Situational variations in ethnic identity across immigration generations: Implications for acculturative change and cross-cultural adaptation

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*T*his study examined whether the acculturation of ethnic identity is first evident in more public situations with greater opportunity for intercultural interaction and eventually penetrates more intimate situations. It also investigated whether situational variations in identity are associated with cross-cultural adaptation. First-generation (G1), second-generation (G2) and mixed-parentage second-generation (G2.5) young adult Canadians ($n = 137$, $n = 169$, and $n = 91$, respectively) completed a questionnaire assessing their heritage and Canadian identities across four situational domains (family, friends, university and community), global heritage identity and cross-cultural adaptation. Consistent with the acculturation penetration hypothesis, the results showed Canadian identity was stronger than heritage identity in public domains, but the converse was true in the family domain; moreover, the difference between the identities in the family domain was attenuated in later generations. Situational variability indicated better adaptation for the G1 cohort, but poorer adaptation for the G2.5 cohort. For the G2 cohort, facets of global identity moderated the relation, such that those with a weaker global identity experienced greater difficulties and hassles with greater identity variability but those with a stronger identity did not. These results are interpreted in light of potential interpersonal issues implied by situational variation for each generation cohort.

Keywords: Situated ethnic identity; Acculturation; Immigration; Generation; Adaptation; Situation; Discrimination.

The number of migrants worldwide has increased substantially over the past decades, such that there are now more people living outside of their country of birth than at any other point in history (Esses, Medianu, Hamilton, & Lapshina, 2015). A case in point is Canada, where almost 40% of the population migrated to the country or are the offspring of immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2011). In some cities such as Toronto and Vancouver, the number of foreign-born residents approaches the number of native-born (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2013). Such substantial demographic shifts in many immigrant-receiving nations necessitate the development of effective policies, programmes and practices to facilitate the newcomers' integration into the society. To optimise these responses, we need to better understand how immigrants and their offspring daily juggle multiple cultural systems as they adapt affectively, cognitively and behaviorally to the new society.

Given the many aspects of daily life that can change as a result of intercultural contact, several scholars have argued for a life domains perspective on acculturation (e.g., Arends-Toth & van de Vijver, 2004). From this multivariate perspective, acculturation may take on a different quality and/or trajectory depending on the domain considered, whether food practices, self-construals, language or other aspects of behaviour, thought or emotion; a common premise is that peripheral practices, such as clothing choices, are likely to change more quickly than aspects, such as values, that are more central to the person. One life domain that we maintain merits particular research attention is ethnic identity because it is an important indicator of the degree to which people have personally invested

in and integrated an ethnocultural group membership into their sense of self.

Ethnic identity has been studied from diverse theoretical perspectives across several disciplines. Across these perspectives, this collective identity is generally construed as a multidimensional construct, although a theme common to many definitions concerns the subjective experience of belonging to one or more ethnic groups (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). Identity has been argued to have both a relatively stable, trait-like aspect and a dynamic, situationally variable aspect (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998; Yip, 2014). Much acculturation research has focused on the former conceptualization, as reflected in notions of identity centrality from intergroup/social identity theory (Cameron, 2004) or identity commitment from psychodynamic, developmental theory (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Although research on ethnic identity as a situated phenomenon is not new (e.g. Christian, Gadfield, Giles, & Taylor, 1976; Okamura, 1981), interest in the dynamic nature of ethnic identity has recently increased, as scholars attempt to identify the situational contexts in which certain identities become more or less important and understand the implications of identity dynamics for cross-cultural adaptation (e.g. Birman, Simon, Chan, & Tran, 2014; Doucerain, Dere, & Ryder, 2013). For instance, sociocognitive perspectives on culture demonstrate that bicultural persons tend to switch cognitive frames in response to cultural primes (Hong, Morris, Chiu & Benet-Martínez, 2000). Developmental psychologists using diary and experience-sampling studies show that the ethnic identity of bicultural Americans tends to be more salient in situations where they are with family or other heritage group members and/or using the heritage language (Yip & Fuligni, 2002). As yet, relatively little research has considered how these patterns manifest depending on the generation status of people from immigrant families. We maintain that by examining situational variations in ethnic identity across a broad range of generations, we can elucidate the process by which acculturative change in ethnic identity takes place. Moreover, we posit these situational variations have different implications for cross-cultural adaptation depending on generation status.

Situated ethnic identity

To understand such situational variations, Clément and Noels (1992) posited the situated ethnic identity framework based on theorising in the social psychology of language and sociolinguistics, communication science and the (cross-) cultural psychology of acculturation. Consistent with Berry's (1997) model of acculturation, it is assumed that people in multicultural contexts engage with at least two ethnic reference groups, including their heritage or ancestral ethnic group and any other relevant group(s), which in the case of immigrants generally includes the majority, mainstream ethnic group of the settlement society. Various acculturation modes are possible, including choosing one identity over the other or embracing or rejecting both identities. It further maintains that identities are negotiated between interlocutors in specific social situations, defined normatively in terms of setting, the relationship between interlocutors, and the purpose of the interaction (i.e. the activity or topic of conversation engaged in) among other dimensions (Brown & Fraser, 1979). Consistent with the tenets of Communication Accommodation Theory (Sachdev, Giles, & Pauwels, 2012), a framework based on the principles of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982), it is assumed that people accommodate their interlocutors,[1] communicatively and relationally, in order to ease communication, facilitate the accomplishment of social goals, and (sometimes) to promote interpersonal affiliation. Following this premise, we expect that in interethnic interactions, interlocutors would attune to each other not only communicatively (in so far as they are able and normative contingencies afford) but also in terms of the identities negotiated. As such, we expect that, on average, people's identities would reflect the identities of those with whom they interact.

