and outsiders [pp. 23–25]. Furthermore, she suggests that the history of immigration and naturalization in the U.S. parallels the process of racialization that spans the annihilation of Native Americans, the history of slavery and the civil rights movement. By comparing the history of the immigration of European people and of the history of the immigration of the 'people of color' to the U.S., Mohanty [1991] suggests the patterns of immigration and citizenship laws for both the groups (European and non-European) were based on racial heritage and the 'economic exigencies of' the state [p. 24].

She points out that in the nineteenth century, White, Negro and Indian were the three racial categories used in the labor market. It was only after the '1848 treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo' that the Mexicans were given the status of free laborers who could work on a variety of jobs anywhere in the country [Mohanty, 1991, p. 24]. And it was only in 1854 that the Supreme Court decided that the Chinese who mainly worked as cheap labor in exploitative conditions in the West Coast were included under the category of 'Indian'[2].

Furthermore, the immigration laws of the United States government influenced the day-to-day living of the immigrant workers. The effects were seen on immigrant family configurations (in some cases women and children could not migrate), and in the end set up firm boundaries between outsiders and insiders, First World immigrants and Third World immigrants, natives and foreigners. Such outside-inside relationships between different immigrants were consistently maintained through a series of U.S. sponsored Exclusionary Acts.

The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was passed as a response to the perception that Chinese immigrants were culturally unassimilable [Sharpe, 1995]. The 1907 'gentleman's agreement' limited Japanese immigration, in 1917 Asian Indian immigrants were restricted, in 1924 the Oriental Exclusion Act suspended labor immigration from

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[2] See Haney López [1996] for a detailed discussion of bidirectional relationship between law, immigration, race, and society in U.S.

mainland Asia, and in 1934 the Tydings-McDuffie Act restricted Filipino immigration to the U.S. [Mohanty, 1991]. Citizenship through naturalization was denied to all Asians from 1924 to 1943. The main aim of sponsoring these Exclusion Acts was to make sure that the flow of non-European immigration was contained, and these immigrants were allowed 'in' only to meet the demands of the fluctuating labor markets in the U.S. In the 1960s, when the U.S. labor markets needed highly qualified and skillful workers, immigration laws were opened up to allow a few 'select' top quality professionals who were technically well trained and highly educated. Sharpe [1995] notes that policymakers did not anticipate that the new laws would dramatically shift immigration demographics whereby the 'new immigrants' would primarily be Asians, Central Americans, Mexicans and Caribbeans. Rather, the reforms were seen as a 'social redress of Catholics and Jews from southern and eastern Europe' who were affected by the 1965 Immigration Act [Sharpe, 1995, p. 188]. In other words, the previous laws restricted 'non-Nordic Europeans' from immigrating and therefore the 1965 Act was specifically seen as a remedy to such restrictions.

The above discussion highlights the point that U.S. state sponsored immigration, naturalization and citizenship laws were historically based on racist ideologies that played a crucial role in shaping and defining the acculturation experiences of many 'Third World' non-European immigrants. Such stereotyping, racializing and othering was directly connected to the economic conditions and the state sponsored immigration laws of the U.S. In this acculturation process, it is reasonable to conclude that a Chinese immigrant's selfhood could be intertwined with the larger American story of 'yellow peril' or as part of the present story of being a 'model minority'. To suggest that such a process is universal and that all immigrants undergo the same psychological processes in their acculturation journey minimizes the inequities and injustices faced by many non-European immigrants. Even worse we risk underrating, overlooking and suppressing the discordant and discrepant history of immigration in the United States (and elsewhere as the case may be).

When new immigrants – whether Carribean, Chilean, Chinese, Indian, Mexican, or Vietnamese – enter the United States, they are introduced to the stories, legacies and the immigration heritage of their respective ethnic group. Kondo [1996] analyzes how the memory of the incarceration of Japanese Americans and emblematic cases such as the beating death of Vincent Chin (a Chinese American engineer, by two White unemployed autoworkers) represent the contested notions of community and home as experienced and narrated by many Asian immigrants. Through personal and collective remembering, tales of discrimination, hardships and sheer exploitation are kept alive in immigrant communities. Many of these narratives are circulated as unofficial histories of immigrant communities and are intimately bound up with the formation of an individual immigrant's identity. Increasingly these accounts are being recorded by immigrant and diasporic writers through autobiographical narratives, memoirs, and novels [Anzaldua, 1987; Alexander, 1996; Maira and Srinath, 1996; Rushdie, 1991]. Many of these first generation immigrant narratives and autobiographies emphasize the embeddedness of their selfhood in concrete material histories and political realities of oppression, discrimination, and exploitation. Specifically, one issue that is often interrogated and questioned in the narratives and renderings of their postcolonial migrant histories is whether home cultures and host cultures are two separate distinct entities. This question takes on utmost importance especially considered in light of how cross-cultural psychologists define host and home cultures.

