

Identity, Youth and Immigration: Narratives of Acculturation and Adjustment*

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Abstract

This project involves an examination of the experiences of 53 immigrant youth from several countries of origin. Using a semi-structured interview format, a number of life histories are presented as examples of recurrent patterns of acculturation and identity formation for immigrant youth between the ages of 15 and 26. In addition to presenting accounts of common triumphs and tribulations of becoming Canadian, various issues of health and acculturative stress are considered through a bio-psycho-social model of adjustment. Against the backdrop of this model, this study considers the manifestation, etiology, and treatment of acculturative stress as a syndrome that is constituted by physiological conditions, psychological and behavioural repertoires, and social relations. Suggestions from and for community support groups are also discussed in conjunction with these narratives of identity, acculturation, and psychosocial adjustment.

Introduction and background

Cultural adjustment and identity transformation have been extensively studied over the past century as migration and cultural exchange has expanded with the ease of international travel. Studies have ranged from an examination of changes and loss of cultural identity for indigenous peoples (Erikson, 1965, Chataway, 1997) through to others on the challenges of life in a new society experienced by immigrants and refugees. Numerous studies have been performed internationally on acculturation as the ongoing changes in identity, behaviour, social practices, and institutions for a variety of cultural groups in continuous first hand contact (Aycan & Kanungo, 1998; Ghuuman, 1998; Liebkind, 1996; Rosenthal, Ranieri & Klimidis, 1996; Very & Lubatkin, 1996; Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990; Chataway & Berry, 1989; Rosenthal & Cichello, 1986; Berry, 1984; Rosenthal, Moore, & Taylor, 1982).

John Berry's (1997) acculturation framework was first established by Redfield, Linton & Herskovits (1936) and continues to be cited widely as a benchmark measure (Ghuman, 1998; Phinney, 1990). Built upon two of the four fundamental assumptions of the multicultural policy as presented by Pierre Elliot Trudeau in 1971, Berry's framework considers the questions: 1) Is it considered to be of value to maintain cultural identity and characteristics? and 2) Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups? From these two issues he lays out a framework that identifies four styles or strategies for navigation of the acculturation process. As seen in Figure 1, Berry considers Integration, Assimilation, Separation, and Marginalisation as the possible options one may adopt with respect to these two central questions.

In various studies it has been reported that integration most clearly demonstrates a "substantial relationship with positive adaptation" (1997, p. 24), while it also appears to be "the most effective strategy if we take long term health and well-being as indicators" (Schmitz cited in

Berry, 1997, p. 25). Elsewhere Phinney, Chavira, and Williamson (1992) have reported that Integration remains positively correlated with self-esteem for "minority" group members (eg. Hispanics, Blacks and Asians) while Assimilation correlated negatively with self-esteem for these groups.

Figure 1: Berry's Scheme of Acculturative Attitude Styles (Berry, 1997)

		Is it considered to be of value to maintain cultural identity and characteristics?	
		Yes	NO
Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other (host) groups	YES	Integration	Assimilation
	NO	Separation	Marginalisation

Marginalisation contrarily has been associated with poor positive adaptation where individuals who are characterised by Marginalisation tend to be shut off or cut out of both traditions, having few or no connections for the development of positive social support and recognition (Berry, 1997; Sam & Berry, 1996). While Berry, Kim, Power, Young & Bujaki (1989) point out that Marginalisation is not easily defined, they state that it is most centrally characterised by confusion, anxiety, striking out against the larger society, and by feelings of alienation, loss of identity, and acculturative stress.

Acculturative stress has been measured extensively by Berry and colleagues, indicating a variety of relationships with other demographic and societal variables (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987; Berry, Poortinga, Segal & Dasen, 1992; Phinney & Kohatsu, 1997). These variables include the nature of larger society (e.g., Multicultural vs. Assimilationist) which has been demonstrated to have an impact on the acculturation of individuals and groups. It has been

shown that culturally plural societies (vs. monistic ones) provide more support for social and cultural groups as well as greater tolerance (multicultural ideology) which tend to foster integration and less stress. Other important individual and group variables considered by Berry, et al. (1992) are: reason for migration, age of arrival, phase of acculturation, gender, social support. It has been reported that those who migrate voluntarily (immigrants and sojourners) experience less stress than those who migrate involuntarily (refugees) (Berry, et al., 1992). Further, those individuals who arrive at younger ages tend to adjust more readily to life in the new setting than those who arrive later in life (Tonks & Paranjpe, 1999). Early and middle phases of acculturation may also be more stressful along with having lesser education and social support (Berry, et al., 1992). Finally, women and girls tend to report having experienced more stress than do men and boys along with greater dissatisfaction (Rosenthal, Ranieri, & Klimidis, 1996).

