THE PROCESS OF DISLOCACITON AMONG FIRST AND SECOND GENERATION IMMIGRANTS

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In this paper, I will discuss the connection between dislocation and addiction, especially among first and second generation immigrants. It is not my intention to develop a clear cause and effect relationship between dislocation and addiction but rather to establish the groundwork for further research and elaboration. The connection between dislocation and addiction among first and second generation immigrants is supported by the fact that immigrating usually involves extreme dislocation, the construction of hyphenated identities, dialogical negotiations and low bicultural integration. This paper will further illustrate how first and second generation immigrants are living in a diaspora where their different selves are parts of a singular self and their identity a dynamic multiplicity of different and often contrasting selves. Unfortunately, many individuals do not see or appreciate this connection mainly because of the mainstream thought that is so prevalent among society and the media today. However, it is my prediction that after a closer analysis, this theory will receive the attention it deserves.

The theory of addiction has for centuries been in the mind of many academic scholars - how does addiction form? Is it medical, psychological or even philosophical? In having the personal experience of knowing a second generation immigrant addicted to heroine, the evolution of addictive behavior baffles me the most. When reading various articles on the theories of addiction, the one that rings true for me is the theory of dislocation.
I am embarking on the analysis of dislocation as a precursor to addiction for many reasons. First and foremost is that I truly believe the merits of this theory. As a second generation Indo-Canadian Sikh, many of the assumptions and modes of thought underlying the theory of dislocation are, in my opinion, fairly accurate. Secondly, this theory looks beyond medical research that is so predominant today and takes it to another level. We believe that science is factual and therefore correct, however, addiction is not as clear cut as many believe. It is a serious disease that is not being cured. Although there are academic scholars that analyze different theories to addiction thereby contesting the medical approach, media and society fall back on the mainstream approach to addiction. It is incumbent to step away from this old school thought, even for a moment, and open our eyes to other theories so as to establish groundwork to solve this serious disease.

**Dislocation – Defined**

From the time we are born to the time we are adults, we have the need to maintain close social bonds. As children we seek this bond from our parents and caretakers. As adults, we look to maintain this bond with our friends, schoolmates, coworkers or ethnic groups. What we are trying to achieve is psychosocial integration, where we grow simultaneously as individuals and members of our culture (Alexander, 2001). Psychosocial integration is a part of individual development; it makes life enjoyable and is essential for every person in every type of society (Alexander, 2001). When individuals cannot achieve this psychosocial integration, they feel dislocated.
Dislocated individuals struggle to find or restore this sense of psychosocial integration and when they fail to achieve it, they construct lifestyles that substitute for it (Alexander, 2001). These substitute lifestyles usually consist of dangerous social relationships that are not stable or culturally acceptable, often centering on illegal drugs and violent behavior (Alexander, 2001). Individuals who cannot find any better way of achieving psychosocial integration than through these dangerous lifestyles tend to cling to them resulting in addictive and self-destructive behavior (Alexander, 2001). Dislocation, therefore, creates disorder with the delicate ties between people, society, the physical world and spiritual values that sustain psychosocial integration (Alexander, 2001). It is those individuals who are severely dislocated that are vulnerable to addiction. While there are some individuals who find ways to achieve enough psychosocial integration, there are others who enter dangerous addictive lifestyles, as illustrated in the following passage.

“The feelings of self-actualization and self-respect that the dealer’s lifestyle offers cannot be underestimated. A former manager of a coke-shooting gallery who had employed a network of half-dozen sellers, lookouts, and security guards and who had gross $7,000 - $13,000 per week for over a year before being jailed explained to me that the best memories of his drug-dealing days were of the respect he received from people on the street. He described how, when he drove up in one of his cars to pick up the day’s receipts, a bevy of attentive men and women would run to open the door for him and engage him in polite small talk, not unlike what happens in many licit businesses when the boss arrives. Others would offer to clean his car. He said that even the children hanging out in the street who were too young to understand what his dealings involved look up to him in awe…” (Alexander, 2001, p. 18)
This quotation illustrates that when an individual is unable to achieve the feelings of self-actualization and self-respect from their own lifestyle, they enter lifestyles that will bring such qualities and feelings into their lives. People need to make some sort of solid connection to avoid the pitfalls of loneliness and addiction. When children on the street looked at this dealer in awe, he felt like a special and important member of society no matter how scandalous his behavior.

Addiction, for the purposes of this paper, can therefore be seen as a social problem and understood as a compulsive lifestyle that people adopt as a desperate substitute of preventing severe and prolonged dislocation (Alexander, 2001). This lifestyle is formed as a desperate substitute of being dislocated from the close ties between individuals, groups, family or the spiritual community (Alexander, 2001). A solution to this problem can only come from understanding dislocation and its root causes, particularly among first and second generation immigrants. For the purposes of this paper, first generation immigrants are those individuals who have not been born in their hostland (i.e. Canada) but have been residing in it for many years. Second generation immigrants are children of first generation immigrants who are born in their hostland. The focus of this paper will be on collectivist immigrant groups.

Addiction is a serious problem that leads to self-destruction and socially atrocious behavior. It is therefore prudent that we take addiction seriously and explore its evolution. We need to understand that addiction is not simply a behavior but rather a lifestyle that occupies all
of a person’s time and activity whether the behavior is conscious or unconscious (Alexander, 2003).