When theorizing about acculturation, a common approach in cross-cultural psychology is to assume a rather distinct separation between the home culture and the host culture of an immigrant. As we mentioned earlier, Hermans and Kempen [1998] state that acculturation in cross-cultural psychology is seen as the process by which a particular individual moves from culture A to culture B in a fairly linear fashion. Typically this distinction between the home and host culture is taken to be at the national level. So acculturation is assumed to take place when, say, a person from Korea or Mexico immigrates to the United States and attempts to adapt to American culture and society.

In other words 'culture' as understood in acculturation literature is usually conflated with 'nation'. This slippage of nation with culture is quite pervasive in the cross-cultural literature. For instance, Hofstede [1997], whose work is much cited in the cross-cultural psychology literature, cautions the reader to be careful when discussing cultural difference solely at the national level and offers a series of categories that include gender, generation, ethnicity, and so on. However, such categories are then put aside in favor of 'collecting data' at the level of nations because he argues it makes 'practical sense to focus on cultural factors separating or uniting nations' [p. 12, 13]. Similarly, Gudykunst and Kim [1997], both of whom have been very influential in developing acculturation research, state that usually boundaries between cultures coincide with boundaries between countries. Other prominent scholars like Segall, Lonner, and Berry [1998] refer to the preponderance of interest by cross-cultural psychologists in examining the notion of individualism-collectivism as a cultural characteristic across 'national samples'.

Conflating culture with nation is an extremely problematic position. Anderson [1991, p. 3] has famously argued that nation, nationality and nationalism are notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyze. To posit that the 'nation' can be understood as a durable, ontological, material, geopolitical concept ignores the counter narratives, the contested identities, and the historical inventions that continuously challenge any unified understanding of a nation. A nation is more than a geographically identified space; rather, it is what Anderson terms an 'imagined community', what Renan [1990, p. 19] calls a 'spiritual principle' constituted by memories that swallow up discordant details, and what Bhabha [1990, p. 297] refers to as a series of narrations constructed by 'scraps, patches and rags'.

Moreover, when we consider the history of colonialism, we are forced to abandon national-level classifications of culture. Postcolonial writers have persistently sought to demonstrate how formerly colonized cultures bear indelible, imperial inscriptions. As Spivak [1993, p. 48] comments, the 'subject-position of the citizen of a recently decolonized "nation" is epistemically fractured', and can 'inhabit widely different epistemes, violently at odds with each other'. The now infamous, but then celebrated, *Macaulay Minute*[3] stated with imperial certitude that: 'We (the British) must at present do our best to form ... a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect' (Macaulay, 1972, p. 249]. So if history and culture are inseparably tied to the construction of self, then, for example, any discussion with regard to

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[3] Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1860) was a British statesman, essayist, and policy reformer. His career in colonial India was marked by his essay titled, 'Minute on Indian Education' in which he made a strong argument for the establishment and promotion of English education and culture in India for Indians.

an Indian immigrant must account for the cultural genealogy of 'English India', which according to Suleri [1992, p. 3] is extensive enough to include both colonial and postcolonial histories.

From the formation of the modern nation state, deeply intertwined with colonial and imperialist policies, to the vast flow of migration from 'Third World' postcolonial societies to the 'First World', the idea that culture can be circumscribed and defined by national boundaries is highly debatable. As Hermans and Kempen [1998] argue, equating culture with the geographic space of the nation does not fully capture the complex relationship between global cultures and the construction of self [p. 1117]. They note that globalization has led to a hybridization of cultural practices and meanings that

> may create such multiple identities as Mexican school girls dressed in Greek togas dancing in the style of Isadora Duncan, a London boy of Asian origin playing for a local Bengali cricket team and at the same time supporting the Arsenal football club, Thai boxing by Moroccan girls in Amsterdam, and Native Americans celebrating Mardi Gras in the United States [p. 1113].

The above examples point to the construction of identities through the intermingling, mixing and moving of cultures. Such a description of culture stands in stark contrast to culture as defined by cross-cultural psychologists. Hermans and Kempen [1998] argue that such monolithic concepts of culture and nation fail to explain the challenges accompanying the acculturation process within a world where the local and the global are merging and creating new 'contact zones' between different cultures [p. 1117].

