

Experiencing the Formation of Hybrid Cultural Identities In First-Generation Turkish Immigrants To The United States

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Abstract. The paper is based upon the research that explored the formation of hybrid cultural identities of five first-generation Turkish immigrants to the United States working in the high-technology sector. Postcolonial theoretical perspective was used to conceptualize the formation of hybrid cultural identities in the globalized world, and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis was employed to analyze in depth the lived experiences of the participants. The research findings indicated four broad common experiences narrated in the interviews: Shifting Identities, Identities in Comparison, Identities against Power, and Transforming Self. These findings concurred with the postcolonial assumptions that challenged the generalizations of cultural identity in clinical psychology theory and research.

Keywords: *hybrid identity, immigrant identity formation, interpretive phenomenological analysis, postcolonial theory*

Introduction

Globalization is changing the immigrant narratives of identity formation and their adaptation processes drastically from the previous generations (Adler & Gielen, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Technological advances are allowing contemporary immigrants' ability to stay connected with their home country while interacting with different cultures in their host country (Arnett, 2002; Kivisto, 2001). It has been argued that these new dynamics have the potential to change the psychological structure of immigrants (Berry, 1997; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). Hannerz (1996) argued that globalization gives momentum to migration, which fosters transnational connections and in turn gives birth to new ideas about self. Furthermore, Arnett (2002) suggested that the main psychological impact of globalization is found in identity-related phenomena.

Thus, immigration results in tremendous interchange and juxtaposition of people, ideas, products, and other facets of culture, which in turn give rise to new

relational activities and patterns. Pieterse (1994) described the new relationships that are formed under globalization as “a process of hybridization . . . [giving] rise to a global *mélange*” (p. 161). Therefore, hybridization could be a relevant concept in studying immigrant identity formation under globalization. Bhabha (1994) introduced the concept of hybrid identity in postcolonial theory, which is defined as a process that emerges in the liminal space where the two cultures interact. Postcolonial theory as an academic discipline was presented primarily by the writings of Fanon (1952), Said (1978), Spivak (1991), and Bhabha (1994). Postcolonial scholarship on identity emphasizes the dynamic process of identity created in relation to the other (i.e., Gandhi, 1998; Gergen, 1989; Loomba, 1998). The theory’s identity conceptualization opposes any assumptions or textual knowledge that gives no agency to immigrants to speak for their selves and argue against conceptualizations that tie identity to nationality (i.e. Bhabha, 1994; Said 1978). It gives rise to concerns over whether the voices of immigrants are silenced by the dominant discourse and emphasizes the impact of the historic relations and power differences between cultures in the evolution of their identities (i.e. Said, 1978; Spivak, 1991). It also highlights such concepts as Orientalization, which originally conceptualized by Said as the creation of the East by the West to justify colonization or the Spivak’s concept of Subaltern, which implies the social group that is outside the hegemonic power structure. Yet, for Bhabha, these are attempts to create binary oppositions to help shape identity against the Other.

In consequence, postcolonial scholars suggest that immigration may result in the emergence of a third identity, which is a product of cross-pollination of cultures and is distinct from the cultures that formed it (Bhabha, 1994; Felski, 1997; Pieterse, 1994). However, traditional research in psychology focuses on one-directional influence of immigration on identity (Berry, 1997; Sonn, 2002). Specifically, the emphasis has been on how immigrant experience and the host culture invariably change immigrant individual identity, requiring an immigrant to either adopt or reject their home or host culture (Berry, 1997; Sam & Berry, 2006). In contrast, scholars have called for studies that examine how first-generation immigrants themselves define and create their identity, and how cultural colonization may influence such identity formation (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1952; Said, 1993).

Therefore, our study sought to explore experiences of first generation Turkish immigrants in the United States in order to understand the common



features of their identity hybridization process. In addition, we utilized the postcolonial perspective with its emphasis on socio-historical realities that unconsciously shape individual identity within cultures (Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1978). Therefore, this research, shaped by postcolonial theoretical framework, sought to examine the immigrant identity formations without relying on generalizations, fixed constructs, and one-sided conceptualizations. We argue that such formulations imply separation of cultures, which may not reflect the integration that is established through global relationships.