Why is this theory important when relating it to the immigrant community? For many reasons, including the fact that thirty-seven percent of the Canadian population are members of ethnic and racial minorities (Toma, 1997). By 1991, half (49.7%) of all immigrants to Canada came from Asia (Berry & Kwak, 2001). In 1984, the Vietnamese ranked as the largest immigrant group to Canada and they ranked the seventh largest among immigrant groups in 1993 and 1994 (Berry & Kwak, 2001). By 1993, East Indians were the second largest group of immigrants (Berry & Kwak, 2001). Statistics further suggest that many ongoing gangland murders are related to the ethnic identity of the criminals and their victims. Many gangs are lead by Vietnamese, Chinese and East Indian men in their early twenties (Pais, 1999). With immigration being on the rise and many ethnic gangland murders, we need to stop and take a look at this trend so as to determine if dislocation and addiction stems from an immigrant’s identity conflict and lack of belonging (Alexander, 2001).

**Immigration Involving Dislocation**

The theory of dislocation is very much linked to the immigrant community as immigrating usually involves extreme dislocation. The correlation, both historical and recent, between severe dislocation and addiction is strong. When immigrants emigrate to the Western culture, there is a destruction of the tradition of their homeland. They are expected to abandon
their traditional character, migrate and settle into a new type of culture; and because the values of their homeland and hostland cultures are different, individuals experience cultural conflict. Cultural conflict captures the experience of feeling torn between two cultural orientations encompassing a more emotion-based and subjective element of bicultural identity dynamics than is typically described in the acculturation literature (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2002). Many of us fail to appreciate that change for immigrants in a new country demands a reorganization of ethnic identity, which can be psychologically stressful (Toma, 1997). Imagine for a moment that you are taken away from the social codes and norms you have known all your life to be placed in another country whose values are completely different from the ones you were raised with. Would this not be psychologically stressful for anyone?

When children grow up in their homeland, they are socialized into the cultural practices and traditions of those countries by their parents, schools, peers and the mass media to which they are exposed. This process of enculturation trains children regarding what they need to know to be seen as competent members of their homeland (Gudykunst, 2001). Accordingly, through this enculturation process, immigrants develop cultural and ethnic identities that are associated with the cultures in which they are raised. When these individuals then move to a hostland such as Canada, and interact with members of that mainstream culture, they experience cultural conflicts (Gudykunst, 2001). They essentially have no choice but to acculturate into the new culture by learning its values and behaviors so that they are able to function within that hostland (Gudykunst, 2001). This may sound dramatic to some but this is exactly what many immigrants go through, resulting in confusion as to their ethnic identity and acculturation process.
Ethnic identity involves an individual’s self-identification, belonging and degree of ethnic group affiliation (Farver et al., 2002). Ethnic identity has to do with the social and cultural distinctions among individuals, groups and roles and is not directly related to racial or physical differences (Gudykunst, 2001). It is important because it influences an individual’s behavior and the way individuals identify themselves and others. The strength of an individual’s ethnic identity is associated positively with the individual’s self-esteem (Gudykunst, 2001). The more immigrants identify with their ethnic groups, the greater their personal self-esteem. Unfortunately, positive ethnic identities are not necessarily stable across time and situations (Gudykunst, 2001). How immigrants experience their ethnicity and ethnic identities is influenced by where they are raised.

Acculturation, on the other hand, involves how ethnic minority individuals adapt to the dominant culture and how their beliefs, values and behaviors are changed by their contact with the new culture and its members (Farver et al., 2002). Being born in one culture and moving to another culture requires some degree of acculturation to a new cultural environment (Gudykunst, 2001). As one can appreciate, ethnic identity and acculturation are two different processes of integration. Acculturation is generally concerned with behaviors and ethnic identity with attitudes. A complex cross-fertilization process of adaptation occurs when immigrant families adapt their relationship norms based on cultural meaning and practices from their homeland and their hostland (Berry & Kwak, 2001). These cultural values continue in the intercultural process when new immigrant groups interact with the dominant society. Immigrants are therefore at the
highest risk for psychological maladjustment because the acculturation gap is often widest between the first and second generations (Farver et. al, 2002).

**Hyphenated Identities**

The increasing emergence of minority communities in North America has led to the construction of hyphenated identities – ie. Indo-Canadian, Chinese-Canadians, etc. These hyphenated identities have lead to dislocation, displacement and instability as individuals struggle between two incompatible worlds (Bhatia, 2002). We are living in a time where acculturation has become increasingly complicated due to the rapid creation of multinational citizens and the formation of diasporic communities. Rather than looking or thinking of immigrants as moving in a straight line from one culture to another, immigrants are more often shifting their identity from one to the other, especially second generation immigrants (Bhatia, 2002). On the one hand, second generation immigrants are being exposed to their homeland culture through their family and rituals, and, on the other hand, they are living in a completely different culture and trying to abide by its practices and norms. Some may construct the cultural identities of the Western world while simultaneously retaining strong identifications and loyalties to the culture of their homeland. Despite the way they are constructing their identities, this is a continuous and ongoing process through which many second generation immigrants reconstitute and negotiate their identity.
The idea of dislocation and hyphenated identities is relevant because it explains and shows how identity negotiations are connected to a larger set of political and historical practices that are linked to and shaped by the cultures of both the homeland and the hostland (Bhatia, 2002). How an individual may view themselves in terms of their homeland can be quite different than their hostland. Each culture molds its specific values and norms and when you are shifting and/or negotiating from two diverse cultures, you hold two different identities.