Postcolonial theorist, R. Radhakrishnan [1996, p. 7], in his book *Diasporic Mediations*, takes his own experience as an Indian immigrant in the United States as a point of entry to reflect critically on how any understanding of culture is inevitably linked with current debates on the politics of colonial and postcolonial practices and issues of nation and nationalism. For instance, he questions what it means 'to be' from a particular culture, as in 'being Indian'. His eleven year old son's question, 'Am I Indian or American?' compels him to question the authenticity of cultural identity. The term culture as generally defined in cross cultural psychology and specifically 'operationalized' in the acculturation model proposed by Berry and his colleagues both implicitly and explicitly posits one India or one China or one Japan and so on, 'out there' in a fixed geographical and territorial space. Such a conception of culture overlooks how the growing presence of diasporic communities, with their continuous back and forth negotiations with the cultures of their homeland and the hostland, contradicts and contests homogenous and stable understandings of culture.

According to van der Veer [1992, p. 1], in the early 1990s, about 8 million South Asians, 22 million Chinese, 11 million Jews, 300 million people of African descent and 350 million Europeans were living as migrant populations. Contemporary global movements and globalization impulses (variously motivated) force us to abandon such seamless conceptions of similarities and differences between national cultures in favor of hybridized, 'diaspor-ized', and heterogeneous notions of culture [Hall, 1993, p. 356]. In other words, the relationship between culture and nation should be viewed neither as completely disjointed nor as coterminous. To posit static, immovable, immutable constructions of culture is a convenient fiction that allows us, as Hall [1991] acerbically remarks, 'to get a good night's sleep'. For it allows us to believe that in spite of the fact that history is 'constantly breaking in unpredictable ways...we somehow go on being the same' [p. 43]. Central to understanding culture as a leaky category is the notion of the

'diaspora'. In the next section we explore the idea of the diaspora in more detail and how it provides alternative ways of thinking about the role of home cultures and host cultures, nation and nationality in an immigrant's acculturation process.

Diasporic Readings of Culture

Kachig Tölöyan, the editor of the journal *Diaspora*, has traced the genealogy of the term diaspora and provided a detailed explanation of its implications for any study of cultural differences [Tölöyan, 1996]. He asserts that the rapidity of material and discursive change in recent times has broadened the semantic domain of the concept of 'diaspora'. Where once the term was used to refer to the migrations of Jewish populations, it now refers to a broad range of dislocations experienced by several groups of people. The term diaspora has been increasingly used both in scholarly discourse and the larger lay community. Tölöyan attributes the expanding usage of this term in part to the acceleration of immigration to the industrialized worlds; to the lack of assimilation of many immigrant groups; to institutional links with the homeland; to sustained work by many immigrant groups to create and maintain their own religious institutions, language schools, community centers, newspapers, radio stations; and to the American university itself where many diasporan elites have converged to forge theoretical sites to address immigrant identity and transnationalism.

Tölöyan [1996] argues that given the increase in travel, media, communication technology, more and more immigrants can be considered to be living in diasporas. Similarly, Appadurai [1996] writes that mass migrations, both voluntary and forced, are not new in human history. However, he contends that, 'when it is juxtaposed with mass mediated images, scripts, and sensations, we have a new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities ... These create diasporic public spheres, phenomena that confound theories that depend on the continued salience of the nation-state' [p. 4].

Given the increasing discursive and material emergence of the diaspora, we can no longer insist on thinking about culture as contained by national boundaries or as reified entities. Scholars studying issues related to the diaspora make us confront questions about the status of 'culture' in global, transnational, diasporic societies: Is there any thing such as a univocal, monolithic, American, English, or Indian culture? What does it mean to have hyphenated identities such as African-American, Asian-American or Mexican-American in the larger American society? How do 'Third World', postcolonial immigrants residing in 'First World' societies negotiate their identities in relation to both Western/European/'First World' settlers *and* to other non-European 'Third World' immigrants?

Consider, for example, the notions of acculturation strategies and 'bicultural competence'. To recall, Berry and his colleagues argue that the four main acculturation strategies are integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. An immigrant adopts an integration strategy when he or she attempts to maintain cultural and psychological contact in his/her everyday interactions with both his or her ethnic group as well as the dominant group. Similarly, the concept of 'bicultural competence' suggests that an immigrant can possibly achieve a happy, balanced blend that entails 'becoming effective in the new culture and remaining competent in his or her culture of origin' [Laframboise et al., 1998, p. 148]. Those immigrants who do not achieve this goal, experience

higher acculturative stress [Berry, 1997] and/or are not as physically or psychologically healthy [Lafromboise et al., 1998]. Although integration and bicultural competency may be worthy goals to achieve, we contend that for most people living in contemporary diasporas, their negotiation with multiple cultural sites is fluid, dynamic, interminable and often unstable. Thus, there are several conceptual problems with describing bicultural competency and integration strategy as the developmental end goal in the immigrant's acculturation process. First, Berry and his colleagues describe the integration strategy as being an end goal of an immigrant's acculturation without explaining the process by which such a goal would be achieved.

