Cultural Identity as Part of Youth's Self-Concept in Multicultural Settings

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Identity is recognized as an important aspect of psychosocial well-being. This study examined the self-concept and cultural identity of 550 youth in a community based sample of high school students in Canada. A revised version of Kuhn and McPartland's (1954) Twenty Statement Test and Oetting and Beauvais' (1991) orthogonal cultural identification item were used to gather data. The relationship between participants' individual (age and gender) and environmental (cultural background and migrant background) with cultural identity levels was considered. Close to 79% of respondents were born in Canada, 18% had immigrated, and 2.5% were visa students. The average age of respondents was 17 years. In relation to self-concept, 61.3% of responses were related to the Self-Evaluations category and 16.5% to the Social Identity category. Five sub-themes (Ethnicity/National origin, Migration status/Residency, Race, Language, and Cultural/Political) were related to cultural identity. Over 54% of the sample identified a lot and 32.5% identified some with the Canadian way of life. Cultural identity levels were found to vary by cultural background in relation to several cultural identity groups. The concept of neighbourhood concordance was considered among the explanations for emerging patterns. The term *multiculturation* was proposed in cultural identity discourse in multicultural settings.

Keywords: Adolescence; Cultural identity; Mental-health promotion; Immigration; Multiculturalism; Self-concept; Youth; Survey.

Introduction

Self-concept is a multidimensional construct which entails various identities including cultural identity. Discourse around adolescent identity proliferated in psychological literature following Erikson's influential work on youth, society and identity (Erikson, 1963, 1968). Erikson recognized the centrality of identity to psychosocial well-being and on the whole to human existence. He noted that "in the social jungle of human existence there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity." (Erikson, 1968, p. 130). Among adolescents who live in multicultural and immigrant-receiving settings, cultural identity can represent an important aspect of identity (Khanlou, in press). With continued global migration trends and changing diversities within societies that receive immigrants, scholarship is needed that examines the multiple influences on adolescent development in culturally diverse and trans-nationalizing societies (Khanlou, 2004a). In particular,

multicultural developmental concepts are required that would account for the diverse experiences of youth from different cultural and migrant backgrounds in such settings.

To date, variations in how cultural identity is conceived of and measured across studies pose challenges to the comparison of findings across settings. Differences in the cultural groups considered and the context in which studies are conducted add further to the challenge. Using similar measurement instruments in cultural process oriented studies can help to control for some of the variations noted. The instruments can be altered to capture the cultural diversity of the context in which the studies are conducted. According to Oetting and Beauvais (1991), while cultural process theories "focus on the general types of changes that occur in cultural transitions," cultural content theories "focus on specific culture linked behaviors, attitudes, or beliefs" (p. 656). Unlike the cultural content approach, the cultural process approach allows for generalization across cultural contacts.

This paper begins by considering the empirical literature on adolescent cultural identity. Findings from a study of 550 secondary school students are subsequently presented. The study examined the self-concept and cultural identity of youth in an urban and multicultural context in Canada. Canada is recognized as one of the major immigrant-receiving countries in the globe (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001). The Canadian Council on Social Development (2001) reports that between 1996 and 1998, approximately 230,000 immigrant children and youth arrived in Canada. Half of these children and youth came from Asia and the Pacific region, and one in five came from Africa and the Middle East. The setting for the study was Hamilton in the Province of Ontario. Following Toronto and Vancouver, Hamilton has been reported as having the third largest size of immigrants as a percentage of its population in Canada (Dickson, Heale, & Chambers, 1995). The study considered Oetting and Beauvais' (1991) prediction that various cultural identification patterns are possible in a multicultural setting. Data on female and male youth was gathered from both dominant and non-mainstream ethnocultural backgrounds. The limitation of the cultural process approach, which was the approach used in the reported study, is discussed in a subsequent section on the study's limitations and suggestions for future research. The implications of the study's findings are discussed in relation to new directions for cultural identity research.

