
Negotiating Intersecting Minority Identities: The Cultural Transitioning of Jewish Argentinean Immigrants Négocier les identités minoritaires transversales : la transition culturelle d'immigrants juifs argentins

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological qualitative study employed relational cultural theory and feminist social constructionist theory as epistemologies to examine the role of multiple intersecting identities in the cultural transitioning of Jewish Argentinean immigrants into a range of relational and social contexts. Results indicated that identity salience across different relational contexts was strongly influenced by the emergence of the immigrant identity and the resulting interpersonal challenges. Implications for future research and counseling are discussed.

RÉSUMÉ

Pour cette étude phénoménologique qualitative, on a eu recours à la théorie relationnelle-culturelle et à la théorie sociale féministe constructiviste comme approches épistémologiques pour examiner le rôle des multiples identités transversales dans la transition culturelle d'immigrants juifs argentins dans différents contextes relationnels et sociaux. Les résultats indiquent que le degré d'importance de l'identité dans les différents contextes relationnels est fortement influencé par l'émergence de l'identité d'immigrant et les défis interpersonnels qui en découlent. L'article présente une discussion des implications pour la recherche à venir et pour la pratique du counseling.

Cultural transitioning—the process of moving from the culture of origin to the new culture of a host country—can be affected by various factors and is often considered challenging and complex in different contexts (Berry, 2001; Jafari, Baharlou, & Mathias, 2010). Successful cultural transitioning is exemplified by social and occupational integration within the new culture (Berry, 1997, 2001). A variety of prevailing factors have been identified to influence the process of cultural transitioning for immigrants, such as education, employment, and integration, in which they are required to make adjustments with respect to their occupational identity, family structure, and social network (Berry, 2001; Sinacore, Mikhail, Kassan, & Lerner, 2009). Support from extended family, friends, and community has also been identified to help ease the transition process (Lam, 2005; Yost & Lucas, 2002).

Additionally, extant literature has documented the connection between social interactions and immigrants' identities. In this regard, the self is viewed as a product of interaction with others based on immigrants' different roles and identities (Valenta, 2009). Although relationships and social interactions lie in the heart of transitioning and integration processes, they can act both as a source of challenge and an avenue of growth (Comstock et al., 2008; Motulsky, 2010). However, Gilligan (1991) argued that relationships are embedded within culture and encouraged the consideration of multiple identities, such as race and ethnicity, in research. Thus, context and connection need to be considered intersecting entities.

Further, to understand the intersection of context and connection, researchers have historically described dual systems of oppression as the *double jeopardy hypothesis* (Beal, 1970), which proposed that occupying two or more stigmatized statuses or identities led to greater negative consequences (e.g., discrimination) than occupying a single status. Feminist scholars subsequently proposed that these statuses and identities should be viewed as interactive processes in relation to one another (Collins, 1990). Thus, immigrants may be particularly vulnerable to experiences of discrimination given their multiple minority identities (Pak, Dion, & Dion, 1991).

Moreover, the identity salience model emphasizes that immigrants' identities are dynamic and change within different contexts, settings, and times. However, the proponents of this model argue that, at times, immigrants may silence one or more aspects of their identities that have been marginalized by others in multiple contexts (e.g., school, work, larger society) (Yakushko, Davidson, & Williams, 2009). Khanlou, Koh, and Mill (2008) posited that it is common practice for immigrants to selectively hide parts of their identity in an attempt to protect themselves from possible discrimination and acts of prejudice in the host country. The decision to hide part of their identity can be a result of media representations, as well as direct or indirect experiences of discrimination. In their study of Jewish immigrants, Sinacore and colleagues (2009) reported that Israeli immigrants were often silent due to negative media depictions about Israel. Other studies indicate that individuals hide racial, ethnic, religious, and sexual identities due to experiencing direct acts of physical or verbal bullying (Khanlou et al., 2008; Sinacore, Khayutin, & Durrani, 2016). While the need to hide certain identities due to oppression is not unique to immigrants, immigrants have to negotiate multiple intersecting minority identities in new and changing social and relational contexts throughout the process of cultural transitioning.