Second, missing from their discussion on 'integration strategy' is how issues of conflict, power, and asymmetry affect many diasporic immigrants' acculturation process. For example, integration, at least as discussed by Berry and his colleagues, implicitly assumes that both the majority and minority cultures have equal status and power. Furthermore, it is not clear what the term integration exactly means. How does one know when someone is integrated or not with the host culture? Who decides whether an immigrant is pursuing a strategy of marginalization, integration or separation?

Radhkrishnan [1996] suggests that the notion of multiple, hyphenated and hybridized identities of the diaspora is a challenge to the idea that there can be some kind of a blissful marriage or integration of the cultures between the hyphen. Recognizing the complications involved in understanding the diasporic identity, Radhakrishnan engages in raising a series of insightful questions. He asks:

> When someone speaks as an Asian-American, who is exactly speaking? If we dwell in the hyphen, who represents the hyphen: the Asian or the American, or can the hyphen speak for itself without creating an imbalance between the Asian and American components ... True, both components have status, but which has the power and the potential to read and interpret the other on its terms? If the Asian is to be Americanized, will the American submit to Asianization? [Radhakrishnan, 1996, p. 211].

Through these questions Radhakrishnan is foregrounding the point that the acculturation process is not a matter of one's individual strategy where one has the free choice to unproblematically integrate the values of the host culture and one's own immigrant group.

Consider scholar and writer Yep's [1998] reflections on his own multicultural identity. He defines himself as *Asianlatinoamerican*, being born in a Chinese family, and having lived first in Peru and then later in the United States. He believes that he has integrated all three cultures within himself. However, he does not claim his 'integration' to be always harmonious or free from tension. Rather his experience with his own multicultural identity brings him 'internal and external conflicts' [p. 80].

Similarly, through her research on Asian Indian women immigrants, Hegde [1998] demonstrates how cultural relocation and the unfolding of migrant identities involves a constant negotiation with old and new environments. Such mediations of selfhood are never finite, complete or benign. Rather, she illustrates that 'the theme of being other continually echoes in the lives of immigrants, displacing and deferring their sense of coherence about self' [p. 51].

Lavie and Swedenburg [1996] point out that the notion of having a displaced and deferred sense of selfhood can be best explained by those living in the borderlands. The notion of 'borderland identity' was originally used to identify the Chicana women who live and work in the boundary region between the United States and Mexico. However,

Lavie and Swedenburg [1996] emphasize that the notion of borders, like the diaspora, is not a place filled with 'imaginative interminglings and happy hybridities for us to celebrate' [p. 15]. Rather they use warlike metaphors to suggest that borders are like 'minefields, mobile territories of constant clashes', where 'formations of violence' continuously signify 'zones of loss, alienation' and pain. Lavie and Swedenburg [1996] clarify:

> Living in the border is frequently to experience the feeling of being trapped in an impossible in-between, like cosmopolitan Franco-Maghrebis who are denied the option of identifying with either France or Algeria and are harassed both by white racist extremists and Islamist xenophobes ... Borders and diasporas are phenomena that blow up – both enlarge and explode – the hyphen: Arab-Jew, African-American, Franco-Maghrebi, Black-British [pp. 15–16].

Rather than posit migrant identity as an allocation of different cultural components in a fortuitous, congenial amalgam, the concepts reviewed above emphasize the constant struggle and negotiation that immigrants experience. One of the assumptions inherent in the integration strategy proposed by traditional acculturation theories is that immigrants can somehow 'positively' assimilate the values and ideologies of both the dominant, mainstream group and their own ethnic group. Rather, the development of hyphenated identities involves a constant process of negotiation, intervention, and mediation that are connected to a larger set of political and historical practices that are in turn linked to and shaped by issues of race, gender, sexuality and power.

Conclusion: Postcolonial Theory, Acculturation and Human Development

Scholars and researchers working on acculturation research in cross-cultural psychology have foregrounded and clarified important themes and issues related to immigrant identity. Our critique of the work done by cross-cultural psychologists is not intended to replace current theories in cross-cultural psychology. Rather we see this article as providing an alternative framework for looking at the development of migrant identity particularly as it pertains to non-Western, non-European immigrants. Our critique has implications for general issues of culture and self in human development, and particular issues in the area of acculturation.