Individual and Environmental Influences on Cultural Identity: An Ecosystemic Approach

Studies of identity as a psychosocial construct have considered individual and environmental influences on adolescent cultural identity development. *Individual influences* include, for instance, age and gender and are related to the particular adolescent. *Environmental influences*, which are related to the individual's social context, include cultural background and acculturating group. As discussed elsewhere (Khanlou, 2004b) this grouping is congruent with an *ecosystemic perspective*. Under an ecosystemic perspective the ongoing interaction between individual and environment influences human development. Waller (2001) recognized the systemic levels to entail the individual, family, community, and society. An ecosystemic approach is on par with evolving mental health promotion concepts and fits well with Erikson's recognition of levels of influence on mental well-being. Erikson (1968, p. 141) concluded that psychosocial strength "depends on a total process which regulates individual life cycles, the sequence of generations, and the structure of society simultaneously."

Individual Influences: Age, Gender, and Cultural Identity

Research on individual influences on cultural identity has examined age and gender differences. For example, through essay analysis, Ying and Lee (1999) studied ethnic identity status and outcome among 342 Asian-American adolescents (average age was 16.3). They used Phinney's (1990) identity statuses (diffuse, foreclosed, in moratorium, and achieved) to assess ethnic identity status.[1] To determine ethnic identity outcome, they used Berry's ethnic identity outcomes (separation, assimilation, integration, and marginal) and an additional "unintegrated" category. They reported age and gender differences in the ethnic status outcome. Integrated adolescents were older than separated and unintegrated adolescents. The females appeared to progress more rapidly through ethnic identity statuses and outcomes. In a large-scale study of 5,127 youth (ages 12 to 17) of Asian, Latin American, and Caribbean immigrants in the United States, Rumbaut (1994) found segmented paths to identity formation (half of the sample was born in the U.S.). Gender influenced the selection of ethnic identification; females were more likely to choose a hyphenated identity, and

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[1] For details on Phinney's three-stage ethnic identity model, see Phinney (1990), and for details on Berry's two-dimensional model of acculturation see Berry (1990) and Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Bukaji (1989).

males were more likely to choose an unhyphenated identity such as American or national origin.

Studies conducted in Europe have also reported mixed findings. For example, Vertkuyten and Kwa (1994) examined ethnic self-identification among 122 Turkish and 119 Chinese adolescents (ages 12 to 17) in the Netherlands. No age or gender differences in self-identification were found in the cross-sectional study. But in a later cross-sectional study of 291 Dutch and 199 Turkish youth (ages 10 to 13), Kinket and Verkuyten (1997) found that "boys more often described themselves in ethnic terms and reported more positive evaluation of their ethnic identity" (p. 351). In a recent study, Verkuyten and Pouliasi (2002) examined cultural frame switching, attributions, self-identification, and attitudes among 51 Dutch and 58 Greek monocultural youth in Greece and 74 bicultural youth who were Greek descendents in the Netherlands (ages 9 to 12). They found gender differences in attributions. Girls gave more external explanations. No age differences were found in cultural frame switching. In summary, while studies have resulted in mixed findings, overall they point towards gender differences and possibly age differences (for hypothesized direction of influence, see hypothesis 1 below in Purposes of Study section).

Environmental Influences: Cultural Background, Acculturating Group, and Cultural Identity

Research on the influence of cultural background and acculturating group (defined here as whether one is an immigrant or was born in the country in which the study is taking place) on cultural identity have been conducted in different immigrant-receiving countries. For example, in the United States, Phinney and Alipuria (1990) examined ethnic identity among 196 undergraduate students (ages 17 to 23) who were members of four ethnic groups. Their cross-sectional study found that minority group members ascribed more importance to ethnicity: "especially Blacks and Mexican-Americans, show greater ethnic identity search than White subjects" (p. 180). Rumbaut (1994) found differences in the identification of youth between those who were born in the United States and those who were not. Being born in the United States was the strongest indicator of selecting an American identity and positively related to selecting a hyphenated-American identity. Parents' nativity, particularly mothers' ethnic identity, had a strong influence on the ethnic identification of the respondents. Recently, Lee, Sobal, and Frongillo (2003) examined the acculturation patterns of Korean Americans (17 or older). Three forms of acculturation (assimilation, integration, and segregation) emerged in their findings. The researchers concluded that a bidimensional model bet-

ter explained the acculturation of Korean Americans than a unidimensional model (see Khanlou, in press, for a discussion of models of cultural identification). One limitation of the applicability of the study's findings was the wide age variance ($M = 41$ years, $SD = 13$ years) of the sample of 356 respondents.