Another way of viewing hyphenated identities is by understanding the difference between a first and second generation immigrant’s public self and private self. The private self is that part of the self concept, which only the individual is aware of versus the public self which is the self that is known to others (Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1988). The private self involves the mental processes in one person whereas the public self includes behaviors open to the observations of anyone. The way one goes about defining their private and public self is dependent upon the culture. For example, in cultures such as Australia, Germany and the United States, maintaining consistency between the private self image and the public self image is of importance. Conversely, in cultures such as China, Korea and Japan, the self is a situationally and relationally based concept (Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1988). Furthermore, the Western conception of self can be seen as being individualistic with self esteem depending on how well the individual can stand on his or her own feet. Individuals of collective cultures, on the other hand, conceive self as equivalent to the relationship of one person to others and self esteem linked to relationships with other individuals. It does not emerge from the individual alone as seen in Western cultures (Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1988).
The private and public self can be seen as two completely different concepts that are dependent upon the culture. This can be problematic when an individual is put in a culture that has values that are of extreme contrast (collectivist Asian culture vs. individualistic Western culture). One is bound by different role obligations, duties and structured by a process of give and take negotiations. The individualistic self is free to pursue personal wants, needs and desires, constantly focusing on the “I” identity. The collective self is never really free as it is focused on lending role support to others and focusing on the “we” identity concept (Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1988). As self esteem is linked to relationships with other individuals, one has to meet not only their own expectations but also those imposed by others. There is no wonder why many first and second generation immigrants are in constant dialogical negotiations.

**Dialogical Negotiations**

The idea of self with its emphasis on multiplicity and the shifting of identity (the “I”) illustrate the kinds of dialogical negotiations immigrants have to undertake. This is especially difficult in the wake of dislocation and movement from being on a familiar territory to being a stranger and foreigner in a distant land (Bhatia, 2002). One can appreciate how immigrants struggle with their hyphenated identities by living with different and incompatible worlds. Dialogical negotiations often consist of contradiction, tension and social strain as biculturalism brings identity confusion, dual expectations and value clashes (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2002).
Not all immigrant communities struggle with their incompatible identities, as there are individuals who accept the diversity and work to integrate it into their lifestyle and culture. However, there are many immigrant communities that make a shared and active attempt to resist the Western culture while striving to keep alive their homeland culture. These communities are constantly negotiating between past and present, tradition and modernity and self and other (Bhatia, 2002). While this negotiating is difficult for first generation immigrants to endure when the culture they have been raised in and exposed to is no longer there, it is even more difficult for their children. First generation immigrants came to their hostland with a strong sense of identity and culture as they were raised and exposed to one culture when they were children. Their only challenge then is to balance their cultural identity with their hostland identity.

Second generation immigrants, however, are born into two completely incompatible identities. They are raised with their cultural identity, which may be a collectivist one, and raised with their homeland identity, which may be an individualistic one. Their challenge then is to both establish and sustain a strong collectivist and individualistic identity. Collectivist for their parents and individualistic for their society. They must live up to two completely different identities. As a result, these second generation immigrant children are directionless and constantly moving back and forth between incompatible cultural positions. Your cultural background is just as powerful as the culture you are exposed to every day in your homeland, no matter how different it may be.
This point is further illustrated by my experience. Due to my Sikh collective identity, I constantly experience confusion as to my place in the host society, which emphasizes an individualistic identity (Toma, 1997). Central to Sikh identity is religion, which occupies a pivotal role in the culture and integrates all other spheres of individual lives. The Indo-Canadian community is a cohesive and supportive minority group with a strong sense of community and belonging. The emphasis on community and care for one another rather than care for self underlines the cultural values practiced by many Sikhs. Whereas the Western world is more inclined to explain social events in terms of internal and stable causes such as attitudes, East Asians are more likely to explain social events in relation to external factors such as social roles, group pressures and cultural expectations (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2002). These differences lead to identity conflicts that pose a threat to the community, family and individual.

Due to these “dialogical voices” which involve the immigration process in a back and forth movement between different voices, many second generation immigrants, including myself, lack a sense of identity. In only being exposed to the homeland culture through their parents and family, they have not developed a strong sense of their culture. In not being able to completely identify with the hostland culture, they are further unable to develop a strong sense of the Western culture. Thus, immigrant children are left feeling marginalized where they lose cultural and psychological contact with both their traditional culture and the larger society. Instead of forming an identity that is fixed by some core, singular and essential universal property, second generation immigrants are faced with an identity they are constantly contesting,
shifting, negotiating and re-negotiating. It is this process that leads to the lack of identity and dislocation (Bhatia, 2002).

**Living in a Diaspora**

As a second generation immigrant, I can understand and relate to living in a diaspora where my different selves are authoritative and independent parts of a singular self. Living in a diaspora is like living in a circle where all the contested parts of the self are constantly negotiating and renegotiating with each other. My dialogical self is constantly mixing and moving between different cultural positions and there is constant negotiation with the different voices of an East Indian and a Canadian. I have to be Canadianized in order to fit in with my peers. I have to be a proper East Indian for my parents. What is particularly unique about these dialogical negotiations is that they are affected by the culture, history, memory and politics of both the hostland and the homeland (Bhatia, 2002). These negotiations are governed by and embedded within my majority and minority culture.