Although many social situations can be consensually defined, they vary in their level of intimacy, that is, the extent to which the interaction is conducted with familiar others, in a familiar context, on topics of a more personal nature (Forgas, 1982). Such situations have been distinguished from more task-oriented interactions with strangers occurring in public (Côté & Clément, 1994). An important implication of this distinction is that because immigrants generally interact with people from other ethnic backgrounds in less intimate, more public domains where situational norms of conduct privilege the mainstream group, the acculturative effects of intercultural contact on identity patterns are most likely to be evident first in these domains. Stated otherwise, it is hypothesised that heritage identity in intimate domains is likely to be sheltered from the acculturative pressures of intercultural contact, although with time and the development of intercultural networks in those domains, acculturative changes would become evident in these sheltered domains as well. A growing body of research not only supports this "acculturation penetration" model for immigrant

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[1]Communication Accommodation Theory recognises that social interactions are not always characterised by harmony or even indifference. Consistent with its social identity perspective, persons might diverge from their interlocutor communicatively and/or relationally, particularly, under conditions of intergroup threat (see Sachdev et al., 2012, for a recent review).

groups (e.g. Clément, Singh, & Gaudet, 2006; Noels, Leavitt, & Clément, 2010; Zhang & Noels, 2013), but also for established ethnic groups in bicultural societies (e.g. Anglophones and Francophones in Canada; Noels, 2013).

Generation status

The immediate social situation is only one contextual factor that has acculturative implications for the identities of people living in multicultural societies. In the case of immigration, the generation cohort is a second important consideration. Comparisons of first-generation (G1) and second-generation (G2) Canadians, that is, those people who were born outside of Canada and immigrated to Canada and those who are Canadian-born and for whom one or both parents were born outside of Canada, respectively (Statistics Canada, 2011), have been shown to differ in their identity profiles (e.g. Lay & Verkuyten, 1999). Research from a situated identity perspective shows that, although there may be little difference between cohorts' identity profiles in public domains, the G2 cohort reports weaker heritage and/or stronger Canadian identity in private domains compared with the G1 cohort (Noels et al., 2010; Zhang & Noels, 2013). These findings provide some support for the acculturation penetration hypothesis: because the G2 can be assumed to have more frequent intercultural contact across more situational domains, shifts in identity are more likely to be evident in intimate domains for them than for the G1. One limitation of these studies is that they have been restricted to only two generations, both of which have a relatively homogeneous ethnic network in the family domain. To better test this hypothesis, it would be useful to compare the G1 and G2 cohorts with a cohort known to have mixed ethnic friendship and family networks, as do persons of mixed immigrant parentage who have one parent who is native-born and one born overseas (termed "Generation 2.5" (G2.5); Rumbaut, 2004). Because the G2.5, by definition, would have more exposure to multiple ethnic groups in the family domain, it is reasonable to hypothesise that their identities in this domains should differ considerably from the other two generations who have less exposure to multiple ethnic groups in this domain.

Situational variability in ethnic identity and cross-cultural adjustment

The central premise of the situated ethnic identity framework is that identities are dynamic and malleable, depending on personal goals, negotiations between interlocutors and normative constraints and affordances. This situational variability arguably reflects functional adaptations to a multicultural environment that foster well-being; by developing positive and supportive relationships with members of both ethnic groups, an

immigrant also develops competence and a sense of self in both cultural systems. Such situational alternation, then, reflects a flexibility and ease with both cultural systems that should correspond with better cross-cultural adaptation (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; cf. Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993). In contrast, those people who more rigidly endorse one type of identity across situations are constrained in their capacity to adapt to the requirements of a complex social life, and thereby experience greater distress.

A competing hypothesis is also tenable: a person with a situationally variable heritage identity might be construed as having a more fragmented sense of self or lacking an integrated "core" self (Donahue et al., 1993). Consistent with this premise, ethnic identity theorists from a psychodynamic, developmental perspective emphasise the importance of achieving (heritage) identity commitment (Phinney & Ong, 2007), and social identity theorists stress the value of ingroup (heritage) centrality and collective self-esteem (i.e. "positive ingroup distinctiveness"). In a related vein, Benet-Martinez and Haritatos (2005) research on bicultural identity integration indicates that a tendency to differentiate and distance the two cultural identifications is associated with identity conflict.

A third perspective posits an interaction between the more dynamic, situated aspects of identity and its more stable, global aspects, such that that identity variability fosters or undermines well-being depending on levels of identity commitment, centrality and/or collective self-esteem. The results of studies examining this possibility have been mixed. For instance, Damji, Clément, and Noels (1996) found that English Canadians living in a French-English bilingual context experienced greater distress, depression and lower self-esteem when they endorsed strong Anglophone but not Francophone identity and their Anglophone identity varied extensively across situations. Yip (2014); see also Yip & Fuligni, 2002) reported that, for Chinese-American adolescents who had relatively strong global heritage identities, greater (heritage) identity salience was associated with greater positive well-being and regard for the heritage group. Elsewhere, Zhang and Noels (2013) found that G2 Chinese Canadians who experienced a large discrepancy in their heritage identity between public and private situations were better adjusted if they had a high general regard for their heritage group and a strong sense of heritage group affiliation. Identity centrality, however, did not moderate the relation between identity gaps and well-being. Moreover, this pattern was only evident in G2 Chinese Canadians; there was no association between identity variability and well-being in G1 Chinese Canadians.