Present Study

Against the backdrop of these earlier studies the present project has investigated the experiences of 53 immigrant youth from several countries of origin. These participants who are between the ages of 15 and 26 were located through community youth groups and a university "subject pool". They were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format, Immigrant Identity Interview - III, which is derived from James Marcia's (1993) Ego-Identity Status Interview - EISI. The III provides a discussion of acculturative styles as well as ego-identity statuses through a series of questions pertaining to issues of education and employment as well as cultural identity and community activity. Ego-identity status has been extensively researched throughout North America, Japan, Europe, and Australia providing a background against which the experiences of immigrant youth can be examined (Phinney, 1996; Misugi, 1998; Jensen, Kristiansen, Sandbekk & Kroger, 1998; Rosenthal, Ranieri, & Klimidis, 1996).

Marcia's model is essentially a developmental model of the search and commitment to identity ranging from diffusion, where there is no search and no commitment, through to achievement where one has actively considered identity alternatives and made a strong commitment to one's ideological and personal identity.

Figure 2: Marcia's Scheme of Ego-Identity Statuses (Marcia, 1993)

Search?	Commitment?	
	Yes	No
Yes	Achievement	Moratorium
No	Foreclosure	Diffusion

In addition to examining ego-identity and acculturation for these immigrant youth this project has also examined issues pertaining to health and acculturative stress using the Bio-Psycho-Social Health Index (BPS-HI). The use of this measure is built upon the ideas that the manifestation, etiology, and treatment of acculturative stress as a syndrome that is constituted by physiological conditions, psychological and behavioural repertoires, and social relations. It consists of 38 questions regarding health which include several pertaining to somatic and psychological symptoms as drawn from Cawte, Bianchi and Kiloh's (1968) short form of the Cornell Medical Index (Brodman, Erdmann, Lorge, Gershenson, & Wolff, 1952). In addition to these questions that are typically used by Berry and colleagues, the present study added further questions on social relations and their role in the alleviation and exacerbation of stress. This was to ascertain the role of social support and the social causes of stress.

In making an assessment of acculturative stress for these immigrant youth, four measures of stress were acquired. The first three of these involve subjective estimates of the participants' own experience of stress. For each of three time periods the participants were asked to estimate between 1 and 10 what the intensity level of stress was that they

experienced. The variable StressA is a self-report of intensity of stress at time of Arrival to Canada. Secondly, StressB is a self-report of the intensity of stress experienced at some other "difficult or challenging episode" sometime after initial arrival, while StressC is a similar estimate of the intensity of stress currently experienced by the participants. The fourth measure of stress (StressS) is count of reported stress symptoms throughout their acculturation experience, as measured by the BPS Health Index.

General Characteristics

Most participants came from a university undergraduate psychology subject pool, a Chinese Christian youth group, and a community support youth group. Other community groups were contacted and some information exchange was made, but no individual interviews were performed. The average age of the participants interviewed is 19.89 years and they have lived in Canada for an average of 7.21 years, having arrived in Canada at an average age of 12.7 years. There were 36 females and 17 males who have come primarily from Hong Kong (23) and Taiwan (16), with others coming from elsewhere in Asia (8) and around the world (6).