First generation immigrants are less willing to accept changes from their originating culture, thus the changes of adaptation they go through generally involve more superficial values and aspects of behavior. Most first generation immigrants do not change the basic values they learned from their native cultures (Gudykunst, 2001). As such, they indirectly model and reinforce ethnic behaviors by teaching their children about the traditions, beliefs and values associated with their cultural background. They attempt to maintain their cultural values and
traditions and to transmit them to succeeding generations. There is, however, an erosion of ethnic identities and behaviors as a function of generation as families become less close and fewer traditions are followed -- the later the generation, the greater the acculturation. This is illustrated by the fact that most first generation immigrants tend to see themselves according to their ethnic origin (i.e. Chinese, Punjabi) whereas most second generation immigrants view themselves with a hyphenated identity (i.e. Chinese-Canadian; Indo-Canadian) (Gudykunst, 2001).

It is important to study biculturalism and understand how multiple cultures affect individual behaviors and adjustment outcomes. Such research can provide a basis as to the different ways in which individuals construct meaningful identities as members of their often complex cultural, national and local communities (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2002). In understanding such findings, we could move beyond the problem and work towards the solution.

The Integration Process and Bicultural Integration

There are four ways ethnic groups members can associate with their hostland culture (Farver et. al, 2002):

1. **Assimilate:** identifying solely with the dominant culture while severing ties with their own culture.
2. **Marginalize:** rejecting both their own culture and their hostland culture.
3. **Separate**: identifying solely with their own group and rejecting their hostland culture.

4. **Integrate**: becoming bicultural by maintaining characteristics of their own ethnic group while selectively acquiring those of the hostland culture.

Integration is the most psychologically adaptive pattern. These individuals experience less acculturative stress and manifest fewer psychological problems than those who are assimilated, marginalized, or separated (Farver et al., 2002). Generally, marginalized individuals have the most psychological distress and problems with self-identification and cultural alienation (Farver et al., 2002). In rejecting both their own culture and their hostland culture, they are forced to construct substitute lifestyles. As indicated earlier, these lifestyles are usually dangerous and center on drug and/or alcohol addiction.

Research has found that adolescents whose immigrant parents did not adapt to the hostland culture had more psychological problems than did adolescents whose parents were integrated or assimilated (Farver et al., 2002). Further, in families where immigrant parents overly identified with their ethnic group, individuals were separated or marginalized from the hostland culture (Farver et al., 2002). Therefore, the way in which parents relate to their homeland and hostland culture will affect their children’s attitudes toward the dominant culture and their own ethnic group. Parents are influential in effecting their children’s psychosocial adaptation through their rates of acculturation and expectations. Many parents continue to hold onto their sense of culture many years after immigration with many immigrants being more “ethnic” than the people they left behind in their homeland.
It can be difficult for immigrant parents to let parts of their culture go as the family can be seen as the backbone of cultural identity (Gudykunst, 1988). As such, keeping contact with family in their homeland provides first generation immigrants not only with a constant social support network but also a barrier in establishing themselves with the host society (Gudykunst, 1988). Unfortunately, this barrier not only effects first generation parents’ adjustment process but also their children’s adjustment process because parents’ attitudes toward their own ethnic group and the hostland culture influences their children’s self identification and ethnic identity. Parents are instrumental in setting the path for their children’s behavior, attitudes and successful functioning in both cultural worlds. Conflict, both inside and outside of the home, is higher in families where parents have a separated or marginalized acculturation style (Farver et. al, 2002). This acculturation gap contributes to a variety of psychological adjustment problems (Farver et. al, 2002).

As immigrant families become part of the community and society, the need to understand how they adapt to the Western lifestyle and the problems encountered becomes more apparent. For second generation immigrants, the root of their intergenerational conflict lies in their parent’s unrealistic expectations as the new cultural norms and values obtained by them often collide with those previously learned in their parents’ home country (Berry & Kwak, 2001). These expectations can differ greatly when compared to the individuals’ host society. An example of this may be gender roles. Many Asian and Sikh parents view females as subordinate compared to men. Wives, according to strict values and customs, are supposed to occupy the traditional
role of a housewife and acquiesce to her husband's demands. Her role, in essence, is to please her husband as he is the one who supports the family. This traditional female role is in extreme contrast to the role carried out by women in Western society. Over the years, women have become successful, at times making more money than their significant others. One could appreciate the conflict second generation women face when growing up in such conflicting values. The roles in cultural variability dimensions explain the differences in rule development and role enactment in diverse cultures. As such, dual value and role expectations can lead to extreme adversities at home.

I would like the reader to understand that I am not blaming immigrant parents for their children's lack of integration. What I am saying is that parents cannot expect their children to have their strong sense of culture, while being raised in a "Western" society. It is not that parents should not expose their children to their culture, for this is, in my opinion, important. One has to adopt the Western world in which they live in order to gain acceptance and still retain the cultural identity they were taught when they were raised because that is who they are. However, a balance needs to be reached when integrating into two different cultures. This balance can be reached when applying an integrated style of acculturation.