To suggest that the acculturation process merely involves 'culture shedding' or 'some behavioral shift' or the 'unlearning of one's previous repertoire' implies that one can float in and out of cultures, shedding one's history or politics and replacing them with a new set of cultural and political 'behaviors' whenever needed. Advocating the strategy of 'integration' as the endpoint or the teloi of the individual or the group's acculturation process overlooks the contested, negotiated and sometimes painful, rupturing experiences associated with 'living in between' cultures.

Instead of thinking about the development of migrant identities in terms of universal strategies of acculturation, we suggest that scholars pay attention to postcolonial concepts and theories of migrant identity. Such an inquiry would shift the focus from looking at an immigrant's acculturation as governed by singular developmental end states (e.g., integration, assimilation) to a more *process*-oriented notion of acculturation

which could account for situated, negotiated and often contested developmental trajectories [see Bhatia, in press].

For example, the 'integration' or the 'bicultural efficiency' model proposed by cross-cultural psychologists assumes a developmental trajectory that implicitly privileges one end point or one goal. However, postcolonial and diaspora theories of hybridity force us to think beyond fixed national and cultural boundaries and allow us to think more in terms of moving cultures where here and there, past and present, homeland and hostland, self and other are *constantly* being *negotiated* with each other.

Several research examples effectively illustrate the attempt to analyze the development of migrant identity as a negotiated process. For instance, in her book *Women Crossing Boundaries,* Espín [1999] emphasizes the importance of personal narratives to understand the psychological aspects of women's experience of migration in relation to gender and sexuality. She clearly states that her intention is not to create a 'grand narrative but rather to present a window into the individual life narratives developed by women who have been immersed in the transformations brought about by migrations' [p. 162]. By counterposing narratives of women from diverse backgrounds she allows us to appreciate how the social and political constructions of gender, ethnicity, race and nationality are crucial to any discussion of the migrant self. Highlighting ambivalences, contradictions and specificities, she demonstrates how linear, universal classifications of acculturation are not always adequate in capturing the transformations and negotiations as women cross cultural boundaries.

In *The Making of Exile Cultures: Iranian Television in Los Angeles,* Naficy [1993] discusses how the Iranian diasporic community uses television media as a source for resisting cultural messages both of the dominant American 'host' culture as well as the culture of the 'homeland'. Specifically, through an eleven year ethnographic study, he demonstrates that the 'relationship between the mainstream culture and the subcultures is fraught with ambivalence and contestation on the one hand and enrichment and assimilation on the other' [Naficy, 1993, p. xvi]. Similarly, Lum [1996] focuses on the role of karaoke in constructing identity in Chinese America. Through an ethnographic study he demonstrates how Chinese immigrants use karaoke as one site to 'establish and maintain their social space' [p. 100].

Both Naficy and Lum resist discussing migrant identity in terms of standard acculturation models. Instead they provide particular analysis of specific communities and reveal the complex processes involved as immigrants navigate themselves between cultures. Both take great care to situate their analysis of the individual immigrant experiences within the larger sociocultural and political contexts and both discuss in great detail the formation of diasporic communities.

We would also like to draw attention to a recent issue of *The South Atlantic Quarterly* [1999] that published a collection of papers on diaspora and immigration. Each of the papers interrogates the idea whether a universalistic model of acculturation is adequate to capture the complexities of contemporary diasporic formations. Most importantly, the authors in this special issue foreground the political processes that embed different migrant experiences. From Kastoryano's [1999] reflections on Muslim diasporas in Western Europe to Hispanic diaspora and Chicano identity [Gutiérrez, 1999] and the history of Chinese immigrants to America [Chang, 1999], the authors provide careful, specific historically and politically situated analyses of different diasporic communities.

Recent scholarship on diasporic identity has implications for how acculturation is explained in the field of human development. For instance, such scholarship prompts us to ask critical questions about the development of diasporic identities – Do all immigrants traverse the same 'psychological' path in their acculturation process? Can we relegate colonial history, gender and race to the status of 'variables' and overlook how identity is embedded in a network of multiple and often contested cultural practices? How does the researcher define the developmental end point (telos) of acculturation? Are there multiple endpoints to this process? How does the researcher capture the contested and hyphenated aspects of the acculturation process? How do we understand and explain how millions of migrant children living in diasporic contexts negotiate their sense of identity vis-à-vis the larger mainstream U.S. culture? What does the term 'culture' in acculturation stand for? Can culture be equated with the concept of the nation in developmental research on diasporic identities? Such questions need to be asked in the face of sweeping demographic changes in the United States where encounters with diverse histories, languages and religions have emerged as central to the daily lives of many children and adults in the 'First World' metropolis.

Acknowledgments

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