Studies have also been conducted in Australia and Europe. In a study of 82 Italian-Australian adolescents in Grade 11 (average age = 16.3) in Australia, Rosenthal and Cichello (1986) found that "*Parental Italianness* was associated positively and *Parental Australianness* negatively with the adolescent's sense of Italian identity. The retention of parental cultural links was thus important for the ethnic identification of the adolescent" (p. 496). In a nationwide and cross-sectional study, Verkuyten (1990) examined ethnic identity among 237 Turkish and 2,710 Dutch adolescents (ages 13 to 16) in the Netherlands. More Turkish respondents referred to their ethnic identity spontaneously, which indicated that for this group of adolescents ethnic identity was more salient than it was for the Dutch adolescents. In the Vertkuyten and Kwa (1994) study, the influence of acculturation on ethnic self-identification was examined among Turkish and Chinese adolescents in the Netherlands. Four types of identification (acculturative, assimilative, dissociative, and marginal) were found in varying frequencies, with most participants having a dissociative or acculturative identification. In summary, empirical work conducted in different immigrant-receiving settings points towards the influence of migration status and possibly parental identification on youth's cultural identity (for hypothesized direction of influence, see hypothesis 2 below in the Purposes of the Study section).

Purposes of the Study

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the self-concept and cultural identity of adolescents in an urban and multicultural context in Canada. Specifically, the study focused on (a) the self-concept of adolescents in a community sample of high school students; (b) their cultural identity as an aspect of their self-concept; (c) individual (age, gender) influences on cultural identity levels; and (d) environmental (cultural background, acculturating group) influences on cultural identity levels. Informed by the literature review described in the preceding sections, the following hypotheses were tested: 1. *Cultural identity levels will vary by individual (age, gender) attributes*. Specifically, 1a) Older adolescents will have higher cultural identity levels. 1b) Female adolescents will have higher cultural identity levels. 2. *Cultural identity levels will vary by environmental (cultural background, acculturating group) attributes*. Specifically, 2a) There will be no differences in cultural identity levels by cultural background. 2b)

Adolescents in the sedentary group (Canadian-born) will have higher cultural identity levels than adolescents in the migrant group (immigrants and visa students).

To meet the methodological challenges noted earlier, the study used (a) previously validated measurement instruments (a revised version of the Twenty Statement Test to examine the participants' self-concept and their cultural identity); and (b) a revised version of Oetting and Beauvais' (1991) orthogonal cultural identification items, which corresponded to the study region's cultural context, to measure adolescent cultural identity levels. The reported findings are part of a study that examined the self-concept, cultural identity, and self-esteem of adolescents (Khanlou, 1999). The study findings regarding self-esteem (Khanlou, 2004b) and a full review of the study's theoretical underpinnings (Khanlou, in press) are discussed elsewhere.

Method

Sample Population and Procedures

The study had a cross-sectional design and used the survey method. The sample population consisted of students in Grades 9-13 who attended four urban secondary schools in Ontario's Hamilton-Wentworth Region in Canada. Purposive, non-random sampling was used to ensure that adolescents from different cultural backgrounds and acculturating groups were included. At least three of the four schools were identified as having a culturally diverse student population. Two of them belonged to the Public School Board and two to the Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Ethical approval for the study was received from the McMaster University and Hamilton Health Sciences Centre Research Ethics Board, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, and the Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board. The principals or vice principals of the four schools were sent a letter describing the study. A sample of the questionnaire and consent form was enclosed. Subsequently, principals or vice principals were contacted through telephone, electronic mail, or face-to-face meetings. Consent forms were sent out via the participating schools to students and their parents. After the consent forms were completed, the study questionnaires were administered at each school under teachers' supervision.