Method

The study used a qualitative method to examine the hybrid cultural identity experiences of first-generation immigrants to the United States. Qualitative research as a human science method attempts to understand meaning, experience, values, and culture of the participants in general and allows for understanding the phenomenon from the participants' vantage point (Barker, Pistrang, & Elliott, 2003; Damico & Simmons-Mackie, 2003; Willig, 2001). We believed that through qualitative methods we could collect richer description of the phenomenon that involves social complexities such as hybrid cultural identity.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is one of the qualitative, experiential, and psychological research methods, which aims to explore participants' making sense of their personal and social world (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The phenomenological emphasis of IPA was particularly important in capturing identity formation process of first-generation immigrants and how presumed hybridity affected their lived world. IPA focuses on the protection of the authenticity of such experiences, which are collected through the narrative accounts of the participants experiencing the phenomenon in semi-structured interviews (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

In IPA, making sense of what is being said always involves interpretations of the listener; therefore the analysis of participants' lived experiences must involve researcher's interpretive presence (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Such understanding combines hermeneutic sensibility (i.e., interpretive focus) with phenomenology (i.e., focus on lived experience through the lens of individuals themselves), and it is the basis of IPA's stance that acknowledges the researcher's standpoint in understanding such lived experiences of individuals (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The reflexivity component of IPA enabled the researcher to

formally acknowledge their interpretive role in the analysis phase of research (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA also allowed researchers to capture dynamic, conflicting, and possibly unconscious material presented by the participants in their interpretation of their realities (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

IPA's idiographic component was essential to this research, as it concerns the particulars rather than generalizations (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The focus was on the experience of each particular case to understand the sense-making context for the participants. Thus, "IPA studies are conducted on relatively small and a reasonably homogenous sample, so that convergence and divergence can be examined in detail" (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 3). Smith, Flowers and Larkin propose that detailed examinations with idiographic focus can produce a psychological research that can capture the complexities of human nature.

Participants

According to IPA guidelines for participant selection, the sample can consist of as few as one or two participants whose experiences could be studied in depth through extensive interviewing process (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). In this study five participants were selected from among adults of both genders who immigrated to the United States as adults from Turkey. Saturation was reached after interviewing five participants (i.e., no new information appeared to emerge through interviewing) and the data collection was suspended (Shinebourne & Smith, 2009). They currently live in the United States and work in the high-technology sector. Several presumptions were made in this purposeful selection of participants. First, we believe that immigrants who immigrated by choice as adults have more flexibility in forming hybrid identities in contrast to those who migrated as children or experienced forced migration (e.g., fleeing economic or political instability or participating in formal refugee resettlement). Moreover, the sample included only individuals who migrated by choice as adults so that their cultural frames of reference were fully established at the time of relocation. Secondly, Turkish immigrants were selected because their culture of origin was significantly different than that of the receiving U.S. culture. Lastly, the rationale for selecting participants who are working in the high-technology sector is related to the sector's association with Western values such as progression as well as features of globalization such as rapid technology change and innovation. Key details pertaining to the participants are shown in the table below. Participants' names and last-name initials are used as an identifier.



Table 1
Participant Demographics

Interviewee Initials	Gender	Age	Years in the U.S.	Job Title
GS	Female	44	17	Software Engineer
HG	Male	58	29	Software Engineer
OS	Male	44	12	Software Engineer
SB	Female	48	23	Information Sys.Specialist
CO	Male	46	26	Business Dev. Manager

The participants shared similar socio-economic and educational profiles and they immigrated to the United States from Turkey with the expectations of better employment and improvement in economic standing. GS, HG, and OS were hired by U.S. companies, had work visas, and lived in the United States long enough to be granted citizenship. SB and CO first arrived to the U.S. as students. SB obtained citizenship through her siblings, and CO was hired by a U.S. firm with a work visa after he completed his education and is now an American citizen.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews by the primary researcher who is a Turkish immigrant. Semi-structured interview format which allowed the primary researcher to be flexible in probing areas of interest as they arose and allow participants communicate freely. This process not only cultivated unique themes but also facilitated building rapport with participants (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). During the interview, the primary researcher monitored and noted participant affect and responded to changes in affect as suggested by IPA procedures (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The transcribed data from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using IPA guidelines

As a first step, the primary researcher reviewed the five transcripts numerous times to obtain an overall sense of the data, then took notes and made comments on significant points through a line-by-line analysis of the participant’s communications. The right-hand margin of the transcribed data was used for initial noting and explanatory comments of the researcher. The goal was to produce comprehensive notes and comments on data, which included the field notes and reflections about the interview. This step focused on understanding the experience of participants by exploring the language they chose, interpreting participant’s

experiences, and also identifying abstract concepts. Transcripts were hand-coded as part of the immersion within the data.