Acculturative Attitudes

Acculturative attitude styles were examined in connection with several personal and social variables where Length of Residence (LR) and Age of Arrival (AA) in Canada demonstrated significant differences across the acculturative styles. ANOVA revealed that participants classified as Separation had the shortest average length of residence (LR-Mean=5.3 years: $F_{2,50}=9.473$, $p=.000$) and the oldest average age of arrival in Canada (AA-Mean=14.6 years: $F_{2,50}=7.374$, $p=.002$). In contrast, those classified as Assimilation had the longest average LR (11.8 years) and the youngest average AA (7.3 years). Those classified as Integration fell in the middle (LR=9.3 & AA=10.7) while none were classified as Marginalisation. These results are consistent with other studies that have found Separation to be a style

preferred early on in the acculturative process and integration as one that often takes time and challenge to arrive at (Tonks & Paranjpe, 1999; Rosenthal, et al., 1998). These findings are also supported by the significant correlations between initial experiences of stress (StressA) and Age of Arrival (AA) to Canada ($r = .538, p = .002, n = 30$), as well as StressA with Length of Residence (LR) in Canada ($r = -.498, p = .005, n = 30$) and StressA with Years for adjustment (YA) to life in Canada ($r = .624, p = .04, n = 29$). These data indicate that those who come at a later age tend to experience more intense stress upon arrival to Canada and also that perceived stress diminishes over time spent in Canada. "Vivian" is an example of one such person where she reported moderate stress (7) upon arrival at age 13 from Hong Kong. This early stress was primarily due to loss of friends and having a hard time finding new friends. Two years later, she reports extreme stress (10) as:

"I start dating my boyfriend. My mom get really, really, really crazy because my dad not living here. Kind of like there is a major problemmom like say kill me. She hate me so much she can't control herself. And there is times that I don't want to go home. I left home. I cry so many times. I find that while I still live here, I hate it here so much, and my mom too I think she gets so depressed, cause that time my mom didn't get work. She stay home all the time. Like she has nothing to do.

Like I talked to my dad like for many times but still like the problem wouldn't solve that much. But like as times go by, I think it take like one to two years for our family to get more easier, get like, I don't know how to say it but that time is just so dramatic. I don't know how I handle it. . . . Yeah, very difficult.

Yeah, when I get older and when she accept me that I have a boyfriend. I still have my boyfriend."

Additionally, the above data suggest that those who experience greater levels of perceived stress take longer to adjust or feel comfortable to living in Canada. Tony stands as a case in point here where he experienced a great deal of perceived stress (9.5) when he first arrived at age 14 from Taiwan. Now, at age 20 he indicates that it took about 4.5 years to get comfortable here where he appears to report low levels of stress (1.5) and integration. He states that initially

"I didn't [that I] feel belong to both groups. . . But I totally didn't feel I belonged to the Canadian . . . [that] is one of the most difficult time for me because you really don't feel like you belong anywhere."

"I always missed my friends back in Taiwan. I missed them a lot. And I felt troubled that I couldn't understand why that I didn't have friends here. I guess one reason I acknowledge now is that I was too young. There was just too many things that I didn't do now. I guess coming here at that young age, facing that kind of problem, I think would be difficult for most people. And of course there is so many other Asians living right here, I found that people find different ways to cope with that problem. Some of them sticks to their own groups, some of them who came a lot earlier don't feel that transition as much as people who came at my age. And I mean there was a lot of confusion. "

In a way I don't like the idea of, I didn't like the idea of sticking to your own group too much to the way that you're trying, you're like you actually don't want to get to know other Canadian people. There is quite a lot of people like I've seen that way. And I don't blame them because there are difficulties that came with it, a lot of people have trouble with their English. They feel maybe inferior sometimes when they use English or they feel embarrassed when they use English. Or even if English is good, just the subjects, just the subjects that you want to talk about is different and it's hard to make friends

when you have nothing in common. And I found those things in my period of three years when I had no friends [laugh]. I was observing other people and for time to time I certainly have thought about you know am I really."

As suggested by Tony, those who came at an early age often report that they had a reasonably easy time adjusting, especially to the new language. They also often reported that older siblings had much more difficult times as an in-family difference that was also reported by participants who had younger siblings. Charlotte reports that her younger sister (preschool) picked up the language in three months, while at 8 years of age it took her a year to learn it. She states that:

"She adapted like faster than me obviously. Basically it was just that two or three months because of my language that it was really stressful. I mean in grade two I was still learning ABC's right so that's why I had a really big problem trying to adjust to the English part but in terms of my friends and my social group, I got adjusted to that pretty quickly."

Others, such as Diana from England reported that older siblings had a more difficult time, often wanting to return. Arriving at age 12 Diana reports

"I remember losing my accent really fast. Like I remember practising speaking Canadian [laugh]. It was just so weird but I totally remember doing that. So I mean I really wanted to fit in. I'm sure I felt Canadian like within a year."