In light of these mixed results, this study examines the link between heritage identity variation and cross-cultural adaptation, and considers how aspects of global identity might moderate this relation. We focus the analysis on

heritage group identity because it has been the focus of most of the previous research on this topic. Because of their pertinence to diverse identity frameworks (Ashmore et al., 2004), we examine three aspects of global heritage identity as described by Cameron (2004), including the importance of the ingroup (heritage) membership (termed "heritage identity centrality"), the respondents' evaluation or regard for the heritage ingroup (termed "heritage affect") and the emotional and social connection with the heritage ingroup (termed "heritage ties").

Objectives of this study

The objectives of this study are twofold. The first objective is to test the acculturation penetration hypothesis by comparing the situated ethnic identity profiles of young adult Canadians from immigrant families. It is hypothesised that, in relatively public domains, the three cohorts will have similar identity profiles, such that Canadian identity will be stronger than heritage identity. In relatively personal domains, G1 Canadians will show stronger and more polarised heritage relative to Canadian identity because of their relatively recent arrival in Canada; G2 Canadians will show a similar but attenuated pattern of identities; and G2.5 Canadians will show equivalent identities and that these identities will be less polarized and possibly positively related, following Berry's (1997) and Benet-Martinez and Haritatos (2005) discussions of integration.

The second objective is to determine whether and how heritage identity variation is linked to cross-cultural adaptation in the three generations, and whether these relations depend on the aspect of cross-cultural adaptation considered. To elucidate the reason for the mixed findings of previous studies, we consider two possible factors that might be at play. First, given that previous studies have operationalized adaptation in different ways, it is possible that the relation depends upon the adaptation measure used. In their model of cross-cultural adaptation, Ward and Kennedy (1994) differentiate sociocultural (or behavioural) adaptation from psychological adaptation, and we will consider whether these two sets of variables differentially relate to identity variation. Second, it is tenable that the relation between variability and adaptation differ depending on the generation cohort, and so we will examine this relation across multiple cohorts. Based on Zhang and Noels (2013) findings, we expect that global aspects of identity will moderate the relation between variability and adaptation for the G2 cohort, but

not the G1, and we will explore this relation for the G2.5 cohort.

METHOD

Participants

The participants included 397 Canadian citizens or permanent residents.[2] The G1 cohort included 80 females and 57 males, age range of 17–29 years ($M = 19.41$; $SD = 1.98$) who immigrated to Canada. They landed between 1 and 28 years of age ($M = 10.01$, $SD = 5.85$) and lived in Canada for 9.43 years ($SD = 5.17$). They originated from diverse nations, including China and Hong Kong (27.8%); India and Pakistan (13.2%); Philippines (8%) and Poland (6.6%). The majority (86.3%) reported that their parents shared a common ethnic heritage. Most (65.7%) reported that their mother tongue was a language other than English, 11.7% reported that English was their mother tongue and 22.6% reported that they had two or more mother tongues, of which one was English.

The G2 cohort included 101 females and 68 males, age range of 17–27 years ($M = 18.71$; $SD = 1.60$) who were born in Canada and had two parents who were born outside of Canada, in countries such as China, Hong Kong and Taiwan (29.6%); India and Pakistan (17.2%), Philippines (2.4%) and Poland (6.5%). The majority (91.6%) reported that their parents shared a common ethnic background. For 40.2%, their mother tongue was English, for 18.9%, it was a language other than English and for the remainder, it was both English and another language.

The G2.5 cohort included 57 females and 34 males, age range of 17–28 years ($M = 19.19$; $SD = 2.21$) who were born in Canada, and had one parent who was born in Canada and one parent born outside of Canada. Most (84.9%) reported that their parents had different ethnic backgrounds. The immigrant parents were virtually equally mothers or fathers (49.45% mothers). Most people (86.8%) reported that their native language was English, 4.4% reported a language other than English and 8.8% spoke English and another language as native languages.

Materials

Participants completed a questionnaire with indices of situated ethnic identity, global heritage identity and cross-cultural adaptation. A description of each

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[2]Initially 456 people participated in the study, but those who reported that one or both of their parents were born in an Anglosphere country (i.e. Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, Scotland, New Zealand, Wales or USA) were removed from the sample prior to describing the sample and conducting major analyses. This decision resulted in the deletion of four and nine participants from the G1 and G2 groups, respectively (i.e. one or both parents were born in an Anglosphere country other than Canada), and 46 from the G2.5 group (i.e. parents included a Canadian and an immigrant from an Anglosphere country), resulting in a final sample size of 397.

instrument follows, with the range of Cronbach alpha indices of internal consistency across the three cohorts in parentheses.