Secondly, these initial noting and exploratory comments were transformed into emerging themes or patterns that convey concepts, “emphasizing convergence and divergence, commonality and nuance” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 79). This stage of IPA data analysis includes the researcher interpretations while focusing on the connection to the participants’ own words. The left-hand margin of the transcribed data was used for the emergent themes in the transcriptions. Thirdly, the primary researcher searched for connections across emergent themes in order to cluster them in a meaningful way. A descriptive label was given to each theme, and the notes were turned into precise statements made by participants. At this point, the overarching or superordinate themes were identified based on the central theme arising from the subthemes. These superordinate themes were triangulated through review by the second author as well as experts in the field. The first three stages were repeated for each case and reviewed on their own terms in order to approach each participant case freshly. Tables showing emergent themes for each participant aided in locating the patterns across individual cases and facilitated the construction of master themes across all participants. At this stage some themes are combined and reframed based on the richness of what is represented by the theme and its ability to illuminate other themes. Finally, the master list of superordinate themes and sub-themes was created and cross-validated within the data and through consultation with experts.

Each superordinate theme for the group was then converted back to a narrative. This narrative described participants’ shared experiences in considerable depth: making claims for the whole group while retaining the voice of individual participants. The primary researcher returned to individual transcripts with the explanatory notes and themes, and checked to ensure that the connections were in line with the actual interview dialogues. The narrative included “relevant extracts in the participants’ own words, not only to enable the reader to assess the pertinence of the interpretations, but also to retain the voice of the participant’s personal experience” (Shinebourne & Smith, 2009, p. 155). Including extracts from the participants represents the phenomenological emphasis of the IPA, and its interpretive part is represented by the researcher’s analytical comments of these extracts. At this final stage, the goal included a creation of a conceptual framework that relates themes to theory and to the literature on hybrid cultural identity of immigrants.



In IPA, the use of direct participant quotes in the narrative involves the reader in the process of auditing by making the researcher’s logic in reaching a theme traceable. These extracts from participants show that interpretations are rooted in the data rather than a product of researcher’s personal biases and assumptions. The extracts from participants that support the extraction of themes aimed to provide an extensive evidence to allow readers to act as data auditors themselves (Elliott, Fisher, & Rennie, 1999; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Equally important to note, the reflexivity process of IPA also serves as a credibility check as the primary researcher continually sought confirmation of her interpretation within participant’s words.

Findings and Discussion

The research relied on the phenomenological interpretation of how people speak about themselves and narrate their experiences of being first-generation Turkish immigrants in the United States, which allowed them to form distinct hybrid selves. In these narratives, nine subthemes clustered under four superordinate themes appeared in a variety of iterations, which are represented as a table below.

Table 2
Superordinate Themes

Superordinate Theme	Shifting Identities	Identities in Comparison	Identities Against Power	Transforming Self
Subtheme 1	Turkish or American, Both or Neither	Compared to American	Western Gaze	The Consequences of Growth
Subtheme 2	Revolving Door	Compared to the Orientalized	Subaltern	The Uncanny and Its Resolution: Global Self
Subtheme 3	-	Compared to the Turkish way	-	-

Shifting Identities

The first superordinate theme clustered the narratives that are focused on the contextual aspect of the hybrid self. Participants' experiences of an identity that oscillated within place and context gathered under the subtheme called Turkish, American, Both or Neither. For example, GS identified a self with separate identities based on context by defining herself as Turkish when describing her emotional life and as American in matters of citizenship. Similarly, HG identified himself as being Turkish in his social life and as American in his professional life. On the other hand, OS expressed a belief that if one has both citizenships they need to call themselves as Turkish-American. However, he added that in essence he feels that he is a world citizen who can live anywhere in the world by indicating "right now, I'm not Turkish, I'm not American. It's tricky term but I'm a world citizen. I can go anywhere, and I can do anything after this experience."