RATIONALE

Given the importance of examining how intersecting identities in different contexts influences cultural transitioning, this study explored the experiences of Jewish Argentinean immigrants. Argentinean immigrants were chosen because the number of permanent residents from Argentina increased substantially between 2000 and 2005, suggesting that Argentina was a significant source of migrants

to Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010). During that time, a subset of the individuals who emigrated from Argentina to Canada was Jewish, and identified as *Ashkenazi* or *Sephardi*. Ashkenazi Jews are descendants of Jews from Eastern or Central Europe whose ancestors predominantly spoke Yiddish (Baskin, 1991). Sephardi Jews are descendants of persons expelled from Spain or those who lived in Southern Europe, the Balkans, Africa, and Turkey whose ancestors predominantly spoke Ladino (Cantor, 1995).

In Argentina, the distinction between Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities is not apparent, and the Jewish community as a whole is generally viewed to be secular and nontraditional (Rein, 2010). That is, secular and nontraditional Jews tend to adapt to the cultures in which they live and integrate into the broader society (Sinacore et al., 2009). In Canada, however, Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jewish people, with their distinctive ethnic backgrounds, adhere to diverse Jewish traditions within their own synagogues and communities and thus typically identify as being part of a sect of Judaism (e.g., orthodox, reform) (Baker, 1993). As well, research indicates that for Jewish individuals, being Jewish is a salient identity through which they view the world, interact with others, and make life decisions (Ginsberg & Sinacore, 2012).

Nonetheless, the differing structures of the Argentinean and Canadian Jewish communities may influence how these immigrants transition into social and relational contexts in Canada. As well, by studying the experiences of Jewish Argentinean immigrants, one can gain insight into how multiple intersecting minority identities influence the ways in which immigrants access social support, community resources, and other services necessary for successful integration.

In sum, the aim of this research study was to examine how the intersections of immigrant, cultural, and religious identities of Argentinean migrants influenced the process of cultural transitioning within a range of societal and community contexts in Quebec.

EPISTEMOLOGY

This study integrated both relational cultural and feminist social constructionist epistemologies. Relational cultural theory (RCT) proposes that “healing takes place in the context of mutually empathic, growth-fostering relationships” (Comstock et al., 2008, p. 279). In emphasizing relationships, RCT facilitates an exploration and a better understanding of cultural dynamics across contexts (Comstock et al., 2008). Further, RCT requires an analysis of the role of resilience in individual development (Hartling, 2008), and the exploration of how different social locations and identities manifest themselves across different contexts (Mottusky, 2010). Thus, applying RCT facilitated the exploration of the important relationships, differing social locations, and multiple identities that influenced the cultural transitioning of Jewish Argentinean immigrants.

Additionally, the researchers employed a feminist social constructionist (FSC) epistemology, which proposes that there are multiple valid truths, and views lan-

guage as a means for constructing and maintaining a reality that benefits certain individuals and groups. As well, FSC posits that identities are not fixed, but are modified by context and perceptions. It also posits that gender is performative and shaped by different contexts and, therefore, structures social interactions. The application of the FSC theory not only allowed the researcher to examine how multiple social identities (e.g., ethnicity) are shaped across time and contexts, but also provided for the examination of emerging identities. Additionally, FSC implores the researcher to deconstruct and question accepted truths and dualistic constructs to allow meaning making to occur (Sinacore & Enns, 2005). Thus, employing this epistemology allowed for the emergence of multiple viewpoints and the meanings derived from these experiences.

Through the integration of RCT and FSC epistemologies (Sinacore, Titus, & Hofman, 2013), the researchers were able to examine how the intersections of multiple identities influenced the construction of relationships in different contexts. These epistemologies are consistent with a phenomenological method, which emphasizes that individuals are situated in particular social contexts, and through these cultural, historical and linguistic locations meaning about a particular phenomenon is derived (van Manen, 1997).

METHODOLOGY

A phenomenological research method was employed in this study in order to facilitate the explorations of how individuals comprehend and experience the world around them. In order to develop an understanding regarding the nature of a particular phenomenon, researchers need to investigate participants' lived experience of that phenomenon (Wertz, 2005). Thus, this study sought to explore the experiences of cultural transitioning of Jewish Argentinean immigrants into Quebec society in general, and the Jewish community in particular. Through the exploration of both similarities and differences between participants' experiences of the cultural transitioning process, the nature of this phenomenon can be understood. (This study was part of a larger project interrogating immigrants' process of cultural transitioning.)