Situated ethnic identity

The Situated Ethnic Identity Scale (Noels et al., 2015; see also Noels et al., 2010) assessed respondents' Anglo-Canadian and heritage group identification across four situational domains. Developed through focused essays and focus groups (Côté & Clément, 1994; Noels et al., 2015), 16 scenarios depicting the interlocutor, setting and activity were presented to respondents, reflecting two relatively personal domains, including family (4 items; e.g. "I am at home talking with my mother about family affairs." Cronbach $\alpha = .78 - .84$) and friends (4 items; e.g. "I am at a close friend's home, talking about our dreams and plans for the future" Cronbach $\alpha = .81 - .93$); and two relatively public domains, including university (4 items; e.g. "I am talking with my teacher in his/her office about an upcoming test." Cronbach $\alpha = .79 - .94$) and community (4 items; e.g. "I am talking to the bus driver about the route I wish to take." Cronbach $\alpha = .75 - .92$). After each scenario, participants indicated the extent to which they identified as a member of their heritage group and as a member of the Anglo-Canadian group on separate 7-point scales, with 1 being "*not at all my heritage group/Anglo-Canadian*" and 7 being "*very strongly my ethnic group/Anglo-Canadian*". Participants were encouraged to use the scales independently, such that they might identify to varying degrees with one group but not the other, with both groups or with neither group.[3]

To ensure that participants' understanding of heritage and Anglo-Canadian groups corresponded with the researchers', Anglo-Canadian was defined as "people whose families have lived in Canada for several generations and who speak English as a native language". As well, instructions were adapted from Phinney and Ong's (2007) multigroup ethnic identity measure, such that participants were reminded of the diversity of ethnic groups in Canada, asked to state their ethnic group, and to answer the questions about ethnic identity with reference to that group.

Global heritage identity

The Social Identification Scale (Cameron, 2004) was adapted to evaluate identification to the heritage group across three aspects of social identity: cognitive centrality (e.g. "I often think about the fact that I am a member of my ethnic group"; Cronbach $\alpha = .66 - .85$); ingroup (heritage) affect (e.g. "In general, I am glad to be a member of my ethnic group"; Cronbach $\alpha = .77 - .80$) and ingroup (heritage) ties (e.g. "I don't feel a sense of being "connected" with other members of my ethnic group"; Cronbach $\alpha = .71 - .80$). Participants rated each statement on a 6-point Likert scale. Negatively worded items were reverse-scored, such that a higher mean score indicated greater endorsement of that construct.

Cross-cultural adaptation

Following Ward and Kennedy's twofold construct of cross-cultural adaptation, we included instruments to assess psychological and sociocultural (i.e. behavioural) adjustment. Four instruments assessed psychological adjustment. The Self-Rating Depression Scale (Zung, 1965; Cronbach $\alpha = .76 - .82$) includes 20 items to which participants indicated the frequency of the symptoms on a scale ranging from 1 (*none or little of the time*) to 4 (*most or all of the time*). The 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Cronbach $\alpha = .89 - .91$) assessed participants' degree of satisfaction with their lives. Agreement with each statement was indicated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). The Emotional and Social Loneliness Scale (Wittenberg, 1986, cited in Shaver & Brennan, 1991) was included to assess the quality of the participants' social relationships in the past year. The 10 items were scored on the basis of two 5-item dimensions: social loneliness (e.g. "I don't get much satisfaction from the groups I participate in"; Cronbach $\alpha = .63 - .71$) and emotional loneliness (e.g. "There is no one I have felt close to in a long time"; Cronbach $\alpha = .71 - .81$). Each statement was answered on a scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*).

Sociocultural adaptation was assessed with three indices. The 28-item Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (Ward & Kennedy, 1999) indexed the degree of difficulties that participants have experienced in the previous 6 months in areas such as social situations, food and climate (e.g. "finding food that you enjoy"; Cronbach $\alpha = .89 - .92$). Respondents indicated the level of difficulty experienced on a scale ranging from 1 (*no difficulty*) to 5 (*extreme difficulty*). Two subscales from Lay and Nguyen's (1998) Acculturation Hassles Scale assessed outgroup hassles (e.g. 8 items concerning hassles from Anglo-Canadians; e.g. "deciding whether rude or discourteous actions are made because of my ethnic origin"; Cronbach $\alpha = .75 - .82$) and ingroup hassles (e.g. 10 items concerning hassles from heritage group members; "being perceived as "too North American" by members of my ethnic group"; Cronbach $\alpha = .69 - .73$). For each

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[3]Although a measure of interethnic contact was not included in this study, Noels et al. (2010) reported that G2 Chinese Canadians had more frequent contact with Anglo-Canadians than did G1 Chinese Canadians, and there was more frequent interethnic contact in the university and community domains than in the friendship domain.

item, respondents were asked to rate the frequency of the experiences over the previous year on a scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*very often*). Higher mean scores indicated a greater degree of difficulties and hassles.

Procedure

We identified potential participants (i.e. persons who were born or whose parents were born outside of Canada and immigrated to Canada) through a mass-testing survey of university students registered in an introductory psychology course. Volunteers completed a paper-and-pencil questionnaire during a small group-testing session in exchange for partial course credit. The procedure was approved by the institutional research ethics board and complied with the Tri-Council Policy of the Canadian federal government and ethical policies of the Canadian and American Psychological Associations.