Measures

The Ten Statement Test (TenST) was used to assess respondents' self-conceptions. The TenST is a shortened version of Kuhn and McPartland's (1954) Twenty Statement Test (TST). The TST has been referred to as "the most widely used technique for studying self-conceptions" (Meltzer, Petras, & Reynolds, 1975, p. 59). It is linked to theory within the symbolic interactionist field (Driver & Driver, 1983) and has been validated in cross-cultural studies of adults. Using the TST, Bond and Cheung (1983) noted that, "we contend that the free-response format is the ideal way to approach cross-culturally the question of how the self is described to others" (p. 155). Others have referred to the TST as a less structured, more meaningful tool, often used in cross-cultural self-concept research (Dhawan, Roseman, Naidu, Thapa, & Rettek, 1995).

Bochner (1994) proposed a modified, shorter version of the TST. Referring to the diminishing returns after the first 7 statements, he asked participants in a cross-cultural study of Australian, British, and Malaysian adults to complete 10 sentences. Kinket and Verkuyten (1997) used the TenST in their study of Dutch and Turkish children's ethnic self-identification in the Netherlands. The TenST version was also used in the current study after feedback was received from pre-testing the study instrument on 18 adolescents (8 females, 8 males, 2 gender not specified).

Cultural identity levels were assessed through Likert scale items. The format for the question and items followed the assessment for orthogonal cultural identification that Oetting and Beauvais (1991) used in their study of minority adolescents' cultural identification in the United States. The one item version (general) of their instrument consists of asking, "Do you live by or follow..." (p. 663) in connection to various cultures. Respondents were asked to indicate the level of their cultural identification with Canadian and 10 other hyphenated Canadian entries (for example, African-Canadian, Chinese-Canadian, French-Canadian). Two items, Other 1 and Other 2, provided the opportunity to indicate other identification(s) not listed in the questionnaire. The cultural groups included reflected Hamilton's cultural context (Statistics Canada, 1994) and that of the schools participating in the study. The orthogonal cultural identification basis of the Likert scale cultural items made them relevant for assessing cultural identity levels of adolescents living in a multicultural society. Use of more than one cultural group provided respondents with the opportunity to identify with various cultures.

Information about respondents' individual and environmental attributes was collected through the demographic items. These included age, gender, parental ethnic or cultural backgrounds, and acculturating group. Information about participants' acculturating group was assessed through their immigration status. Two acculturating groups, one sedentary (Canadian-born) and one migrant (immigrant and visa students),

were used in the analyses. Berry's (1990) criteria for mobility (sedentary or migrant), under his classification of acculturation groups in Canada, were used to distinguish the two groups.

Analysis

A categorical analysis was applied to responses to the open-ended items of the TenST. The general categories that Kuhn (1960) and others (Dhawhan et al., 1995; Driver, 1969; Driver & Driver, 1983) used were applied to categorize responses. Inspiration for the sub-themes under each category was influenced by Kuhn's examples for each category. However, additional sub-themes were created to better describe the range of responses that the adolescent participants in this study provided. A descriptive analysis was applied to the demographic and cultural identity items. A three-group classification (high, medium, and low) was used to examine the relationships between cultural identity levels and individual and environmental attributes. Chi-square analysis was conducted for categorical variables, and Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance was conducted for categorical independent and continuous dependent variables. Alpha levels of .05 or less were considered statistically significant.

Results

Sample Profile

The sample of 550 respondents consisted of 288 females (52.4%), 260 males (47.3%), and two respondents (0.4%) who did not indicate their gender. The 550 returned questionnaires comprised a response rate of 50.2%. The 550 respondents comprised 9.6% of the total 5,723.5 full-time equivalent students enrolled at the four participating schools. Respondents' average age was 17 ($SD = 1.5$ years, median = 17 years). There was no statistically significant difference in age between females and males. Close to 79% of respondents were born in Canada, 18% had immigrated to Canada, and 2.5% were visa students. There was no statistically significant difference between females and males in respondents' immigration status. Among immigrant respondents, the average age at immigration was 9.6 years (for females, 8.8 years and for males, 10.5 years). When four age groups were used (1-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16-20 years), no statistically significant gender difference emerged in the respondents' age at immigration. Immigrant respondents identified 42 places of birth. Among the total sample of 550 respondents, 68.2% spoke one language at home, 28% spoke two, and 2.7% spoke three or more. English was most frequently identified as the language spoken at home.