Whereas her sister:

"who is a year and a half older than me, so she came in she's like, she's moving back. My parents are thinking of moving back. So.. I think I'm the only one that's gonna stay here."

Birth Place

In comparing cell frequencies using Chi2 analysis ($\chi^2=27.56$, $p=.000$), Acculturative Attitude Styles (AAS) were also found to vary significantly across Country of Birth Place (BP) for the participants. It was found that 61% of people from Hong Kong were classified as Separation in contrast to 81% of the Taiwanese. Secondly, 39% of participants from Hong Kong versus 19% of those from Taiwan were classified as Integration. Participants from other Asian countries were classified as Separation (25%) and Integration (75%) while those from elsewhere in the world (e.g., Britain, Slovak Republic, Iran, USA) were classified as Integration (67%) and Assimilation (33%).

One possible interpretation of this data is that some participants have had greater previous exposure to elements of Canadian life style indicating that they have undergone some degree of 'acculturation' prior to immigration to Canada. This appears to be the case for those coming from Hong Kong in comparison to those coming Taiwan, where Hong Kongers have had greater exposure to "western" or Anglo-Celtic culture than those from Taiwan. While participants from Hong Kong more readily accept Canadian culture along with their tradition blend of Chinese and British than those from Taiwan both groups remain much more committed to Separation than do the youth from elsewhere.

Ego-Identity Status

Ego-Identity Status was also examined for these youth where no differences were found for overall Ego-Identity Status, but there were significant differences found for Ego-Identity Status pertaining to issues of cultural identity and Birth Place ($\chi^2=17.73$, $p=.038$). It was found that 44% of people born in Hong Kong were scored as Foreclosure, while 26% were scored as Moratorium and 30% as Achievement. This can be compared with those from Taiwan where 6% were scored as Diffusion, 19% as Moratorium and 75% as Foreclosure-none as Achievement.

Alternatively 50% of those from other Asian Countries were scored as Moratorium and 38% as Foreclosure, with 12% as Achievement. Finally half of those from elsewhere in the world were classified as Moratorium and the other half as Achievement.

As with the previous discussion of Acculturative Style and Birth Place, it appears that the participants from Taiwan prefer Separation and Foreclosure while participants from non-Asian countries prefer Integration and Achievement. Participants from Hong Kong fall somewhere in the middle where they have some preference for Separation and Foreclosure, they also have some who prefer Integration and Moratorium. A closer look at age of participants reveals that all groups are of the same approximate age, however, their age of Arrival (AA) and Length of Residence (LR) do differ significantly. It was found that participants from Taiwan have the oldest (15.6 years) average age of arrival ($F_{3,49} = 4.64, p = .006$) and the least average number (4.7) of years of residence in Canada ($F_{3,49} = 4.82, p = .005$). This is contrasted with those from Hong Kong with an average AA of 12.3 years and LR of 7.4 years and those from elsewhere in the world with an average AA of 8.9 years and average LR of 10.6 years. It appears the initial interpretation of the differences in Acculturative Attitudes and Ego-identity Status across the country of origin may be attributable to Age of Arrival and Length of Residence in Canada.

ESL

An examination of average years of ESL versus Birth Place show a similar profile where those from Hong Kong & Taiwan reported 1.3 and 1.5 years while those from elsewhere report virtually no ESL training. In the interviews it became apparent that for many immigrant youth ESL is a place to find friends who can be understood, forming a network of linguistic and social support for them to maintain some stability of identity. As such Separation and Foreclosure of identity are fostered through the social milieu in which these youth find themselves. This was

the case for "David" who states that when he first came to Canada at age 13 from Hong Kong that finding friends was

"not a problem because they already have the Chinese community at school so it's easy to fit in to your group. . . It's easier to meet like the Taiwanese people at first because you understand their language and you can ask them like what is teacher talking about it. They can help you and stuff like that so you feel closer. Yeah, it's just like a community I suppose. Like lunch time you can see one group of people there and one group of people here."