RESULTS

Heritage and Anglo-Canadian identities across generation cohorts

Situated ethnic identity means analyses

To examine variations in heritage and Anglo-Canadian identities across the four situational domains for each generation cohort, a mixed model analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with two within-subject factors including identity (two levels: heritage vs. Anglo-Canadian) and situational domain (four levels: family, friends, university and community) and one between-subjects factor (generation: G1, G2 and G2.5). The results yielded statistically significant main effects for identity, $F(1, 336) = 40.35$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$, situation, $F(3, 1008) = 99.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .23$, but the main effect for generation was not significant, $F(2, 365) = 2.80$, $p = .06$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. The two-way interactions were significant for the identity by generation effect, $F(2, 336) = 15.98$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, and the identity by situation effect, $F(3, 1008) = 292.95$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .41$, but not for the situation by generation effect, $F(3, 1008) = 1.17$, $p = .32$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. The identity by situation by generation interaction effect was statistically significant and is interpreted below, $F(6, 1008) = 6.57$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$.

Tukey HSD *post-hoc* analyses compared the two identities across the four situations and three cohorts. As shown in Figure 1, for the G1 and G2 cohorts, Anglo-Canadian identity was stronger than heritage identity in the more public domains, but the converse

was true in the family domain. In the friendship domain, the two identities were equivalent for the G1 cohort, but Anglo-Canadian identity was stronger than heritage identity for the G2 cohort. For the G2.5 cohort, the two identities were equivalent in the family domain, but Anglo-Canadian identity was stronger than heritage identity in the friendship domain.

The three cohorts were equivalent in their mean levels of Canadian and heritage identity in the public domains. There was, however, considerable cross-group variation in feelings of identity in the more personal domains. In the family domain, the G1 cohort reported a significantly stronger heritage and lower Anglo-Canadian identity than did the G2.5 cohort. The G2 cohort fell midway between these two cohorts, but was not statistically significantly different from either, with the exception that their heritage identity was stronger than the G2.5 cohort's. In the friendship domain, Anglo-Canadian identity was equivalent across the three cohorts, but the heritage identity of the G1 cohort was stronger than that of the G2.5 cohort. The heritage identity of the G2 cohort was midway between the two other cohorts, and differed significantly from the G1 cohort, but not the G2.5 cohort.

Correlational analyses

Correlational analyses of the relations between identities in each domain yielded a different pattern for each cohort. For the G1 cohort, Anglo-Canadian and heritage identities were negatively related in the family and friendship domains ($r = -.34$, $p < .001$ and $r = -.20$, $p = .04$, respectively), but the two identities were unrelated in the university and community domains ($r = .07$ and $r = .01$, ns, respectively). For the G2 cohort, the two identities were unrelated across the domains except for a small positive correlation in the friendship domain ($r = .22$, $p = .01$). For the G2.5 cohort, the identities were positively correlated in the friendship domain ($r = .27$, $p = .02$), and approached conventional significance levels in most of the other domains (family: $r = .22$, $p = .06$; university: $r = .18$, $p = .11$; community: $r = .21$, $p = .07$).

Heritage identity variability and cross-cultural adaptation

The second objective of this study is to examine whether situational variations in heritage identity are linked to cross-cultural adaptation variables. To create a heritage identity variability index (HIVI; adapted from Damji et al., 1996), a standard deviation score was computed for each person by calculating the square root of the sum of the squared differences between the identity score for

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[4]The relatively small sample size constrained the assessment of a more complex analysis, which includes generation status. Comparisons across the cohorts must be interpreted with this limitation in mind.
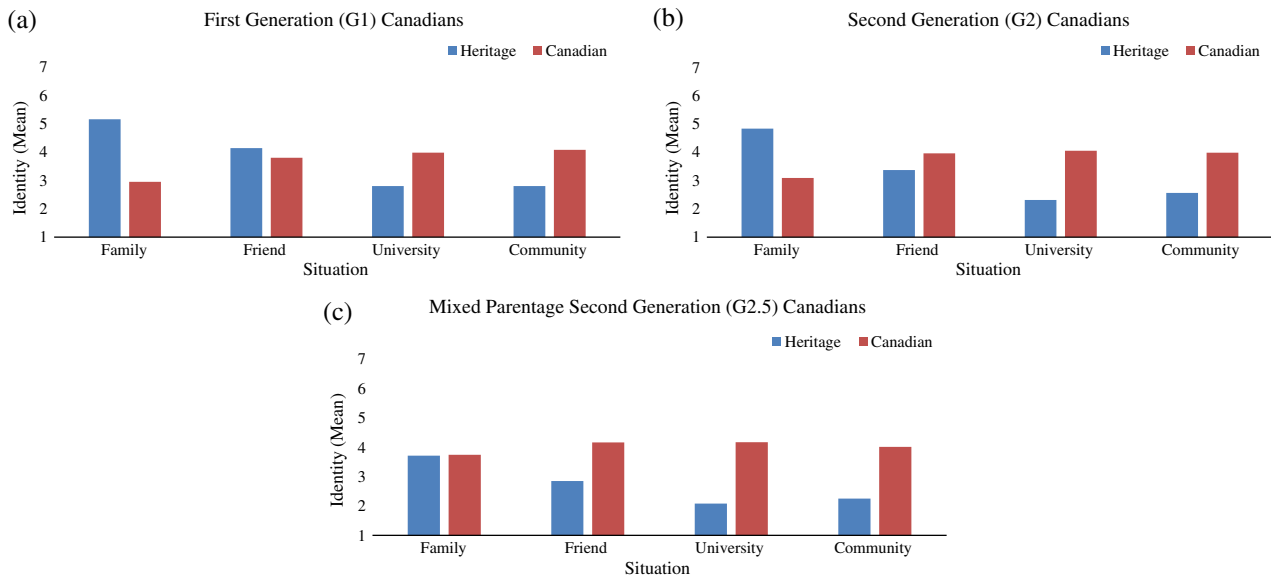
Figure 1. Mean identity as a function of identity type, situation and generation. (a) First-generation (G1) Canadians, (b) Second-generation (G2) Canadians and (c) Mixed-parentage second-generation (G2.5) Canadians.