Procedures

Upon ethics approval, purposive selection ensured that the sample represented the phenomenon in question (Polkinghorne, 2005; Wertz, 2005). Purposive sampling is consistent with the objects of phenomenology in that it aims to collect detailed accounts of a phenomenon as experienced by individuals (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Participants were recruited through language classes for new immigrants, word of mouth, and newspaper advertisements. Recruitment resulted in 14 participants; this number is typically recommended for qualitative research (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997).

Next, after identifying potential participants, each individual participant met with the researcher in order to reiterate the purpose and procedures of the re-

search project to them. Upon agreement to participate and provision of informed consent, each participant completed a demographic information sheet, as well as the semistructured qualitative interview. While all participants had the option of completing forms and conducting the interview in Spanish, participants chose to be interviewed in French or English.

The interviews were approximately 60 to 90 minutes in length. The interview protocol was composed of open-ended questions, which addressed participants' experiences in a range of contexts including country of origin, educational institutions, workplaces, the Jewish community, and the Quebec society at large. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim, and then checked to ensure accuracy.

In order to ensure trustworthiness, four major criteria were reviewed: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Sinacore et al., 2013). Credibility, or the process of confirming that findings reflected the reality of the participants' experiences, was confirmed through two steps. The first was "honesty" (Shenton, 2004, p. 67); that is, completely voluntary participation and withdrawal from the study. The second was "iterative questioning" (Shenton, 2004, p. 67) during the interview, in which the researchers clarified, revealed contradictions, and paraphrased the participants' statements. Regarding transferability, information with respect to context and methodology has been provided, and a detailed description of the research design and procedures ensured dependability. Finally, confirmability was ensured by keeping a detailed "audit trail" (Shenton, 2004, p. 67) regarding data collection and analysis. In addition, debriefing participants at the end of the interview established catalytic validity.

Data Analysis

All transcripts were analyzed in the language in which the interview was conducted. Furthermore, the epistemological lens of both theories was applied to data analysis. Specifically, RCT epistemology required the researchers to conduct a conceptual analysis with a voice-centred relational method (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998), which requires the researcher to read the transcripts multiple times in order to situate the participants' stories in various social locations and relational contexts (Motulsky, 2010). In order to do so, transcripts were reviewed to identify "I" and "we" statements. Next, these statements were categorized by type of relationship and social location. Subsequently, relational contexts and themes therein were identified across all transcripts. Then, the lens of FSC was applied to analyze these contexts; specifically, the researchers conducted discourse analyses on each relational context, so as to identify dualistic constructs and allow a number of meanings and identities to emerge (Sinacore & Enns, 2005).

By employing a voice-centred relational method (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998), reflexivity was evident throughout the data analysis process. Specifically, the method dictates that the researcher read the transcript for (a) themes; (b) the researchers' reactions; (c) the relationship with family, close friends, and others; and (d) the broader social and cultural contexts. The researchers demonstrated reflexivity

from the outset of the analytic process when reading the overall transcript, and staying aware of their responses to the data. The members of the research team came to consensus regarding the themes, relationships, and identities identified.

Participants

Recruitment of participants resulted in 11 heterosexual men and 3 heterosexual women, whose ages ranged from 28 to 58 years. In the sample, 10 individuals were married, 3 were in common-law relationships, and 1 was single. None of the participants' mother tongue was English or French. All participants had lived in Canada between 2 and 5 years. With respect to level of education attained in their home country, 3 individuals earned a Master's degree, 6 earned a Bachelor's degree, 3 earned a vocational diploma, and 2 earned their high school diplomas. In the sample, 12 participants identified as Ashkenazi, 1 as Sephardi, and 1 as both Ashkenazi and Sephardi.

RESULTS

Data analysis revealed how Jewish Argentinean immigrants navigated the immigration process, and how they negotiated their multiple intersecting identities in different social and relational contexts.

Immigration Process

The men and women in this study reported several reasons for wanting to leave Argentina. First and foremost, several participants stated that given the economic depression that occurred in Argentina between 1998 and 2002, they had difficulty securing employment in their profession or faced unemployment. They also noted that there was limited freedom of expression in Argentina due to the government's economic policies. In addition, the participants detailed that the riots that ensued due to the political and economic turmoil caused them to fear for the safety and security of themselves and their family members. As well, participants highlighted concerns for their children's safety, both at school and in their neighbourhoods.