The optimal profile and worthy goal for individual psychological functioning is one in which second generation immigrants and their parents both have an integrated style of acculturation. Integration implies both the preservation of and contact with the homeland culture and an active involvement with the hostland culture. Integration into the mainstream culture
means both retaining some cultural activities of your ethnic origin and changing some (Toma, 1997). This concept assumes that immigrants can achieve a balanced blend that involves becoming effective in the new culture and remaining competent in their culture of origin (Bhatia, 2002). Unfortunately, to achieve integration is not simply a matter of an individual being able to integrate the values of the hostland culture and their own immigrant group. The formation of immigrant identities in communities involves a constant process of negotiation and intervention that is shaped by issues of race, gender, sexuality and power (Bhatia, 2002). As one can see, achieving integration among immigrant communities can be difficult and rare. Nevertheless, immigrants, irrespective of their nationality, race or culture should try and use the integration strategy to fit into the Western world (Bhatia, 2002). While it may be difficult, it is a necessary step that first generation immigrants must take to make life easier for both them and their children. Failure in taking this step results in low bicultural identity integration, which, as I will explain, could be detrimental to an individual’s lifestyle.

Individuals low on bicultural identity integration have difficulty incorporating both cultures into a cohesive sense of identity. They often view the two cultures as highly distinct and oppositional, leaving themselves to believe that they should choose one culture over the other with conflict forming an important part of the dialogical process (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2002). This process of self-identification can result in rebellion by refusing to accept either culture and attempting to create a new self-definition that is on one’s own terms rather than on the mode of acculturation or preferred ethnic identity. This new self-definition can often be compulsive and addictive. Rather than conforming to one identity, immigrant children often
choose a path that is self-destructive. This formation occurs because of the lack of integration and the differences between the belief systems of Western and Indian societies and the expectation of each group. If immigrant adolescents retain their heritage, they are likely to be alienated from their peers. If they reject their heritage, they can be alienated from their own ethnic group. There is therefore, a pull on adolescents to marginalize rather than integrate (Farver et. al, 2002).

I constantly find myself struggling with my identity. My Western identity often feels disconnected from my Sikh identity. My parents are Sikhs who emigrated from India in 1965. They have a strong faith in Sikhism and, although they have been living in Canada for over 35 years, they still hold onto the strong values of the Sikh culture. They are Western in that they follow the social codes presented by the Western culture and are East Indian in that they follow the same traditions and practices of India (practices that are not even followed in India today). It is not that my parents have strong Sikh values that is problematic but rather that they impose and expect me to have these strong values as well. I believe in my Sikh identity values but not to the extent my parents do. This is something my parents do not understand nor accept.

In growing up in such diverse and hyphenated cultural identities, I often feel out of place. My Sikh identity and my Western identity constantly collide and conflict with one another. You cannot escape one or the other. Because Indian self-identity is defined by the family and established by a surname that affiliates me to a religion, social class, language and state in India, I feel I have an added challenge of creating a sense of self that is based on
conflicting cultural loyalties (Farver et al., 2002). Everyone knows my cultural background through my appearance and name so I cannot escape this identity and I live and work in a Western culture and therefore cannot escape it either. It is no wonder that I often feel out of place and a need to marginalize.

It is not only the responsibility of first generation immigrants to help themselves and their children integrate into their hostland but also the responsibility of society. The Greater Vancouver Gang conducted research on and with 128 known gang members for the purpose of determining why individuals become involved with gangs. Thirty-two percent of incarcerated gang members were not born in Canada (Gordon, 2000). When questioning their involvement in gangs, it was found that there was a social and cultural bond which attracted individuals to organizations and addressed their sense of ethnic and cultural marginality in a predominate environment. The importance of a shared language and a sense of belonging accounted for continued involvement with organizations (Gordon, 2000). When individuals feel marginalized by their hostland, they don’t feel like they belong and may resort to such dangerous lifestyles as a result of the need to belong and identify with a “friendly” and supportive group that included their friends. This belonging included a desire to be with individuals of the same cultural and ethnic group as gang members felt ethnically marginalized (Gordon, 2000). In the case of some immigrant and ethnic minority families, these problems were compounded by isolation from the larger, surrounding community and even from individuals and families within that community who shared the same ethnic background (Gordon, 2000). It is therefore prudent that the hostland
not allow immigrants to feel ethnically marginalized or isolated as this is a barrier to achieving optimal integration.

**Identity Formation**

Thus far, I have emphasized the importance of a stable and/or strong identity to the theory of dislocation. It is now imperative that we understand the process of identity formation. Accomplishing a positive and coherent self and social identity is an important part of any adolescents’ psychological development (Farver et. al, 2002). However, for adolescents who are members of ethnic minority groups, identity formation can be especially difficult due to the conflicting values and beliefs of their host and homeland culture. Second generation immigrants are raised in contrasting, yet parallel, cultures (Farver et. al, 2002). At home, they are expected to maintain their traditional values and beliefs while at school they are expected to maintain other values to fit in with their peers. In attempting to balance these conflicting loyalties and establish a distinct identity as well as a compatible ethnic identity, second generation immigrant youths experience increasing conflict both within their family and selves (Farver et. al, 2002). This identity achievement can be exceptionally problematic if it is not understood or supported by both family and society. That is not to say these problems are exclusive to ethnic minority populations but rather to point out that the experience of growing up as a child of an immigrant family may effect normal developmental crises. The greater the difference between the host and homeland culture, the higher the stress level and more difficulties individuals experience in their psychological functioning.
In an increasingly interconnected world, the conception of independent, coherent and stable cultures becomes more irrelevant (Hubert, 1998). The Western conception of self is characterized by independence and autonomy (individualism), while the non-Western self is characterized by society as a whole (wholism) (Hubert, 1998). Self and identity can therefore be defined as a dynamic multiplicity of different and often contrasting positions that allows mutual dialogical relationships. Different and contrasting cultures can be part of a list of collective voices playing their part in a multi-voiced self (Hubert, 1998). For example, I can speak differentially as a Sikh and a Canadian as I am familiar with the Sikh culture, together with the Canadian culture. Then we ask, which voices are parts of my self – the voices of a Sikh or a Canadian? When an individual participates simultaneously in different cultures and these worlds are to a large extent disjunctive, that individual can be faced with uncertainties, contradictions and contrasting interests, thus leading the individual to abandon their sense of identity (Hubert, 1998).