CO separated his two identities but described himself as a Turkish-American who feels more American. He attributed this feeling to his coming to the United States at the age of 20 and having experienced most of his adulthood in America. He mentioned that "being American is based on whether you have memories and bonds here and how much you contribute to this country." In fact, one person's comment about his not being American because of his accent offended him. He narrated,

I was in Amsterdam there was this lady in train. . . . She asked me where I am from . . . I said Seattle. She said you're not American. . . . She was ignorant; she said this based on my accent.

On the other hand, SB positioned herself as Turkish while she also migrated to the United States in her 20s with her whole family. She stated that she only identifies as being Turkish, adding, "I cannot forget my Turkish roots; I'm much more conservative compared to others but I did adopt the culture here too." She stated, "I always call Turkey as my home" but then she described a state of being with different associations in two different countries as "I have two homes, two citizenships. When I get homesick I go to Turkey, and after a while, I am happy to come back to my home in the U.S."

In addition, three of the participants had spent up to two years working and living in Turkey after their migration to the United States for different reasons (e.g., visa requirement, spouse commitment, or work assignment). Their experiences of return are gathered under the subtheme of Revolving Door. GS indicated she had to return to Turkey due to her scholarship's 2-year home residency requirement, but stated this return was something she desired



regardless of the requirement. She described that unpleasant experiences in her Turkish work environment was the primary determinant of her decision to come back to the United States after two years with a job offer. She stated her “American work style” did not fit to the Turkish institutions. On the other hand, HG stated, he was comfortable at working in Turkey after years of working in the United States but their decision of return was taken mutually with his wife for their children’s future. Alternatively, CO separated himself more from his Turkish identity because of the negative social and professional interactions during his stay, although his being Turkish led his company to send him to open Turkish-based operations. He grounded his desire for return to his longing for the American way of life, with which he identified the most.

This theme illustrated how participants’ concept of cultural identity shifts based on the context of their localized experiences. In the oscillations of feeling American in one context and Turkish in the other, the self was becoming hybridized and expressed as a choice rather than being at one point along the continuum of transforming from one national identity to another as expressed in traditional immigrant adaptation literature (e.g., Berry, 1997). The participant experiences also challenged the conceptualizations of traditional unidirectional experiences of immigration (e.g., Sam & Berry, 2006), implying that immigration is no longer related only to economic and political necessities. These conclusions defy the assumptions of static immigrant adaptation theories and identity formation and were consistent with emphasis on globalization as an influence on the identity formation of immigrants (Arnett, 2002).

Identities in Comparison

The second superordinate theme highlighted that the cultural identities were created in relation to the Other. Participants narrated a hybrid identity by comparing their self to American, Orientalized, and in contrast to Other Turks. The first subtheme of this section is termed Compared to American, which compiled the participant narratives of identifying with being Turkish likened to their relational understanding of what being an American means to them. For instance, SB narrated herself as Turkish and not American based on an understanding of social relations that stood in direct opposition to what she considered an American social life. She stated, “I miss the social life in Turkey, neighbors, friends, and all these relationships. Here you live like a robot, you have to get appointments to see one another, and everything is on the agenda.” Similarly, HG’ sexpression of his connection to Turkey was due to his identification with Turkish social values as

compared to American way of socialization. On the other hand, CO narrated a relational identity of feeling more American in relation to what he considered as the Turkish or not-American way of personal and business interactions.

Some participants differentiated themselves from a subculture that they identified as blue-collar labor, people who had no choice but to emigrate, immigrants from other countries, or from other Turks who belonged to different social strata. These narratives were found within the subtheme of Compared to the Orientalized. In her story, GS narrated a self as an immigrant with reference to cultural Others:

I was a Turkish immigrant in Germany, and I had a very bad experience there. Because, you know being a Turkish immigrant in Germany is like being a Mexican immigrant in the U.S. Second or third level, you're not wanted; you're looked down [on], despite your education, despite your income. So deep down, when I came here, I was expecting that, without realizing, because I'm a foreigner, they would rub it to my face. I have not seen that here, honestly felt proud to be Turk here. Because Turkish immigrant mean, you're best of best from Turkey, education wise or even the manually working people, they're more adoptive, not like the ones in Germany. Not like those close-minded, religious, I-dress-one-way, I-eat-one-way, and I-don't-learn-the-language type of people. They're more open, fitting into the culture here. I feel proud of being Turk in the U.S.