While participants entertained the idea of moving to several countries, they reportedly chose to immigrate to Canada, and specifically to Quebec, due to its stable political and economic climate, multicultural society, and openness to immigrants, as well as for greater opportunities for employment and education. In addition, several participants noted that Canada would provide a "good quality of life" for themselves and their family. Participants reported that in order to move to Canada, they were expected to provide necessary documentation to immigration officials at the Canadian Embassy, as well as undergo an interview to delineate their financial standing and reasons for immigration. The men and women who immigrated with their spouses stated that they had to provide the history of their conjugal relationship to officials, including evidence of cohabitation and joint bank account information. Some participants also commented that possessing a

higher level of education or skills that met the required needs of Canada's labour market, having the ability to speak English or French, and immigrating with children improved their chances for acceptance. The length of the immigration process for the participants varied between 6 months and 2 years, depending on their personal circumstances. Generally, participants found this process to be onerous, leaving them frustrated and resulting in them questioning the decision to come to Canada. However, some participants noted that maintaining a positive attitude throughout the process was helpful for them.

Prior to leaving Argentina, several of the men and women in this study developed high expectations with respect to securing employment, learning English or French, and receiving support from members of Quebec society. For example, one participant stated, "Yes, I had the expectation of arriving to a place where opportunities were everywhere." Upon their arrival, however, many participants experienced a "loss of illusion" after encountering difficulties finding work quickly, mastering one or both of the official languages, and developing a supportive social network.

In contrast, other men and women in the study immigrated to Quebec with few or no expectations, thus anticipating difficulties with the transitioning process. As one participant noted, "they [immigration officers in Argentina] didn't tell me that it's going to be easy to get a job, never. They didn't promise that there are a lot of opportunities." Furthermore, once in Quebec, these participants maintained a positive attitude regarding the transitioning process, and were proactive in seeking employment and social support. As one woman reported, "I didn't have these expectations, and I took charge of what I wanted to do."

Jewish Community

In addition, participants needed to adjust their perceptions with respect to the social and cultural norms of the Jewish community in Quebec. Several participants noted considerable differences between the Jewish communities in Argentina and in Quebec with respect to size, socializing, and religious practice. That is, the Jewish community in Quebec is considerably larger than that in Argentina, and participants perceived it to be more traditional and conservative in its customs and traditions. Participants also reported that while the Jewish community was quite dispersed throughout Argentina, individuals within the Jewish community in Quebec generally live in specific neighbourhoods. Given their close proximity to one another, Jewish community members often socialize and interact in a variety of contexts, including the synagogue, Jewish community organizations, and structured events. Another notable difference is the distinction between the Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities in Quebec. That is, while these subcultures of the Jewish community are integrated in Argentina, there are separate synagogues, traditions, and religious practice for both of these subgroups in Quebec. Furthermore, knowledge of one or both of Canada's official languages dictated the participants' ability to form relationships with other Jewish individuals, as the Sephardi community predominantly speaks French, while the Ashkenazi community speaks English.

Many participants reported that prior to their immigration, they developed high expectations that the Jewish community in Quebec, as one participant noted, “takes care of its own.” These participants anticipated that the community would provide services to make them feel welcome and ease the transitioning process. Several reported that specific social services and agencies within the Jewish community met or exceeded these expectations and provided satisfactory psychological and social support upon their initial arrival and for the long term. For example,

Actually, [agency workers] were helpful. They gave me this membership to the [Jewish Community Centre], [and to] the library, they were very good, very useful ... [Also], to know that someone is [here] if I have an emergency or inconvenience ... that doesn't cost a cent. And that means a lot. That's really the best part about coming here.

On the other hand, some participants did not require the services that were offered to them, while others were disappointed by the services they received. For instance, one participant commented that while the organizations were generally helpful with respect to the immigration process or providing language courses, “And yes, we thought that they might help a lot. And I don't [know] what their role is exactly. They didn't help me ... maybe because [I] didn't need the help they were giving.” Another woman also discussed how she was treated by individuals within an organization, and noted, “You come in and they help you, like they are supposed to help you ... but it's not like they really cared because if they cared, then they would follow up, but they don't follow up.”