While this social support can make the transition easier, as it was for David, this support often leads to isolation where several participants reported that ESL 'held them back' in terms of learning English and Integrating with people from other cultural groups. David also reports that "being in E.S.L too long your parents will pressure you, 'when will you get out of E.S.L?'" Others report similar concerns that too much ESL is not good, where they were "forced" into regular classes and then made the transition faster than others who were "locked into" ESL. Tony earlier reported that he thought he was better off having to mix with other Canadians. Henry reports similar experiences when he says:

"in my school at the time there was only some Indian people in the E.S.L program so it was very, very hard for me to find my other friends. . . . Then those kind of thing open my mind....like, "ooh, I'm gonna do it [get a scholarship]." Because I get like.....just I have the believe that I can do it. I can do it. I can found more faith to speak out, go out and meet with other peoples. . . . Yeah, confidence yeah [laugh]."

Charlotte agrees, stating that:

"They kind of opened up an English program, something like that, where the teachers just help you with that. I got adjusted really quickly because well, first of all, environment forced me to right and also because I'm willing to do that. Because I know some people now and they're just....I have some friends who are like that too. They came like a year or two ago and already the whole, like Palmer, like my high school, was already full of Chinese people. They don't really need to adapt to a Canadian style in the first place. So they would be unwilling to...so they would just not learn English."

In contrast Helen states:

" we went to an English private school in Hong Kong. So it was ok. I got rid of it, so I don't need to do any ESL Actually I think it is harder that way because I didn't have time to adjust. And I had to go high school system right away. And everybody around me expect me to know everything because I didn't go through ESL or anything." . . . Here I'm not use to the way we went to class or like different block and that was a different teacher. Because there we had one teacher, one main teacher that take care of us and different teachers would come teach us different subjects. We had one main teacher there for us throughout the whole year and if anything we would just go to her and ask our problems.

I'm like oh well if I have a problem who do I go to...counsellor, wow long line up. You have to actually sign up and there usually in pretty bad mood because they have to see tons of students everyday and they have to deal with lots and lots of problems. Usually, its not gonna work out I don't think. Because they, they basically start yelling That's how bad the mood is. Because they are, I understand that if I were them I would yell too. But from a students point of view I don't think it's really good so I didn't do it anymore.

Q So what did you do when problems came up, had difficulties?

Cried, parents, friends, new friends, yeah. That's basically about it. Luckily I met some friends that come, that came the same year with me. So we experienced the same problem. That is very important and we met them luckily through school and church and so yeah.

Family Type

The nature of the family was also examined where it was found that participants who were from Satellite families (without parents), Astronaut families (with one parent), and Intact families (living with both parents) differed significantly on Length of Residence (LR) and Age of Arrival (AA). Youth coming from "Intact" families tended to have arrived earlier (10.8 years) and stayed longer (8.7 years) while those who represent "Satellite" families tended to arrive at a later age (15.4 years) and have stayed in Canada for a shorter period of time (5.2 years). Youth from "Astronaut" families reported an average AA of 11.9 years and an average LR of 7.7 years.

Stress

While judgments of stress upon arrival (StressA) and their current levels of perceived stress experienced (StressC) were not found to vary significantly, a significant difference ($F_{2,50}=3.83, p=.04$) was found for family type by "other stress" (StressB). Here it was observed that youth from "astronaut"-single parent-families reported the highest mean scores (8.3) followed by the youth from "Intact" families (8.1) and last the "satellite" youth (5.5). The previous account by Helen is an example of the struggles that can arise in Astronaut families. Vivian, who is quoted above, also shares this profile. The notion of involuntary migration has often been considered for refugees, however it also applies to many of the children of immigrants who have

often had no choice in their immigration to Canada. For example, Simon, representing Astronaut families reports having been torn from his friends:

"Just feel really bad cause in my class [back in Hong Kong] I got really good friends. We probably hang out from dawn till dusk. Just all the time and when I left it was kind of like...It was a drastic change for me. And when I came I couldn't speak English so I feel kind of shut out."

Representing the "Satellite" family youth, Marcus indicates that he was "sent here" at age 18 by his parents from Hong Kong in order that he would be safe in 1997. He states that it was:

"Well, pretty bad . . . It's not about like, like it's two fold right. One is that my parents didn't listen to me, didn't listen to my feelings. That's one thing because I've been living in Hong Kong for eighteen years and then . . . like they sent me here. Um, by that time I was really unsure about this place and also I was worried because I didn't know whether I can get use to this life.