each situational domain (X) and the mean across the four situational domains (M) divided by the total number of domains (N; in this case 4) minus 1, such that

$$\text{HIVI} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (X - M)^2}{N - 1}}$$

Correlational and regression analyses

Correlations between the HIVI and cross-cultural adaptation indices were conducted separately for each generation cohort. For none of the groups was heritage identity variability associated with depression or life satisfaction. For the G1 cohort, greater heritage identity variability was associated with less emotional loneliness, $r = -.23$, $p = .02$, and marginally less social loneliness, $r = -.17$, $p = .07$, as well as fewer outgroup hassles, $r = -.20$, $p = .04$, and marginally fewer ingroup hassles, $r = -.17$, $p = .07$. For the G2 cohort, identity variability was not associated with any adjustment variables. For the G2.5 cohort, greater heritage identity variation was associated with experiencing more outgroup hassles, $r = .35$, $p = .001$, and more ingroup hassles, $r = .29$, $p = .01$.

To test for possible moderating effects of global heritage identity, we conducted a series of regression analyses in which each of the adjustment indices served as the criterion variable, the variability index (centred) served as the predictor, and an aspect of global heritage identity (centred; centrality, affect or ties) served as the moderator. We repeated the analyses separately for each generation cohort.[4]

For the G1 and G2.5 cohorts, none of the global heritage identity facets moderated the relation between HIVI and adjustment indices, all $ps > .05$. For the G2 cohort, heritage group affect did not interact with HIVI to predict any of the adjustment variables, all $ps > .05$. There was, however, a significant interaction between indices of heritage ties and identity variability and between centrality and identity variability for sociocultural adaptation difficulties, ingroup and outgroup hassles (see Table 1 for a summary of statistically significant analyses).

Figure 2 depicts the findings regarding the interaction between heritage identity centrality and heritage identity variability for sociocultural difficulties, and the other interactions followed the same pattern. Simple slopes analysis showed that at one standard deviation above the mean, there was no significant relation between heritage identity variability and sociocultural difficulties, $t(150) = -1.38$, $p = .17$, confidence interval: CI(95%) = $-.27$, $.35$. Thus, for those who felt that their heritage identity was important to their sense of self or that they were well connected to other heritage group members, heritage identity variability was unrelated to sociocultural adaptation difficulties (or hassles with ingroup and outgroup members). In contrast, at one standard deviation below the mean, there was a significant positive relation between heritage identity variability and sociocultural difficulties, $t(150) = 2.39$, $p = .02$, CI(95%) = $.03$, $.05$ (and outgroup and ingroup hassles). In sum, those who felt neither that their heritage identity is important to their sense of self nor a sense of connectedness with other members of the heritage group experienced more difficulties performing everyday activities and interacting with heritage and non-heritage background people as their heritage identity varied more extensively across situations.

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TABLE 1

Summary of moderation analyses for the second-generation (G2) Canadians

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Criterion	Predictor		Moderator		Interaction		R^2	F
	β	CI(95%)	β	CI(95%)	β	CI(95%)		
			Moderator: Heritage identity centrality					
Sociocultural difficulties	.07	−.07, 1.59	.19[**]	.01, .12	−.21[**]	−.23, −.04	.09	4.86[**]
Outgroup hassles	−.02	−.23, .14	.19[**]	.01, .19	−.25[**]	−.40, −.09	.09	5.20[**]
Ingroup hassles	.08	−.09, .22	.10	−.04, .12	−.17[**]	−.27, −.01	.04	2.34[*]
			Moderator: Heritage group ties					
Sociocultural difficulties	.12	−.02, .21	−.11	−.12, .01	−.25[**]	−.28, −.07	.09	4.67[**]
Outgroup hassles	.03	−.13, .24	−.13	−.21, .01	−.21[**]	−.42, −.06	.07	3.48[**]
Ingroup hassles	.16[**]	.02, .31	−.38[**]	−.30, −.14	−.24[**]	−.36, −.09	.21	13.29[**]

Note: The predictor variable is the heritage identity variability score.
CI = confidence interval.
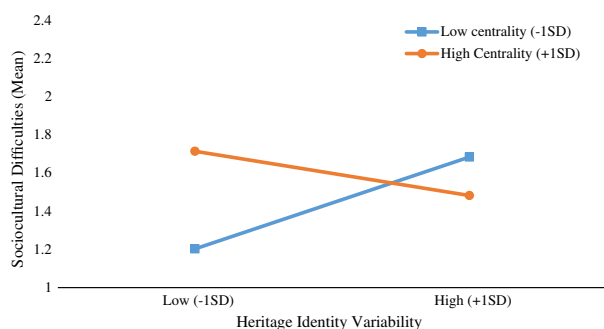[*]$p = .08$. [**]$p < .05$.

Figure 2. Sociocultural difficulties as a function of heritage identity variability and heritage identity centrality.