In addition, several participants revealed certain expectations of being welcomed by individual members of the Jewish community. They had hoped that individuals in the community would take the initiative to form long-standing relationships with newly arrived immigrants and were disappointed when this did not occur. However, some participants revealed only positive experiences with members of the Jewish community, which allowed for a smoother transitioning process. For instance, one man detailed,

What we received ... from [this] person ... [on] her [own] initiative ... [she] received us at the airport ... and it was because she [had the initiative] to do this ... she calls us, she invites us to her home ... several times ... she helped us with little things.

Other participants also spoke highly of several individuals within the Jewish community who not only provided assistance and support, but also connected them to others members of the community. One participant stated, “and I think it was really wonderful. She opened lots of doors [for us] ... it was because of her we talked to [the Rabbi].” Conversely, some participants were disappointed with the lack of initiative and follow-through by members of the Jewish community. As one man commented, “Oui, il y avait une famille qui nous a invité pour le Sabbat. Mais puis, nous avons jamais reçu une autre appel [Yes, there was one family who invited us to Shabbat. But, then we never received another call].”

As a result, participants reconceptualized how they intended to be Quebec citizens and integrate as Jewish persons within these two contexts. Specifically, they needed to adjust their expectations of how to be contributing members to Quebec society, given that they encountered difficulties securing employment and learning the official languages. Participants' cultural transitioning experiences resulted in their having to re-evaluate how they negotiated their Argentinean and Jewish identity and how the intersections of these identities influenced their transitioning experiences.

Identities in Cultural-Relational Contexts

Data analysis revealed that two social and relationship contexts strongly influenced participants' experiences of transitioning and integration. Specifically, they discussed the larger Quebec society and the Jewish community. Within each of these contexts, the ways in which individuals socialize and interact influenced participants' experiences of integration and marginalization. As a result of feeling marginalized, participants reported that a new identity emerged that they did not anticipate. This identity was that of being immigrants, where they experienced themselves as outsiders in both the Jewish community and Quebec society.

Argentinean identity. A careful review of the data resulted in the identifying formal versus informal patterns of socializing. These patterns resulted in participants struggling to negotiate their Argentinean identity.

Participants reported that they observed that members of the larger Quebec society demonstrated a different way of socializing than what they were accustomed to in Argentina. Participants indicated that they viewed Quebecois to be more private about their personal life, and more prescriptive with their free time. For instance, one participant stated, "If you [work] full time ... you have an agenda in your free time, and then you don't [leave] that much open to opportunity [to informally socialize]." This structured form of social interaction resulted in participants developing an identity as outsiders to Quebec society.

Similarly, the men and women in this study stated that they had to adjust to the way in which members of the Jewish community socialized. Participants reported that they perceived the lives of individuals in the Jewish community to be more structured and scheduled, with less informal free time than Jews in Argentina. As a result, participants found it difficult to form long-standing or close relationships with Quebec Jews, as they did not know how to access informal social networks. As one man reported,

In Argentina, you go for coffee with a friend, it's very common to see how things are going and to talk about certain issues. And here ... to maintain a relationship, to be close to the people that you care about, there has to be certain events or certain situations or certain activities to have a relationship. In Argentina, you don't need to have any excuse. You go and have a relationship with somebody that you like because you want to see him, not because there is an event involved.

Another stated, “Here the social environment, it’s not really easy to make friends like in South America. We are more open ... here, they are too individualistic.... Here, [you have to] pick up the phone to have a meeting.”

Overall, the socialization patterns of both Jewish and non-Jewish individuals in Quebec often made it challenging for participants to connect with and form friendships with Quebec citizens. This pattern of socializing resulted in participants questioning how to maintain their Argentinean cultural frame and identity, while questioning their ability to take on the identity of a Quebec citizen.

Immigrant identity. The struggle of being Argentinean in Quebec society resulted in the emergence of the immigrant identity within both the Quebec society and the Jewish community. Despite participants’ willingness to integrate into society and form new relationships, they were continuously made to feel like outsiders due to cultural and language barriers. For instance, one participant stated, “I live with the Quebecois, but I don’t feel like I’m really integrated yet in the Quebecois society.” These feelings of isolation often prompted participants to consider immigrating to a new country or returning to Argentina, as one participant commented: “I think we are going to leave [Quebec]. I am talking about this month, 2 or 3 months, ... [Quebec], it’s not our place.”