Close to 50% of respondents' parents were born in Canada, 43.4% were immigrants, and 4.3% were not living in Canada. Information about parents' original ethnic or cultural background indicated that 69.4% were reported as being from one background, 20.4% from two, and 2.5% from three or four backgrounds. For the first ethnic or cultural background, 87 backgrounds were identified for mothers and fathers, respectively. The most frequently occurring grouped backgrounds were Southern European, British Isles, and Eastern European (in the case of fathers, Canadian as well as Eastern European).

Table 1
Self-Concept Categories and Sub-Themes

Category	Sub-Themes
Social Identity	Age, Gender, Physical specification, Educational level, Occupation, Sports, Arts, <u>Language</u>, <u>Ethnicity/National origin</u>, Race, Human, Religious membership, Name, Me, Kin relations, Boyfriend/Girlfriend/Romantic, Friends, Other relations, <u>Migration status/Residency</u>, Sexuality, and Other identities
Self-Evaluations	Academic, Artistic, Appearance, Physical abilities, Mental abilities, Unique qualities, Success-oriented abilities, Personality, Emotionality, Clinical psychological, Clinical physical, Social abilities/qualities, Relatednesss to others, Habits, Self-aspirations, Fears, Past achievements, Resources, and Other self-evaluations
Interests	Sports, Arts, Hobbies and entertainment, Social activities, School-related, Family, Friends, Boyfriend/Girlfriend/Romantic, Animals, and Other interests
Ideological Beliefs	Religious, Philosophical, Moral, <u>Cultural and political</u>, Beliefs about life, Beliefs about cosmos, Spiritual, and Other Beliefs
Ambitions	Academic, Occupation, Social, Friendship, Romantic, Financial, and Other ambitions

Note. The categories and their corresponding sub-themes are based on the responses to the TenST. The underlined sub-themes are related to cultural identity.

Self-Concept and Cultural Identity

Five general categories, consisting of Social Identity, Self-Evaluations, Interests, Ideological Beliefs, and Ambitions, were applied to the TenST responses. Table 1 presents the general categories and their sub-themes. The Social Identity category contained social groups, roles, classifications, and relationships and consisted of 21 sub-themes. The Self-Evaluations category contained responses related to the evaluation of the self across various domains and consisted of 19 sub-themes. The Interests category contained the likes or dislikes of the respondent and consisted of 10 sub-themes. The Ideological Beliefs category included "statements of a religious, philosophical, or moral nature" (Kuhn, 1960, p. 41). The sub-themes cultural and political, beliefs about life, beliefs about cosmos, spiritual, and other beliefs were added to include the responses from the study; this category consisted of 8 sub-themes. The Ambitions category contained respondents' statements on their ambitions, including "all anticipated success themata" (Kuhn, p. 41) and consisted of seven sub-themes.

Figure 1 presents the five TenST categories in total and by gender. The percentage values represent the proportion of the total sample responses related to the corresponding category across the 10 lines of the TenST (i.e., percent of 550 × 10). Also presented are gender specific values. The Self-Evaluations category occurred most frequently; 61.3% of the sample's responses to the TenST questionnaire item were related

to this category. A larger proportion of female responses (69.1%) than male responses (53.2%) were related to the Self-Evaluations category. The Social Identity category was the next most frequently occurring category, followed by the Interests, the Ideological Beliefs, and the Ambitions categories, respectively.

The top three most frequently occurring sub-themes belonged to the Self-Evaluations category. The Personality sub-theme occurred most frequently; 15.2% of responses (females: 18.6%, males: 11.5%) were related to it. The Relatedness sub-theme followed with 12.9% of responses (females: 16.3%, males: 9.2%). The Emotionality sub-theme contained 4.7% of responses (females: 6.3%). However, for males the third most frequently occurring sub-theme was the Other sub-theme (4.9%).

Five sub-themes that were directly related to cultural identity emerged from participants' responses. Four of them (Ethnicity/National origin, Migration status/Residency, Race, and Language) were from the Social Identity category and one (Cultural and political) was from the Ideological Beliefs category. In total, the five sub-themes occurred in 3.6% of responses (males: 4.1%; females: 2.9%). The cultural identity related sub-themes are underlined in Table 1.