Social identity can be defined as that part of an individual’s self concept that comes from the knowledge of their membership in a social group, together with the value and emotional significance attached to that member concept (Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1988). How is one to know their social identity when struggling with such identity conflicts? Individuals need to seek positive social identities in their interactions with others, no matter what culture it may be. However, when immigrants are to a large extent stripped of this right, whether it be by society or
the immigrant group, they are left in a sort of limbo and struggle to restore psychosocial integration while suffering from extreme dislocation.

**Historical Example**

One could appreciate the consequences of not having an identity. Losing an identity, especially a cultural identity, has proven over the years to lead to extreme dislocation. An example of this would be that of the Native Indian culture. The settlement of Vancouver by Europeans began in 1862 when British settlers arrived (Alexander, 2003). As the city burgeoned, space was obtained by confining the majority of the Native population to reserves, thereby destroying the territorial basis of their culture (Alexander, 2003). Many of the Native Indians’ cultural practices became outlawed or mocked out of existence (Alexander, 2003). From 1884 until 1951, Native ceremonies were prohibited by law and those individuals caught participating in such ceremonies were jailed.

In a further effort to acquire Native lands, the British and Canadians governments pursued a policy referred to as assimilation with the intention of moving aboriginal lands into the real estate market and aboriginal people into the labor market as peacefully as possible (Alexander, 2003). This policy was intended to strip Native Indians of their culture and land. A way of implementing this policy was with a network of “residential schools” where Native Indian children were often forcibly taken from their families, trained to despise their own language and customs which often resulted in alienating them from their own families.
(Alexander, 2003). Even though the assimilation policy nearly succeeded in eliminating native
language and cultural practices, it failed to integrate most Native Indians into free market
society, thereby leaving them dislocated. In not having their own cultural identity and the
identity of their hostland, Native Indians could not integrate to any of the cultures and were
stripped of the opportunity in establishing any identity at all. Although many of the laws have
changed over the years, historical events have resulted in much of the aboriginal culture and
many of the Native Indian languages' being lost forever (Alexander, 2003).

Currently, the Government of Canada is facing a number of lawsuits from individuals
who claim that assimilation has destroyed their culture and adversely affected individual mental
health (Alexander, 2003). Many Native Indians now feel dislocated and are over-represented in
the drug addicted and prostitution population of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, and in
alcoholism treatment centres throughout the province (Alexander, 2003). Aboriginal people
cherished their culture, lived communally and shared the resources that grew from the family,
clan, village and religion (Alexander, 2003). Due to these historical actions, aboriginal people
have lost the bond of their culture and are unable to grow simultaneously as individuals and
members of their own culture.

The example of the Native Indian culture is an extreme example of the root cause of
dislocation and addiction and how it develops. Although some Native Indians may have been
addicted to alcohol from the time Europeans first introduced alcohol, many individuals and tribes
either avoided alcohol, drank only moderately or as part of tribal rituals (Alexander, 2003). It
was only during the period of cultural disintegration and assimilation that alcoholism originated as a universal and crippling problem for Native people. Thus we can conclude that with the lack of psychosocial integration came dislocation and addiction. Universal dislocation nearly produced universal addiction (Alexander, 2003). Deliberate destruction of aboriginal culture lead to extreme dislocation followed by rampant alcoholism (Alexander, 2003). It has even been reported that treatments for alcoholism in Native Indians that do not recognize the importance of dislocation as a precursor of addiction have been only minimally successful. However, treatments based on fostering cultural and spiritual restoration appear to be more successful in aboriginal communities (Alexander, 2003).

Many have attempted to explain the widespread alcoholism in Native Indian populations by stating that they have a racial inability to control alcohol. This is unlikely, however, since alcoholism did not become a problem among Native Indians until assimilation subjected them to dislocation (Alexander, 2003). One can therefore conclude from this example that dislocation was a precursor to addiction.

**Current Example**

Now let us apply the theory of dislocation to recent events. Stories linking violence, drugs and Vancouver’s Indo-Canadian community date back ten years with the Indo-Canadian gang war over drugs and money increasing over the years. Most of the 50 plus victims come from the same complex culture and are young Indo-Canadian men. Among them one was shot
dead in rush hour traffic, one at his friend’s wedding, and one in plain view of 300 people on the floor of a crowded nightclub (Sullivan, 2002). One of the latest victims, Robert Kandola aged 31, was murdered on an early Sunday morning as he stepped out of a cab and into a hail of bullets in front of an upscale Coal Harbour high-rise apartment building on the edge of downtown (Sullivan, 2002). What is unique about these events is that these victims and assassins have been from second generation immigrant families whose background by birth is in India’s Punjab region. They are Punjabis who grew up in religious Sikh households (Sullivan, 2002). Many describe these incidents as a war waged in public with few arrests being made and even fewer convictions being obtained.