Part of the conflict and feeling like a stranger was exacerbated by language as a barrier, which made it difficult for participants to develop a social network in Quebec. When asked about their relationships with Quebec citizens specifically, one participant replied,

the [Quebec] people, it’s more difficult to make a relation [with them]. They don’t understand, they think that we are stupid because we do not speak the language. In [either the] French and English community, [it is] the same problem.... We tried to make friends here, but it’s very, very difficult. Very, very difficult.

Moreover, some of the participants became increasingly aware of their accent, which further emphasized their emerging identity as immigrants. For example, one man reported,

My father was an immigrant [in Argentina] and he spoke like an immigrant.... So, [now] I speak like an immigrant (*laughs*) like my father or other persons [in] Argentina that speak like an immigrant ... I am feeling [bothered by] this now.

Additionally, participants reported that knowledge of a specific language influenced the culture of people with whom they interacted within the Quebec society. More specifically, despite their interest and willingness to do so, participants reported experiencing difficulty in forming relationships with French-speaking individuals, which led to increased feelings of isolation. Many participants also observed that the French-speaking non-Jewish communities in Quebec do not generally socialize with Jewish individuals. One participant commented,

Ça c'est important pour moi [pour créer une connexion avec des gens hors de la communauté juive]. C'est que tous les familles que j'ai connais, et autres latino américains que je connais, nous ne savons pas comment nous ferons des amis dans le milieu Québécois... parce que nous essayons de faire ça, mais, nous voyons que nous ne pouvons pas trouver un vrai ami.

[That's important to me (to create a connection to others outside of the Jewish community). All the families I know, and other Latin Americans I know, we do not know how we will make friends within Québécois society ... because we try to, but we see that we cannot find a true friend.]

Another participant noted, "I find that people ... are not open to [meeting people] in other parts of the society." Basically, participants reported that Quebec society was structured around specific ethnic or religious identities (e.g., Francophone, Anglophone, Jewish) and thus participants did not always feel that their identities coincided with the structure of Quebec culture, making it difficult to develop friendships.

However, those participants who felt more accepted within the Quebec context reported that connecting with other immigrants was a valuable source of social support. Through sharing the immigrant identity, participants were able to develop relationships with individuals who had migrated to Quebec but did not necessarily share their ethnic or Jewish identity.

As well, participants reported that other immigrants were an important source of information, as they were forthcoming when they asked questions about Canadian systems. Some participants noted that having friends and coworkers who were immigrants reduced feelings of isolation as their common experiences resulted in them developing a support system. In addition, some of the participants reported that forming relationships with other Latin immigrants who spoke Spanish helped them build friendships more reflective of their experience in their home country. One man stated,

Quand je suis arrivé, il y avait pas une grande communauté Argentine. Quand j'ai commencé à étudier, j'ai trouvé des amis colombiennes, mexicaines. Latinas, on est tous pareilles ... qui parlent la même langue. C'est pas la même culture, parce que chaque pays a sa propre culture, mais la langue [est la même].

[When I arrived, there was not a large Argentinean community. When I started my studies, I found Colombian and Mexican friends. Latinas, we're all alike ... who speak your same language. This is not the same culture, because every country has its proper culture, but the tongue (is the same.)]

Similar to the conflicted feelings that arose while trying to integrate into Quebec society, the men and women in this study felt "foreign" within the Jewish community. As one woman reported, "I don't feel part of anything ... I don't have a lot of opportunity [to meet people]. I belong in the fringes [of the community]." However, several of the participants noted that being involved with a specific Jewish organization made them feel more included in the larger Jewish community.

For example, when asked if he felt part of the Jewish community, one participant commented, “No. I don’t really feel like I’m really part of the Jewish community, but sometimes when there are [name of organization] activities, I am part. I think then yes ... because [name of organization] is part of my life.” Overall, participants reported that their Jewish identity intersected with their immigrant identity. That is, in Quebec society, they felt like an outsider as a Jewish person, but could connect with other immigrants. In the Jewish community, they felt like an outsider as an Argentinean and therefore immigrant, but could safely express their Jewish identity.