The Ethnicity/National origin sub-theme contained responses indicating identification by geographic location or, in Rumbaut's (1994) terms, ancestral, immigrant, or national-origin identity, such as Irish or Polish. Hyphenated identities, such as African-Canadian or Canadian-Italian, were present in the responses as
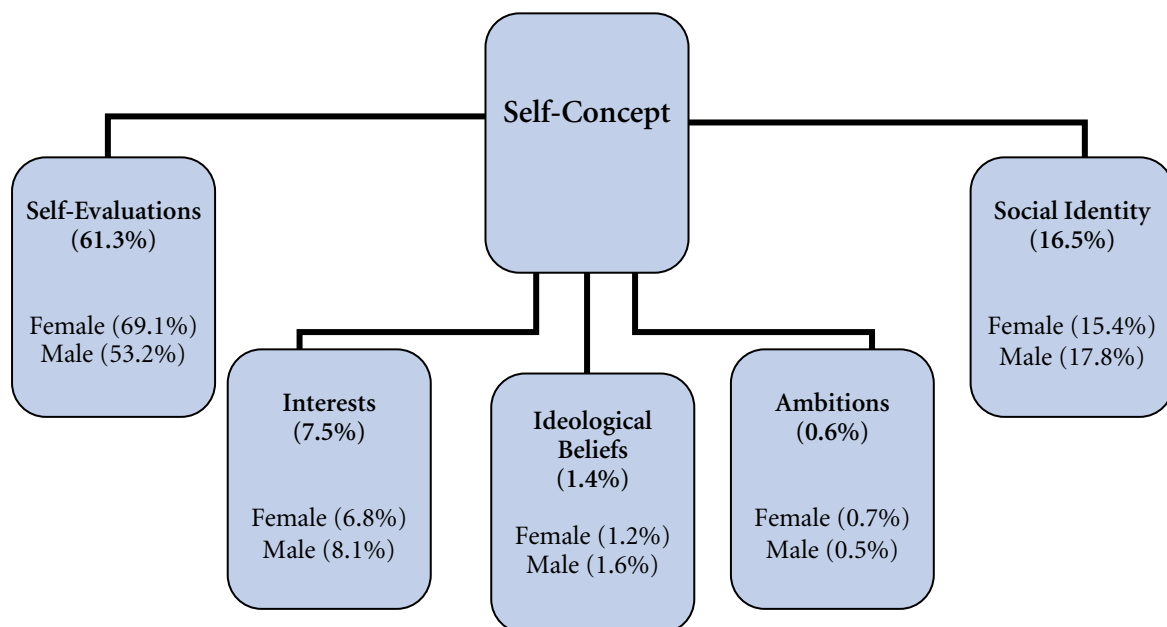

Figure 1. Self-concept categories by gender.

well. In some cases respondents did not use the hyphen symbol between the two backgrounds, such as British Canadian or Scottish Canadian. The national identity, Canadian, was present as well as panethnic identities, such as Asian or Easterner. The Ethnicity/National origin sub-theme, which was the most frequently occurring Social Identity sub-theme, emerged in 2.5% of responses. Among males, it ranked first (3.2% of responses), and among females it ranked second (2% of responses).

The Migration status/Residency sub-theme emerged from responses related to a migrant identity (e.g., "Immigrated" or "Visa student"), the length of time in Canada (e.g., "Been in Canada almost 4 years"), whether the respondent was born or not born in Canada, place of residence (e.g., "Live in Canada" or "My home is in Hong Kong"), and minority identity. The Migration status/Residency sub-theme occurred in 0.3% of responses (females: 0.4%; males: 0.2%). The Race sub-theme emerged from responses that described the respondents' racial identity, such as Black or White. It occurred in 0.2% of responses (females: 0.2%, males: 0.3%). The Language sub-theme had one occurrence (0.02%) from a male respondent who referred to himself as bilingual.