The Indo-Canadian community has for years been a law-abiding community and many question why this generation has been plagued with the reputation of drug addicted gang members. Authorities are fighting an uphill battle against this widespread drug abuse and gang violence, realizing that this is a unique problem. They have been working with the Indo-Canadian community by holding a forum with the community in an effort to get more cooperation on the investigations (Bakshi, December 23, 2002). Could the stigma facing the Indo-Canadian community be a result of dislocation? While the answer to this question will not be solved in this paper, it is definitely something to consider when interpreting such violent occurrences.

Young Indo-Canadian men are not the only immigrant groups facing self-destructive lifestyles and behaviors. Law enforcement is beginning to observe other second generation
members in street gangs (Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, 2002). Much of the increase in violent Asian-based criminal activity can be attributed to Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian Street gangs, which for the most part exploit victims in their own communities (Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, 1997). There is a predominance of Asian-based criminals at every level of the Canadian heroin trade, from importation to street level distribution. Asian Organized Crime groups across the country remain extensively involved in the large scale importation and trafficking of drugs, particularly heroin, cocaine and ecstasy (Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, 2002). All major heroin seizures in Canada in 2001 involved Asian-based crime syndicates (Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, 2002). Vietnamese-based groups also continue to be involved in large-scale cultivation and exportation of marihuana through residential growing operations across Canada (Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, 2002). Is it just a coincidence that many second generation immigrants are involved in addictive and self-destructive behavior? Why are so many young second generation immigrants falling into this type of behavior?

It has grown to the point where it has gotten out of control. Who do we blame? For starters, the media can be at the top of the agenda for people to blame. The media adds to this problem through their emphasis of ethnicity and race in new stories and the operation of news frames. The following is an example of headlines that link minority groups to a series of drug motivated murders: “Fifty Bodies Equal a War: Vancouver Police try to end Indo-Canadian drug mayhem” (O’Neill, May 13, 2002); The Roots of Gang Warfare: B.C.’s Sikhs must look hard at themselves” (Bakshi, December 23, 2002); and “Keep your Head Down in Vancouver these
Days (Sullivan, 2002). In singling out the Indo-Canadian community in such a direct manner, the community has been left open to criticism and shame by associating the problem to a particular ethnic group rather than a large scale social problem.

"In B.C., the vast majority of Indo-Canadians are Sikhs, a religion marked intermittently over the past few decades of violent feuds. Most recently, traditionalists and moderates at several Lower Mainland temples fought over the use of chairs in dining halls. Earlier, radical Sikhs, seeking independence for Khalistan in India, brought their fight to Canada. B.C. Sikhs once tried to assassinate a visiting Indian political leader. More seriously, three B.C. Sikhs, Ripudaman Singh Malik, Ajaib Singh Bagri and Interjit Singh Reyat, are charged with murder in the June 1985 bombing of Air India Flight 182, which killed 329 people."

(O'Neill, May 13, 2002)

With news stories such as these, how are we to look beyond the racial stigma to the underlying problem. Stories such as these force the reader to blame certain ethnic groups for the violence they are experiencing. The emphasis on ethnicity and race is presented as an explanatory characteristic of violent behavior, as though cultural difference will somehow justify its occurrence (Zhao, 2002). If an ethnic minority group is responsible for a gang related shooting, it is because of their ethnicity and culture and not as a result of a larger social problem. "This is what these people do" – seems to be the acceptable way of understanding such destructive behavior.

The cultural specificity further provides a conceptual buffer, such that there is a rational context to understand why such violence may have taken place. The audience is asked to read
the story as though the action is not simply a violent assault, but rather signifies a problem with the entirety of the families' culture. Such stories catch the attention of the reader due to their sensational tone, their unbelievable story line and their extraordinariness and seeming disconnection from the "real" world (Zhao, 2002). These are the stories that leave the reader surprised by their very occurrence but also with a sense of security in that it doesn't effect them and is distant from the readers' lives.

The reason many individuals want to blame social problems on certain ethnic groups is because they want to distance it from their lives. This provides the average reader with a sense of security in that the event appears distant and disconnected from them. This disconnection is furthered by the story headlines, which implies that the incident is a strange and freakish occurrence (i.e. "Fifty Bodies Equals a War: Vancouver Police try to end Indo-Canadian drug mayhem"). By using such a heading, the validity of the experience is diminished and the violent act is granted entertainment value. News stories are essentially represented as an event that has more to do with public entertainment than with social issues. Unfortunately, this line of thought legitimizes the current theories on addiction and renders alternative analysis difficult, if not completely impossible.

Notwithstanding journalistic claims of objectivity, news foregrounds certain ways of seeing the world and excludes others through the operation of news frames. Frames not only allow journalists to organize stories, but also provide the reader with a necessary orientation toward new material, enabling comprehension of complex events (Zhao, 2002). A particular
news frame, therefore, shapes a particular interpretation of an issue such as addiction. Stories that specify the ethnicity of primary actors in the stories falls within this frame (Zhao, 2002). Due to the emphasis on oddities and difference, stories whose actors are racially identified embody the characteristics of difference. Even when individuals are reported as living in Canada, reference to heritage distances the story (Zhao, 2002). A second generation immigrant who has been residing in Canada for all of his or her life will be referred to in the newspaper as an “Indo-Canadian” rather than just a “Canadian”. The presentation of foreign people and events as oddities does little in terms of recognizing the severity of events. By placing the emphasis on the differences in appearance and culture, the events themselves are decontextualized, reaffirming the belief that such events cannot and do not occur to the average citizen. Such content reinforces the decontextualized event by emphasizing the violence and not the context (Zhao, 2002).