Jewish identity. When spending time with people outside the Jewish community, participants reported that they were wary about disclosing their Jewish identity. That is, they were guarded in sharing personal information about themselves, due to prior experiences of anti-Semitism in Argentina. As one participant reported, “I am very cautious ... it’s safer for me to, well, not to hide because I am not hiding. But maybe not to say this so openly.” In general, however, participants felt safe in expressing their Jewish identity around other Jewish individuals.

In fact, participants reported that upon moving to Quebec, their Jewish identity needed to become considerably more overt in order to develop a social network. That is, in Argentina, they identified as secular, did not attend religious services, and socialized in informal ways that were not directly connected to being Jewish. However, in Quebec, participants felt that they had to attend synagogue regularly in order to connect with others. One man stated,

I think there [is a] difference because for the Argentinean people it’s not normal to go to synagogue. We used to go to [local shops] to make relations, to [do] the things that the people do here at the synagogue.

In addition, participants noted that in Argentina, attending synagogue was associated with social activities and less with religious practice, while they found the opposite to be true in Quebec. Thus, they needed to change their views about attending synagogue, as well as how they practiced Jewish customs and traditions. For example, one participant commented,

The difference is that [the Jewish Community] is more religious than [in Argentina] ... yes, it’s very strange that we all go to the synagogue, it’s not very normal. I went to the synagogue here [in Quebec] more times than [I did in the last] 10 or 15 years [in Argentina].

Thus, attending religious services challenged their secular Jewish identity and highlighted their experience of being an immigrant. Overall, participants had to reorganize how they thought about and integrated their Jewish Argentinean identity into their everyday lives.

DISCUSSION

Integrating FSC and RCT epistemologies (Sinacore et al., 2013) allowed the researchers to examine how holding multiple intersecting minority identities af-

affected the cultural transitioning process for Jewish Argentinean immigrants in societal and community contexts. More specifically, applying RCT highlighted the social and relational contexts important to participants in this study, while employing FSC illuminated the multiple viewpoints within and between these contexts. Consistent with the literature pertaining to the immigrants' intersecting identities (Yakushko et al., 2009), participants' multiple identities (e.g., secular, Jewish, Argentinean) were dynamic and the salience changed within different contexts and across time.

However, this study departed from the literature in that it demonstrated that the salience of participants' identities across contexts was strongly influenced by the emergence of the immigrant identity following their migration to Canada. Upon immigration, the immigrant identity was always present, regardless of whether they were interacting with members of the Jewish community specifically, or with the Quebec society at large. This ever-present immigrant identity resulted in the renegotiation of participants' other identities. Specifically, participants' Jewish identity became more overt and less secular than it was in Argentina, in order to facilitate the development of relationships with members of the Jewish community. As well, they had to adjust how they managed their social interactions: from spontaneous and informal in Argentina to formal and structured interactions within Quebec.

Moreover, while participants' other identities (e.g., Jewish or Argentinean) moved in and out of salience depending on the context, their immigrant identity was always a present and defining identity, with the exception of when participants were in the presence of other immigrants, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation. In these cases, the other minority identities, such as being Jewish or Argentinean, became more salient, while the immigrant identity moved into the background, since all individuals in question were immigrants.

Additionally, accepting the emerging immigrant identity was challenging and unexpected, as participants had to accept and understand themselves as immigrants simply due to their new social location. That is, as participants became acculturated to life in Quebec, the immigrant identity slowly emerged through their interactions with Jewish community members and members of the larger Quebec society, leaving no social context in which they felt fully affiliated.

Further, results of this study revealed multiple locations of discrimination experienced by the participants simply due to holding various minority identities. Previous scholars have demonstrated that immigrants are selective in the identities they exhibit as a way to protect themselves from possible discrimination (e.g., Khanlou et al., 2008). Consistent with this research, participants in the current study reported hesitation in revealing their Jewish identity among non-Jewish individuals. Moreover, results supported the double jeopardy hypothesis (Beal, 1970; Pak et al., 1991) and extend findings by revealing how holding multiple minority identities places immigrants at a disadvantage with respect to forming relationships with individuals in a new host country.