That was one major problem because in particular like, well my parents, well I will respect them but I wasn't very close with them because I was raised by a nanny. So.....I usually talk to my friends and stuff and more than my family.

That's make it even more difficult when I have to leave.

Oh, yeah [laugh]! By that time I was hoping maybe that for some strange reason all this would just get cancelled [laugh]."

Marcus reports feeling:

"just depressed. . . Well, feeling not [like I] very much want to go out because I don't know the place. . . Well, I got depressed, I got depressed for other reasons now. . . I'm not just like exaggerating. I'm more pessimistic person [laugh] . . . feeling negative all the time because things are not that good . . . I still feel shy especially in class . . . I feel like uncomfortable just to say it out loud, like drawing peoples attention because I think its interrupting other people. . . That's why I think it's important to know about English. That makes you a lot more confident about yourself."

Further analysis was done on the reported number of stress symptoms with respect to the type of stressors reported. It was found that the number of symptoms differed significantly ($F_{6,43}=4.198, p=.002$) with respect to the type of stress reported where those who reported Family as a source of stress had the largest average number of symptoms 5.67, followed by those who reported employment (5.5) as the greatest source of stress. This was followed by a sense of alienation of loss due to leaving friends behind or having trouble making new friends (3.5). Those who reported school as the greatest stress averaged 2.08 symptoms while those who reported that they did not feel stressed averaged 0.4 symptoms.

A closer look at those who reported the highest stress scores reveals that Helen reported the greatest levels of perceived stress and some of the highest stress symptom scores. Her greatest concern was her mother and the stress placed upon her by not being functionally fluent in English, her mother's separation from her "Astronaut" father and the fact that Helen had a boyfriend and her mother was enraged by that fact. Her symptoms ranged from depression to insomnia and hair loss. She states that:

"Losing hair was the main thing. And I was actually scared that I was going to be bald. [laugh]. Not that bad but then when you wash your hair you think, "wow this is too

much." Actually, now it's getting back and I have really thick hair and but is just lost almost half of it when I came here.

"Basically I can say the counsellor wrecked my life because he wouldn't look at my problems and I go into, I got into all regular classes just because my English teacher was a horrible teacher and he even criticised me by telling me that my English level in only in grade three. For me, English was my strongest subject in Hong Kong. I can't say I'm really good but among a lot of student, I'm seventh position out of two hundred and thirty eight so that is not really bad over there. So I thought that's my best subject, I shouldn't worry about anything when I come over here, no, the teacher is like you're the worst, you're third grade and you shouldn't even be in my class and he kicked me out and my counsellor didn't help me. And he didn't help and tell me what I should do, try another teacher.

Then he put me into what they call communication English, you can't go into university directly if you have that English because that is not ESL but it's like not as higher level English. And so that is why right after high school I felt depressed and I'm like I'm not gonna ever get into university. So I'm like why don't I just go to college and take some useless courses and then yeah.

. . . and then my parents was really upset cause for them university is a big thing. They think the only reason why I am bringing you here is to get a better education, to get a better life. Not only a better life, but like want you to become a better person. And if you can't get into university and definitely I will be depressed, I will be a worse person [laugh] and my lifestyle is gonna be not as good. And basically for them, "it's a mistake for bringing you over here."

Q So you felt very badly about that?

Oh very bad. I had really, really bad time and now since I come back to university my life is getting back to normal, the self-esteem is coming back. And yeah, that's a really, I guess there is a lot, that's a main issue. That I felt depressed....you feel like nobody is listening.

Q And yeah you couldn't really tell your family because that might make things more difficult.

And one very thing for Chinese parents is they'll never blame anyone else but their kids. If you say this teacher is a whatever, then they'll say, "it must be you being bad." It must be you, not hard working enough. That's why you get a "c" or "d." Whereby the teacher is not making sense, I don't understand what she is talking about, her notes is messy, she is talking things like this and that, her questions tough, there is a lot of others reasons too but for them they always believe if anything happens, it is you kids that is wrong.

You can't blame your teacher. Teacher can't be wrong and other places like you know if anything happens it's you. So for me I just think, I know what they are going to say to me, it's better not to talk to them [laugh]."