In her narratives, Mexican immigrants were Orientalized using their historic relations with the United States such as the Turks within the context of the movement of Turkish workers to Germany in the 1960s, which enabled her to develop a distinct Turkish identity in the United States in reference to the Orientalized Other. In order for her Turkish identity to take form, an Orientalized position was needed. She attributed her positive experience as an immigrant in the United States to the fact that there are not as many traditional Turks, which she Orientalized, in the United States in contrast to countries such as Germany. In her interview, she also differentiated her identity from other nationality immigrants working in the high-technology sector. She mentioned on several occasions the advantages of not being among the dominant immigrant group in the United States, like Turkish immigrants in Germany. She stated this was a way of having a favorable position as a Turk compared to other cultures like Indians or Asians in the United States. These nation-based comparative relationships were at the locus of GS's immigrant identity formation.



Another way of such a differentiation for GS was to allow an educated, open-minded, and adoptable identity to form. CO also differentiated himself from others through education. He came to the United States as a student to complete his undergraduate degree and had to pursue graduate education when he could not secure a job that would sponsor him for work and a residency permit in the United States. Through getting more education, CO was able to find a position and started to shape his identity as a Turkish first-generation immigrant working in the high-technology sector. These narratives of educated selves enabled some participants to enter a global space by overcoming obstacles related to being foreign. Therefore, education was used as a way to differentiate oneself from the Orientalized, to change status or move up in social standing, and a way to find a personal voice. Moreover, CO narrated that his path to citizenship from temporary work permit to green card and then naturalization as a citizen as the most appropriate way compared to other immigrants' inappropriate ways (e.g., being undocumented), which helped him differentiate his identity from other immigrants. In effect, he sought to escape an Orientalized position by Orientalizing another group of people—the undocumented immigrants.

Participants also separated themselves from a notion they defined as a "Turkish way" of forming their identity, which is grouped under another subtheme. Some of the participants believed that Turkey and Turkish culture were incompatible with professionalism. For example, OS admired his old company's executive team who had Western industry experience and changed the culture of the company in Turkey. He believed they made significant improvements in the way the company in Turkey does business by embracing Western practices. HG also articulated the ways that his Turkish upbringing negatively impacted his career and remarked,

The way I was brought up . . . impacted me negatively for years from a career perspective because I was always trying to be nice. And now this is something I try to instill in my kids, be nice socially but be assertive.

It was clear that high value was placed on the American way of doing business rather than social aspects of his cultural upbringing, which he valued in other instances.

In most of the narratives, the professional mannerism of the West served as code for first-generation Turkish immigrants in order for them to be viewed as professional both in the United States and in the world. In these cases, the formation of a hybrid identity appeared based on cultural imports from or mimicry

of a Western practice rather than being a reflection of their original culture's practices. These examples were not only an expression of forming relational professional identities but also a way of separating identity from national culture. Hence, valuing and mimicking the Western professional practices became an area where the hybrid identities were formed at the professional level. However, this mimicking was not a way of mocking or transgressing, as Bhabha (1994) conceptualized; rather it was a way of giving the cultural authority of professionalism to the West rather than the non-West. Nevertheless, the act of mimicking represents a resistance that is used to undermine the ongoing pretensions, a response to the stereotypes, and to gain agency in the global professional world. It is a way of showing how immigrants can be successful professionally.

It is important to note that, in the narratives the expressed norms of professionalism did not come from the West but from the first-generation Turkish immigrants. According to the postcolonial lens, this stance can be interpreted as reflecting Western ideas of what constitutes professionalism that have colonized the Turkish first-generation immigrant who works in the high-technology sector by way of business practices (Bhabha, 1994; Said 1978). On the other hand, it could also be interpreted as Turkish immigrants, through hybridization of identities, created a bridge to both cultures and reclaimed the agency of being professional and resisted stereotyping (Anzaldúa, 1987). Overall, this is an act of resistance, through which these immigrant professionals escaped the Orientalized position assigned to them symbolically and found a way to be successful in the global world. Correspondingly, this act interrupted the idea of homogeneous cultural identity demanding that Turks speak and act as Turks.