For example, participants found it difficult to form social networks due to the fact that they were secular, Jewish, Argentinean, and immigrants. Due to lan-

guage and cultural barriers, participants struggled to connect with individuals in the greater Quebec society and the Jewish community. In addition, their Jewish identity made it difficult for them to connect with non-Jewish people, since they generally felt safer expressing their Jewish identity around other Jewish individuals. As such, their interactions with non-Jewish individuals were limited, which reduced their ability to form a wider support network. Simultaneously, participants found it difficult to develop social relations with members of the Jewish community given its traditional and formal structure, language, and religious practices, which were very different from their experiences in Argentina.

STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Several strengths were noted in this study. First, employing a phenomenological methodology gave voice to participants who may have felt silenced as a result of their being immigrants. Second, the number of participants that participated in this study fell into the recommended sample range for qualitative studies (Hill et al., 1997), and thus allowed for the researchers to gather rich descriptions from multiple participants in order to facilitate a deeper understanding regarding the phenomenon in question. Examining the intersections of multiple minority identities across contexts during the process of cultural transitioning was a third strength of the study, because identities do not exist in isolation and are also shaped by interactions within societal contexts.

Nonetheless, this study was not without its limitations. As noted by Sinacore and colleagues (2009), participants self-selected to participate in this study, thus deeming their language skills to be “good enough,” as no one opted to do the interview in Spanish. Other individuals who were not comfortable with being interviewed in English or French may have chosen not to participate. Moreover, as the primary language spoken in Quebec is French, the results may not generalize to other parts of Canada in which English is the primary language spoken. In addition, intersections of several other identities were not considered (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, age of immigration), which may have also influenced the process of cultural transitioning. Thus, future research needs to address a broader range of minority identities, with attention given to those identities that might result in marginalization both within and outside the immigrants’ cultural community (e.g., sexual orientation, gender). As well, an examination of the ways in which counsellors’ negotiation of their salient identities serves to facilitate or inhibit the counselling process with immigrant populations is warranted.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING PRACTICE

Findings from this study indicated that immigration, and thus the new identity of immigrant, resulted in participants renegotiating their minority identities (e.g. Jewish, Argentinean) across a variety of contexts. Counsellors working with immigrant populations must be particularly aware of immigrant clients’ experiences

of different contexts and how these clients negotiate and make decisions about which identities to express within and across context. Moreover, counsellors need to be aware of the different forms of discrimination experienced by immigrants in different contexts. Thus, counsellors must be sensitive to the fact that immigrant clients may not be transparent about their multiple minority identities and have difficulty discussing them.

As well, it is important for counsellors to consider how different social locations influence immigrants' social interactions. For example, participants were less traditional in their practice of Jewish customs than members of the Jewish community in Quebec, and were also less formal in their way of socializing with others as compared to citizens of Canada. As a result, they had to readjust their expectations and behaviour in order to meet people and form relationships with them. Thus, counsellors who are cognizant of cultural differences within and between Argentinean immigrants will be better prepared to understand the interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts that may arise as a result of cultural expectations.

In addition, the participants in this study reported having different expectations about the immigration process prior to moving to Canada and then having to readjust those expectations once they were in the process of culturally transitioning. As such, counsellors may want to discuss with their clients how they constructed these expectations and how these expectations are met or unmet across social and relational contexts. Furthermore, counsellors need to be cautious when encouraging immigrant clients to seek out cultural communities consistent with their identities, as these clients may experience themselves as outsiders within these communities.

Additionally, counsellors should explore with their clients how each minority identity influences and intersects with clients' other identities across contexts. Specifically, by understanding and accepting their new immigrant identity, as well as considering the salience of this new identity and its impact on their other identities, clients may experience a smoother cultural transitioning process. Thus, counsellors should explore with their clients the value they place on each identity and how this may change across time and contexts.

Finally, using a strength-based approach, it would be important for counsellors to help clients view their new immigrant identity as a facilitator of, rather than a limitation on, forming new relationships and adjusting to a new culture. For example, several of the participants noted that when interacting with other immigrants, they felt accepted and were able to build a support network with individuals experiencing similar transitioning struggles. They also noted that other immigrants provided assistance in navigating the complex economic and immigration systems in Quebec. In this sense, counsellors may find it beneficial to encourage their clients to also build relationships with members in a range of communities in order to minimize disappointment and ease their transitioning process. Counsellors are well situated to facilitate and ease the transitioning process by understanding the integral role of social relations and context to immigrants' movement into a new society.

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