Vivian also described her stress due to family situations where she reports experiencing depression, insomnia and

"headaches, headaches, yeah, a lot of headaches. [laugh] Yeah, depressed yeah. I remember one time I just get enough of my mom, I just ran away at night and it was so cold outside. I feel so lonely. I think my friends, my neighbour tried to find me all over the place. Like I just sat in the corner of the park, it was so dark, so cold. I think it was

raining, I can't remember. But that was one time yeah . . . Yeah, when I get older and when she accept me that I have a boyfriend. I still have my boyfriend."

In similar fashion Kenny (age 22), having come to Canada from Taiwan 8 years ago, reports that she suffers from a number of symptoms including:

"[I] couldn't go to sleep, many years now. Stress, anxiety, worries about family issues, worries about friends, myself, and people I know No, I drink coffee; it's the first thing I have to do, it's good to do something that I like, I'm not addicted to it, but it's good for me to smell a beautiful thing like it Yeah, I take vitamins

. . . headaches very often at least once every 2 days; sometimes I will pass out; [doctors] yeah, but there's nothing they can do, I haven't told them that serious yet

I'm a loner and how often do I feel depressed? Maybe every day

Depends, I hardly talk to anyone about that [tough days]"

now I'm living with my cousin...I'm very stressed. He's my cousin and he relies on me."

Keiko (age 20) who is integrated indicates that school is the greatest stress since she first migrated to the USA with her mother and sister from Japan at age 8, then immigrated Canada at age 10 and reported almost no stress upon arrival. She reports that when she was about 15 she suffered from:

"stomachaches for a very long time. I think it was just constant. I think I found that lots when I was younger, I tend to get sick more often."

This appears to have developed into an eating disorder where she reports

"I had a little bit of eating disorder. I wanted to lose weight even though I was perfectly fine. I don't know what I was thinking but I think, when you started thinking about

I mean I think I do still have stress, I'm very easily stressed kind of person, I think I get that from my mother [laugh], but I try, that's why working out and things like that, and talking to other people, and I've found my ways to reduce stress. Whereas then I just, it would just show up in like symptoms such as headaches and stuff. So now, I'm very sensitive sleeper, so if I do have even a little bit of something on my mind, I have trouble sleeping and that's the night that I really have to go work out in order to kind of put the stress somewhere else."

Expectations to achieve and do well at school are currently the greatest sources of stress for Keiko as she states:

"I think first year, just last year, I had trouble with sleeping problems again for two months. For two months I had trouble going to sleep and staying asleep. And when finals came around, I went to the health clinic and talked to the doctor who encouraged me to go workout and you know put that stress somewhere. But as well as talking to friends that I actually have, and saying like friends are not there just only in fun times but in bad times and I do think you do have a lot of friends that would be there for you. And I think that just kind of really hit me. I think I'm really still very choosy when you are choosing who to speak to. I think my boyfriend, he's stressed too.

In spite of the stress of life she is finding positive methods of coping with it such as writing her feelings down, exercising and talking to others.

Social Support

The number of stress symptoms reported was also found to vary significantly ($F_{4,43}=3.75, p=.011$) with the person (if anyone) to whom these youth would talk when they

were "having a bad day." Here it was found that those who identified talking to a boy-friend or girl-friend reported the most number of symptoms (5.4) followed by those who would tell no-one (4.2), one of their parents (3.5) a friend (2.36), or a sibling (1).

It was further observed that the number of stress symptoms reported demonstrated a negative correlation with number of people one talks to when having a "bad day"

($r = -.297$ $p=.037$, $n=50$). This suggests that those who have more people to talk to experience fewer symptoms of stress. For many of the people who experience the largest levels of stress report having a girl-friend or boy-friend with whom they can "vent" or let go of the stress or worry. Helen, Henry, Keiko & Vivian all talk about such issues with their boy-friends or girl-friends. While their reported levels of stress might appear to be high, it should be clear that this measure is over a period of years and all of these individuals appear to be making better use of social support now than they did in earlier more challenging times.

People who reported that they would not talk to anyone if they had a bad day often said things like what Suni reports:

"I don't tell anybody of my bad things . . . I don't do anything. I just have to sit there and clear my mind. That's all I do. Or when I am stressed sometimes, I get angry for some reason. Like anything that makes me feel bad, I turn it into anger. And then I just like slam doors, yell at people. Like I wouldn't yell at my friends. I would take it out on my family. Like even if my dad asked me like an innocent question like, "what are you going to be doing today?" I'm like "I don't know!!!" I feel bad, I do. And I still do that. I'm very irritable. I really don't know why. You can ask anybody in my family like they will know it – she's really moody."