DISCUSSION

There were two main purposes of this study. The first aim was to investigate situational variations in the ethnic identity profiles of young adult Canadians from immigrant families of varying generations in order to better understand how acculturative changes in ethnic identity unfold. The second was to determine whether and how heritage identity variability is linked to cross-cultural adaptation, and whether this relation is moderated by aspects of global heritage identity.

Situated ethnic identity and generation status

The results of the means analyses replicated earlier studies comparing G1 and G2 Canadians (Clément et al., 2006; Noels et al., 2010; Zhang & Noels, 2013), such that heritage identity was stronger than Canadian identity in the family domain, but the converse was true in more

public domains, such as being at the university or in the general community. This pattern is in line with the idea that people generally negotiate identities that are consistent with the people and normative expectations of the social situations in which they are engaged. It is noteworthy that these findings based on hypothetical scenarios parallel the results of experience-sampling and diary studies that show that heritage identity is stronger in situations where one is with family members or other members of the heritage group and/or utilises the heritage language (e.g. Yip & Fuligni, 2002). This pattern obtained using different assessment strategies, combined with the substantial size of the situation by identity interaction effect in this and other studies ($\eta_p^2 > .40$; Noels et al., 2010; Zhang & Noels, 2013), attests to the robustness of this finding, and underscores that global identity indices gloss over the fact that a strong heritage identity does not preclude a strong mainstream identity (and vice versa); rather both are possible, depending upon the situation. Thus, a more nuanced, situated approach to ethnic identity assessment is warranted so as not to obfuscate the complexity of ethnicity in people's daily lives.

Although the G1 and the G2 cohorts are similar in several regards, differences between the two cohorts are consistent with the acculturation penetration model, which maintains that acculturation begins in situations where there is greater opportunity for intercultural contact (typically public domains, such as work, school or community) and, with greater intercultural exposure across more domains, acculturative shifts become evident across more domains (typically private domains, such as with friends and family). Moreover, the correlation analyses suggest that there is a transformation in the relation between these

identities. In this study, the G1 Canadians clearly differentiated and polarized their identities in the family domain, but the G2 Canadians attenuated this difference and were less polarized. Evidence of acculturative shift is perhaps stronger in the friendship domain: whereas the two identities were equivalent for the G1 Canadians, Anglo-Canadian identity was clearly stronger than heritage identity for the G2 Canadians. Moreover, whereas the G1 Canadians polarised their identities in this domain, the G2 Canadians did not. Thus, although heritage identity is relatively sheltered from the acculturative impact of intercultural contact in private domains, for those who can be presumed to have more intercultural interaction even in private domains, there is a corresponding difference in identity profiles.

Additional support for the notion of acculturation penetration comes from the results concerning the G2.5 cohort. By definition, the G2.5 cohort had one parent that was a Canadian by birth and one that was born abroad, so that this cohort interacted with people from both cultural groups in the family domain. Corresponding with this pattern of cultural contact, the two identities were equivalent. That said, it is intriguing that the G2.5 respondents indicated only moderate levels of identity with either group; if identities are solely contingent on cultural contact, we might have expected high means on both identities. An interpretation of this finding might be facilitated by the fact that the correlations indicated that the G2.5 cohort's identities tended to be positively associated. Such a pattern is consistent with notions of identity fusion or hybridity (cf. Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; LaFromboise et al., 1993), or possibly endorsement of individualism, involving a refusal to identify with any ethnic group (cf. Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997). It is conceivable, then, that moderate and equivalent levels of situated identification represent the creation of a third identity, derived from, but also distinct, from the parental ethnicities. More research into the quality of experience associated with this identity profile is necessary, especially given that some correlations were nonsignificant at conventional probability levels.

Identity variability and cross-cultural adjustment

The analyses concerning the relation between situational identity variability and cross-cultural adjustment reveal three important findings. First, variability is more consistently related to personal and interpersonal difficulties rather than psychological well-being (as assessed by indices of depression and life satisfaction). This finding suggests that situational alternation is not directly indicative of problematic identity fragmentation or salubrious flexibility. Instead, it appears to be more closely linked, either positively or negatively, to the perceived quality of everyday engagement in one's social world. Given that some previous research has found a relation between identity variability and well-being (e.g. Damji et al., 1996; Yip, 2014; Zhang & Noels, 2013), further research might further address this issue, perhaps by considering whether quotidian hassles and difficulties in some way mediate the relation between identity experiences and well-being.

Second, identity variability did not have a straightforward relation with adjustment, but instead different patterns emerged depending upon generation status. Given that greater heritage identity variability corresponds with greater opportunities for interaction with non-heritage groups, an interpretation of this finding depends on the significance of diverse interactions for each generation cohort. For the G1 cohort, greater integration into both heritage and Anglo-Canadian networks is likely functional; since newcomers must establish support networks in the new society, the more they engage with both the Canadian mainstream and heritage ethnic groups, the more social support and other resources they are likely to acquire and the less loneliness and alienation they are likely to feel. In contrast, the G2.5 cohort is from birth very familiar with and integrated into both cultures. At the same time, because of their dual ancestry, they might not be perceived as fully belonging to either group. As a result, they could be particularly sensitive to actions that could be construed as rejection and microaggressions from the heritage group and/or the Anglo-Canadian group. In sum then, situational alternation of identity is not necessarily indicative of poorer or better adaptation. Rather greater variation can expose bicultural persons to either the best or the worst of each sociocultural world, depending on their generation cohort.