Identities Against Power

The third superordinate theme demonstrated the ways of coping with the power dynamics resulting from various binary oppositions that are related to immigration experience. The postcolonial lens allowed researchers to examine how the relational self emerges from the context of historic national interdependences and power relations. In the interviews, the political power of the United States or the West over Turkey echoed in various ways. For example, CO and OS described their desire to come to the U.S. OS described this powerful yearning as follows:

I don't know why, I always wanted to come to the U.S. since I was very young, I don't remember why, maybe the movies I saw, I don't know. I think I kind of shaped my life according to this desire.



CO described this longing as something common to his generation and stated,

In the mid- and late '80s everyone wanted to get off the country and explore something new, especially the ones who watched a lot of American movies. So I said, let me try my chances and go to the States to study.

Both participants stated that their yearning developed in their childhood, entering their mind from a source they could not identify clearly although attributed to American cultural colonization through movies. On the other hand, for SB and GS, coming to the United States was an educational and professional necessity; their belief that the United States is an authority in their area. Both SB and GS were not planning on staying but rather receiving an education that was accepted as superior and needed for career advancement.

Postcolonial framework allows capturing how people develop the agency in their attempts to neutralize the imbalance of this power dynamics that may have been embedded within them since their childhood. According to postcolonial theory, one of the outcomes of the discourse that reflects cultural power dynamics is creation of the *gaze* (Okazaki, David, & Abelmann, 2007; Said,1993)—the establishment of cultural narratives by those who possess power for those who lack such power. In the interview narratives that describe the impact of being observed from the position of power and its various effects on participants' sense of self were grouped under the subtheme called Western Gaze. Participants' understandings of and reaction to this gaze were varied: One of them denied the existence of it, the other normalized it, and another assumed an indifferent attitude after declaring deep hurt, whereas some resisted it in different ways.

For GS, the Western gaze was not an issue in the United States. In fact, she believed that being a high-technology immigrant leaves a favorable impression in people's minds. In other words, even if there were such a gaze, it did not bother the observed because it was a constructive one. GS also attributed a lack of an unfavorable opinion of Turkish people in the United States to the fact that there are not as many Turkish immigrants in the United States as in countries such as Germany. On the other hand, OS stated that he developed an indifferent attitude toward the presumptions about his coming from Turkey. He describes his indifference in this dialogue:

They're not very familiar of Turkey, they think Turkey is a backward country; people are riding camels in the desert, stuff like that. Some people knew because they have been to Turkey. They want to talk about their trip, etc. When they don't have any idea about Turkey, they say, "hmm,

interesting”, “hmm, cool”, which means, “I have no idea, no clue.” I’m neither angry nor upset. Even for the people who knew about it, I’m like whatever.

The stance of OS is one of not only indifference but also normalizing the acts of Western gaze. This indifference is formed through years of experience feeling powerless against how one can be viewed as Other. He, in fact, described his feelings of being powerless and the resultant suppression of feelings as follows:

Around the area we were living, they were not accustomed to foreigners . . . because of our accents, they didn’t get us and they just dismissed us. I was so pissed off. Yes, I was not a citizen but I was paying taxes, I was creating value. I’m going to pay you, you have to serve me, you cannot dismiss me. I was a bit lonely, it was a huge change and my mind was busy taking care of so many things . . . so I guess I was some kind of depressed. I say “kind of” because I don’t really remember my first 6 months, I deleted it from my mind.

OS appeared to cope with his stresses of immigration by suppression and normalization. In contrast, CO could not stay indifferent to Western gaze and chose to resist the assumptions. For example, he believed the conceptualization of Turkey as a Muslim country prohibited him from having a voice as a professional. Therefore, when he speaks, he has to clarify his own views of religion. “I don’t believe in organized religion,” he said, “but people assume since I come from Turkey, I must be Muslim. They’re wrong!” He highlighted this fact as another disadvantage of being Turkish in the professional life.

Alternatively, SB assumed an ambassador role, trying to inform and primarily give good impression to the people around her to resist the Western gaze. She stated, “I have been trying to change others’ view of Turkey, tell how beautiful the country is, how generous the people are.” She stated she wants a recognition or awareness in the United States about Turkish culture, this is in fact an act of resistance against an unfavorable gaze and entering the space denied to the Oriental, that is, an Oriental could be a modern as well. Her identity formation was based on paying attention to others’ impressions rather than an innocent process of cultural differentiation of self from Others. In these acts of resisting Western gaze, identities were formed to achieve recognition by the West and “reinscribe” (Said, 1993, p. 210) what Turkish means in the world.