Because society is often not visible within these articles, it can be inferred that there are no social issues. Violence is no longer represented as a social issue. Sensationalism desensitizes and trivializes the issue, making violence just another attractive and entertaining storyline to sell newspapers. Racist filters that link violence to specific ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds and the “us” vs. “them” nationalistic discourse serves to further dissociate the issue with mainstream culture and thus render it less a topic of concern. They – either an ethnic group within Canada or a politically repressive and culturally backward nation outside Canada, and we – middle class white Canadian society – don’t have a national culture of violence. Consequently,
we do not have to be bothered with such an issue. This train of thought is not only ignorant but also dangerous when attempting to understand the relation of dislocation to addiction.

We can see that drug addiction is merely a symptom of a much larger problem – large scale dislocation masked by ignorance and the media. Over the years, many have come to believe that addiction is an individual disease. We have in a sense been taught to think of addiction in this way. We now need to look at the other side of the coin and realize that it is not an individual problem but rather a societal one. Addiction is not an individual disease but rather a large scale community problem.

If we were to embrace the scientific explanations for drug addiction, we can conclude that drug addiction would be eliminated if alcohol and drugs were dispelled from the earth. Do we actually believe this to be so? In removing drugs and alcohol from this earth, we may have eliminated drug addiction but we have not eliminated addictive behavior, such as gang affiliation and violence. To eliminate the concept of addiction, we need to understand the problem and create a society where so many people would not need to fall into addictive behaviors. It can then be proposed that the key to controlling addiction is maintaining a society in which psychosocial integration is attainable by a majority of people, especially first and second generation immigrants (Alexander, 2001). Individuals have a need to belong and identify with their society and culture, no matter what it may be (Alexander, 2001). By reducing dislocation, we would be laying groundwork for reducing present and future forms of addiction.
We must understand that psychosocial integration is a natural condition for a human being and must continue at every stage of the life cycle to simultaneously foster secure individuality and social stability in both ancient and modern cultures (Alexander, 2003). Insufficient psychosocial integration leads to dislocation. Severe and prolonged dislocation can lead to severe forms of self-destruction, as illustrated in the history of Native Indians. No matter how much economic aid we give Native Indian people whose cultures have been destroyed, we cannot restore them to health and dignity. The problem of addiction among the Native Indian population stems from a deeper issue.

When dislocation arises, it provokes a desperate response as dislocated individuals struggle to restore psychosocial integration (Alexander, 2003). Individuals who do not restore psychosocial integration construct narrowly focused substitute lifestyles (Alexander, 2003). As illustrated above, such lifestyles could be gang affiliations, alcoholics, and drug addicts. As these addictive lifestyles are not sufficiently close or stable, they are usually harmful (Alexander, 2003). This is not to say that the addictive lifestyle is one that is desirable to the individual. It is, however, to say that membership in a sub-culture which may be harmful to society is more bearable than no identity at all (Alexander, 2003). Drug addiction and violent gang affiliation provides social support and a sense of universal truth that fills part of the gap left by the destruction of family, cultural and spiritual traditions. Individuals who substitute an addictive lifestyle for psychosocial integration will defend their addictions despite the harm they cause, as illustrated by recent events.
Numerous large scale studies have shown that only a small fraction of crack cocaine users become addicts and those who do become addicted to crack cocaine are those concentrated among the visibly dislocated segments of the population (Alexander, 2003). You could almost see why these individuals who have a lack of identity resort to addictions such as drugs and alcohol. Drugs and alcohol allow dislocated individuals to step out of their reality into a type of fantasy because being “high” on cocaine or heroin allows them to avoid the formality of their own life. Heroin addicts are not actually surrendering to the drug but rather to themselves and their society. They are avoiding the complications and formalities of their life by being involved in compulsive behavior (Alexander, 2003). There is a need for psychological work on how bicultural identities are cognitively and interpersonally negotiated, together with the impact this process has on individual lives.

The adaptation of immigrants to the hostland cultures should be viewed as a two way process. That is, immigrants adapt to the hostland culture and the hostland culture adapts or changes in response to the presence of ethnic groups. Our society has adapted to immigration to some degree, but unfortunately this is not good enough. The answer may be education. In understanding and educating immigrants on the problems of adapting to the host society, it may make the transition from their homeland much easier. The ethnic experience in modern society provides us with insight into the diversity of identity formations and experiences. Through the eyes of ethnic communities it is possible for one to gain access to the unique relationship existing between cultural experiences and communication codes (Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1988).
Addiction is a social problem with the burden on society to provide a basis for psychosocial integration. Failing same, dislocation will increase thereby increasing the level of addiction faced by many individuals. In looking at current events, we will all agree that there have been a vast number of individuals forming substitute lifestyles as a result of their addiction. Historical examples further illustrate how this theory has been playing itself out for centuries. These destructive and addictive living patterns are not easily overcome nor understood by our institutions of health and government. Let us not let it lay out for the future years by looking at this problem straight in the eye and tackling it as best we can. I am not saying that I have the solution, but what I am saying is that by understanding this theory we will be able to find a solution together. It is now that we should take action rather than later.
Bibliography