Although there were no significant bivariate correlations between identity variability and cross-cultural adaptation for the G2 cohort, the moderation analyses showed that for those people who felt that their heritage identity was important to their sense of self and felt secure in their associations with heritage group members, identity variability was unrelated with the difficulties and hassles experienced in daily life. In contrast, for those people who felt neither that their heritage identity was central to their self-concept nor a sense of interpersonal connection with heritage group members, identity variability indicated greater difficulties and more hassles. These findings are in line with Zhang and Noels (2013) results, which showed that large identity gaps between public and private situations are associated poorer well-being if heritage group ties and affect are weak and negative, and with Yip's (2014) finding that under low levels of centrality, situational salience of heritage identity was associated with lower esteem for that group. These findings underline the third theoretical point that situational and global facets

of identity can interact to affect adjustment in multicultural contexts (cf. Yip, 2014). On an applied level, they highlight the deleterious implications of a weak sense of heritage identity for G2 individuals, and suggest that promotion of a positive sense of self and connection with the heritage group might mitigate the difficulties of bicultural identity negotiation.

Limitations and directions for future research

The present research contributes to the understanding of ethnic identity by positing a situated perspective and considering how an examination of generation cohorts provides insight into the process of acculturative change. There are, however, at least three limitations to this study that point to future research directions. A first concern is the use of a cross-sectional design to address the developmental process posited by the acculturation penetration hypothesis. Although it is plausible that generation cohorts have differing degrees of intercultural contact across situational domains, these cohorts differ in many other respects as well. A longitudinal design in which immigrants are followed for a considerable duration would provide more convincing evidence of acculturative changes in identity first occurring in relatively public domains and eventually becoming evident in more private domains.

A second set of concerns relates to the characteristics of the sample. First, university students are likely more privileged than many immigrants, in terms of their access to social, cultural and economic capital of different kinds. Moreover, the sample consisted of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Although some research with ethnic-specific community samples has shown similar profiles (e.g. Clément et al., 2006), further replication with other community samples is merited. A useful next step would be to systematically compare identity patterns across ethnic groups, selected on theoretical grounds (e.g. groups varying in age, socioeconomic status, national contexts, etc.).

A third issue that this study raises concerns the diversity within cohorts of different generation status. The results show that there are important differences between young adults who have two parents who migrated versus those of the so-called Generation 2.5 who have only one parent who migrated and one who is a native-born Canadian. We concur with Rumbaut (2004) that researchers should not combine this cohort with the G2, but rather study their unique experiences, especially given that this mixed parentage cohort represents a large proportion of those come from immigrant families. In a similar vein, researchers should be attentive to the diversity of those who can be categorised as belonging to the first generation. In this study, the G1 cohort all migrated during childhood and adolescence, which is a group that is sometimes termed Generation 1.5.[5] These persons likely differ significantly from persons who migrated in adulthood not only in their premigration and migration circumstances, but also in their settlement experiences. As children (and adolescents), they likely did not have much input into the decisions regarding when, where and how to migrate, but upon arrival in Canada they may have relatively ready access to the settlement society through schooling and other activities that might facilitate their adaptation. In contrast, adults generally must seek and retain employment (often involving multiple jobs that offer little interaction with members of the mainstream society), while supporting a family. Such obligations can constrain access to social and cultural capital that enables full participation in the settlement society. These considerations highlight the importance of attending to the diversity of immigration circumstances, and we encourage more comparative studies of the kind conducted here.

CONCLUSION

This study adds to our understanding of the experience of young adults from immigrant families by demonstrating the complexity and uniqueness of each generation's ethnic affiliations. Not only did it replicate previous findings regarding the identity profiles of G1 and G2 immigrants, it provided insight into a large but understudied segment of those who come from immigrant families. The comparison of the generation cohorts generally supported the claim that acculturation is a situated phenomenon; different situations have different affordances for intercultural contact, and those that yield more contact are also those where identity change is likely to take place. Given that intercultural interaction tends to first take place in public domains, acculturative change is likely to occur in these domains first, and penetrate more intimate domains in time, as the multicultural social networks encompass more situational domains. Finally, the study also contributed to discussions in the acculturation literature and beyond, by demonstrating that situational variability in ethnic identity can be either problematic or adaptive depending on generation, and by underscoring the value of a strong heritage self-concept and secure interpersonal connections to overcome any possible relation between variability and maladjustment.

As rates of immigration continue to rise in many countries, such dynamic, contextualised understandings of acculturation may help to develop more nuanced

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[5]Generation 1.5 usually refers to people who migrated before adolescence, although some scholars suggest higher or lower age limits. Rumbaut (2004) has argued for even finer distinctions, including Generations 1.25 and 1.75. Given the sample size, a consideration of variations within the G1 group is outside the scope of this study.

policies, programmes and practices to better foster the integration of newcomers into increasingly multicultural societies. For instance, one practical implication of the perspective presented here is that, given that some situational domains are less exposed to the acculturative pressures of intercultural contact, it may be possible to create sheltered contexts for the maintenance of heritage identities (e.g. schools, community centres, etc.). Alternatively, to facilitate adaptation to a new society, this perspective emphasises the importance of engaging in social situations where new identities can be forged. We hope that future research will continue to explore the applied and theoretical value of a situated perspective which underscores the importance of the diverse life domains in which intercultural contact and acculturation occur.

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