Notions of gender and subalternity further complicate the multiple narratives of first-generation immigrant high-technology employees’ identity formation and these narratives were grouped under the subtheme named



Subaltern. Specifically, GS talked about two discourses in her conversation one of which is the high-technology sector, which is dominated by immigrant males and their prejudices regarding women based on their cultural backgrounds. The other one is the behaviors that are associated with femininity such as not being aggressive or being quiet, which are not valued in the male-dominated high-technology sector. Her belief of high technology immigrants viewed favorably has changed when discussing the issues of immigrant women. These are not the contradictions in her speech but rather represented an identity and a perception that is contextual and multiple.

In addition, OS and CO conveyed a work environment where first-generation immigrants are not considered for executive positions. In both participants' narratives this practice was normalized and accepted. OS expressed his opinion as follows:

If you look at it in all these companies, the top executives are White Americans, a miniscule percentage of executives are immigrants who grew up here. Women are another story. I don't see this as an unfair thing; it's their country, they have the power, and they don't want to give up the power. The power is always reserved for them.

CO also normalized the same situation, claiming it is something that happens everywhere in the world, not just to him and not just in the United States. These examples show subalternization of ethnicity and gendering occurring in a way that it is accepted and normalized by the subaltern. Participants raised justifications for their silenced voice by listing prejudices of other immigrants they have no control over or acceptance of the conceptualization that power does not belong to immigrants but to the hosts of the country. Beyond these personal opinions on specific conditions, these narratives represent Turkish first-generation professionals without a preformed subaltern identity that could be easily captured; instead, they showed a shifting set of narratives about experiences of attitudes toward women, cultural upbringing, and masculinity that is associated with the high-technology sector's corporate values and power distribution. It is notable that, similar results in other studies reflected that a male culture is associated with the high-technology sector, which attempted to silence the gendered and Subaltern Other (Ozkazanc-Pan, 2012, Rosser, 2005).

Transforming Self

The final superordinate theme compiles the narratives supporting the ongoing process of identity formation while describing a difficulty in the process of

identity growth. In the interviews, it was observed that some participants had actively sought personal growth and pursued the opportunities for this growth through immigration but encountered difficulties that they did not expect. These narratives grouped under the Consequences of Growth subtheme. OS articulates this dilemma by indicating; “In Turkey, families are too much on you and they don’t really let you grow. And I needed to get out of that environment and I wanted to grow but I never realized how hard it would be.” He asserted his individuality against the psychological placidity and the external demand for social conformity. The path for growth was difficult for OS, experienced as a termination of his old ways and relationships. However, despite the cost, he reiterated throughout the interview that this transformation was a choice.

For CO, the cost of desire for personal growth was financial hardship. However, he did not seem to regret his decision to move and reflected this view in various ways in the interview. He described his first years this way: “I didn’t know it would be that hard, first 6 years was very hard. I didn’t know any one. I started from scratch, but I was a smart kid with a goal.” Instead, GS was not confident that her struggle for growth was worth it although she achieved her explicit reason for her immigration, which was professional growth and her immigration served the purpose of escaping from personal problems as well. On the other hand, HG regarded inner growth as an unavoidable part of life, especially when one is exposed to different viewpoints and practices. For him, the dynamics of his growth involved emergence of hybrid identity through the fusion of two cultures. He regarded this process as an enlargement in perspective: exposing himself to different views, and choosing a space that feels more suitable for him.

In some of the interviews, signs of identity fragmentation and ambivalence toward any cultural identity were noticeable, which were grouped under the subtheme of The Uncanny and its Resolution: Global Self. For example, OS, who desired to come and experience the United States since his childhood stated that “they say, you became American, you start to think like them, then I say, No I don’t exactly think like them, I’m something in between. I don’t know what I am, though.” The postcolonial rendering of the psychoanalytic term *the uncanny* (Freud 1919/55) can be observed in OS’s narratives of self as he expressed his feelings of in-between-ness. Both Kristeva (1994) and Bhabha (1994) use this Freudian concept to emphasize the details and the dangers of living on the margin in contrast to living with the idea of homogenous culture or national identity. For Bhabha, feelings of the uncanny are the underlying force for hybridization of identities. In OS’s later narratives, a world citizen or global-self emerged as a



solution of this indeterminate state. In his interview, the ambivalence of returning to Turkey or staying in the United States was also prominent. He resolved the ambivalence by calling himself a world citizen.