Mary (19) from Taiwan also reports that: "I just keep to myself" and that the most stressful sources is "the control from my relatives and my parents and school work." She experiences some trouble sleeping.

Diana (20) from Britain has lived in Canada for 8 years and reports having had severe ulcers when she was younger, not long after she first moved here. While the initial year was relatively stress-free according to her report quoted above, she says:

"I can say it to myself, like I know if something is going wrong, like, 'this is not right,' but I don't, like I would never tell my sister that something is going wrong. We're pretty close but I wouldn't go tell her something is going wrong. I would never tell my parents. I might tell (?) depending on what it was that was going on.

That's an English trait I think. I don't think that British people talk about their feelings very much. So... But if something is going wrong, you wouldn't admit it if you were English, privately to anybody.

No, I don't, if things go wrong I don't tell anybody.

Q So what would you do, just sort of think about it?

Keep it inside. I had ulcers [laugh] for a long time.

After recovering from that earlier bout with stress she has adopted techniques to combat it, including writing it out and exercise, and she says that:

"I think as I am becoming more Canadian, um...I talk more about that kind of stuff. But I still find it really hard to say something is going wrong. I do."

Gender

Cell frequencies and Chi2 analysis revealed that gender varied significantly with experience of stress over language issues ($\chi^2 = 4.11$, $p = .04$) It was found that only 30% of the females reported stress over language in contrast to 71% of the males who experienced stress over language and communication. Additionally it was observed that Gender varied with perception of stress for "other reasons" (StressB) ($F_{1,20} = 4.69$, $p = .04$) where females reported an average intensity of 7.72 while males reported an average intensity of 5.33 for such other stressors.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based upon these data a number of conclusions and possible recommendations can be made. First, acculturative attitudes were clearly related to the age of migration to Canada as well as the number of years one was present. This indicates that for young children the adjustment process to life in Canada occurs more rapidly than it does for older youth who arrive after having established a reasonably strong sense of cultural identity. It was also observed that with more time spent living in Canada new immigrants shift from being foreclosed to traditional cultural identity to exploring and committing to an integrated ethno-cultural identity.

It was also reported by various participants that ESL offered a 'safe haven' for adjustment during the early years of acculturation. With time it is expected that greater fluency in English enables these new Canadians to explore and adopt the cultural practices and perspectives of people from cultures other than their own. On the down side, some report that it is better to immerse oneself in the Anglo-Canadian culture to really learn the language and meet people from other places, other cultures.

A full range of symptoms of stress were reported by participants including: insomnia, anger, ulcers, depression, family fights, hair loss, headaches and eating disorders. Individuals coming from "Astronaut" families, where they were living with one parent (usually mother) while

the other works most of the year in Asia, reported the most intense and most numerous symptoms of acculturative stress. Social support in the form having someone to turn to in order to talk about difficult situations appears to alleviate the experience of stress. In particular, those who reported some of the highest levels of stress also reported that they talk to their boy-friend or girl-friend for support. Those who report talking to no-one during stressful times reported some of the highest levels of stress. With respect to gender, it was found that males were more likely to experience stress over language issues.

In terms of recommendations, it appears that one of the most important factors in facilitating adjustment are acquisition of one of the official languages (in this case english) which enables integration with the broader society. Against this concern the promotion and support of language acquisition for non-native Anglophones needs to be of top priority. Secondly the establishment and support of programmes or information forums for "astronaut" families to help identify and diffuse the added stress that they are likely to experience. These might include both peer-parenting support programmes where immigrants who have already made the adjustment to life in Canada can support new parents. Additionally it would be beneficial for immigrant youth to have Canadian peer-buddies to help them learn English and local customs beyond the training they would get in an ESL programme. Community forums can also involve cultural training for new youth and their parents to promote the development of communication among family and community members over challenging issues that may emerge. Finally, it would also be beneficial to provide workshops for teachers and counsellors on these issues where they can help to enhance the development of confidence and fluency in english and interacting with other Canadians for the young immigrants.

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