In one of these ambivalent places, HG looks at the emergence of global self as a natural outcome of an integrated world through globalization. He believes the world is more accepting of immigrants as it embraces what he calls “the global way of thinking.” His definition of global self emerges as a way to join this nation on one’s own terms. HG expressed this idea of global self when asked about which country’s culture he identifies with the most:

When you say culture, it’s a big word, so I would like think [to] myself I’m a global citizen more than any one culture, but I think it could be a pretentious thing to say; when you see more, you’re better kind of, but it is not always true. But I say more global not in the pretentious way but in the sense that quite often I don’t fit neither American view nor Turkish view. I might fit in one aspect to Turkish or in another American but for most issues it’s neither, because I don’t quite fit to one culture, I don’t fit to ideas in general population in the U.S. nor in Turkey ... that’s why I say global but something different beyond culture affect me. Some people in the U.S. think like I do or some in Turkey.

The resolution to seek an identity in cosmopolitanism, which was defined as global self or world citizenship, was clearly observed in some of the interviews. Their experiences endorsed the fact that stable repositories of identity and culture can no longer be assumed in the globalized world.

According to postcolonial theory, identity and culture are dynamic processes that disrupt the concept of nationality as an anchor point (Bhabha, 1994). For Bhabha, this lack of reference in turn creates a space for ambivalences. In a state of ambivalence, an identity cannot be determined or categorized and therefore has a hybrid nature that leaves a sense of self in between and indeterminate. In the interviews, it was observed that some participants tried to resolve the ambivalence by living in Turkey for a period or by literally assuming the bridge role where they voluntarily facilitated communication and travel to each place, or identifying with global citizenship. It is the hybridity that provides the ability to live in ambivalence, to stand in the spaces between self-states and resolve the psychic conflict between the old and new, me and them, past and future, love and hate (Akhtar, 1995).

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, this research presents only a portion of a complex story about self and identity that is formed through the experience of immigration in the globalized world. The research focused on five first-generation Turkish immigrants who work in the high-technology sector. This study found support for assertions by postcolonial theorists regarding multiple ways, in which hybrid identity formation of a certain group may be based on context, place, and relational histories (Bhabha, 1994; Ghandi, 1998; Gergen, 1989). The result of the study highlighted facets of hybrid identity formation that can be attributable not only to immigration but also to other experiences that bring cultural foundations together or apart. Thus, the impact of power differences, historic relational dynamics, resistances to textual knowledge, stereotyping, mimicking, subalternization, Orientalization, effect of the gaze of the powerful over powerless, the uncanny, and the other postcolonial expressions of identity may represent the immigrant identity formation.

The narrow focus on the high-technology sector in this study was intended not only to create a homogenous sample but also to analyze a group of people who work in a segment that is identified with Western and the globalized world's values of innovation, modernism, and progress. The same study could be extended to immigrants with different backgrounds and different worldviews, and who worked in fields that are considered more traditional in order to analyze their formation of hybrid identities in the globalized world from a wider perspective. Moreover, the comparative analysis of two studies not only highlights how differences in backgrounds of people may impact the hybridization process but also acts as a comparative measure for the impact of globalization on the identity formation of immigrants or any other groups of people.

The study results did not highlight a neat set of ideas that could describe the identity process for the use in quantitative research or clinical practice with immigrants because of the indeterminate and unsettled nature of identity formation viewed in postcolonial terms. The complicated task of examining this information could be moderated by other research designs that can attempt to answer specific clinical questions from a postcolonial or alternative theoretical perspectives. In addition, further qualitative research can seek to examine ideas regarding cosmopolitanism or global identity in deeper and more focused ways than were included in this research. However, the study highlighted the complex and dynamic nature of identity formation and self-identification that represents a living view into how immigrants perceive themselves within the multiple sending



and receiving cultural spaces. We hope that further research continues to attend to such complexity in an effort to provide a more nuanced and dynamic view of immigrants and migration.

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