The Cultural and political sub-theme of the Ideological Beliefs category emerged from responses describing respondents' beliefs in connection with their cultural identity and attitudes towards prejudice and tolerance. Statements such as "Proud of my culture/heritage," "Proud of my Jamaican culture," "Proud Canadian," "Proud to be Portuguese-Canadian," revealed the pride these respondents experienced in identifying with a cultural or national identity. Statements such as "no tolerance for ignorant people" or "Nazi sympathiser" revealed respondents' attitudes of intolerance and prejudice. Statements describing respondents' beliefs in "Equality," not believing in "Bias" or "Prejudice" or "Racism" or "Sexism," and respecting "people's rights," depicted the adolescents' attitudes towards equality. The Cultural and political sub-theme was one of the two most frequently occurring Ideological Beliefs sub-themes, occurring in 0.4% of responses (females: 0.3%, males: 0.5%).

Cultural Identity Levels

Participants' cultural identity levels were assessed through Likert scale items. The response items consisted of "A lot," "Some," "Not much," or "Not at all" in connection with each of the 11 cultural groups and 2 Other items. Most of the sample identified a lot (54.2%) or some (32.5%) with the Canadian way of life. A smaller proportion did not identify much (9.3%) or at all (2.7%). A three-group classification of cultural identity levels, similar to Oetting and Beau-

vais' (1991), was used in the analyses related to the hypotheses. The high level represented the "A lot" responses, the medium level represented the "Some" and "Not much" responses, and the low level represented the "Not at all" responses.

Individual Attributes and Cultural Identity Levels

Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance (KW) was conducted to examine the relationship between age and cultural identity. Statistically significant differences across age were found for Canadian ($KW = 9.199$, $df = 2$, $p = .01$), Chinese-Canadian ($KW = 8.545$, $df = 2$, $p = .01$), and Italian-Canadian ($KW = 6.436$, $df = 2$, $p = .04$) identity levels. In these groups, an examination of the average and median values of age for each level of identity revealed no consistent pattern. For the Canadian identity, the average age decreased as the level of identification increased, but for the Chinese-Canadian identity, the average age increased. For the Italian-Canadian identity, the average age increased and then decreased. Based on these findings, the hypothesis predicting that older adolescents would have higher cultural identity levels was not supported.

Except for identification with the Canadian way of life ($\chi^2 = 6.32$, $df = 2$, $p = .04$), there were no statistically significant gender differences. Among the 283 female participants who responded to the Canadian item, 52.7% had a high level of identification with the Canadian way of life, 45.9% a medium level, and 1.4% a low level. Among the 258 male participants who responded to the same item, 57.4% had a high level, 38.4% a medium level, and 4.3% a low level of identification. Given that a higher percentage of females than males were in the medium level and a higher percentage of males were in the high and low identity levels, and that no other statistically significant gender differences occurred, the hypothesis predicting that female adolescents would have higher cultural identity levels was not supported.

Environmental Attributes and Cultural Identity Levels

The top three most frequently occurring specific backgrounds of mothers and fathers were used to ex-

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[2] The parental cultural background analyses were conducted separately while controlling for mothers' or for fathers' cultural background. If the cultural background of both parents had been controlled, the resulting group sizes available for analysis would have been smaller. For example, among respondents with both parents from the most frequently occurring specific backgrounds, 28 were from Italian, 40 were from Portuguese, 9 were from English, 10 were from Irish, and 22 were from Canadian backgrounds.

amine the relationship between respondents' cultural background and their cultural identity levels.[2] Forty-eight respondents had mothers from Italian background, 43 from Portuguese, 35 from English, and 35 from Irish (i.e., English and Irish backgrounds occurred with same frequency). In total, the group comprised 29.3% of the respondents. It is in this sub-group of the sample that the relationship between cultural background (defined in terms of mothers' background) and cultural identity levels was considered. Statistically significant differences in respondents' identity levels were found in connection with 4 of the 13 items listed. They consisted of the British-Canadian (χ^2 = 15.04, df = 6, p = .02), Italian-Canadian (χ^2 = 65.30, df = 6, p = .00), Middle Eastern-Canadian (χ^2 = 12.60, df = 6, p = .05), and South American-Canadian (χ^2 = 22.05, df = 6, p = .00) ways of life. Although statistically significant, the χ^2 values for the Canadian and Other 1 identities cannot be considered valid due to expected values of less than 5.

Over half of respondents whose mothers were from English or Irish backgrounds had high or medium British-Canadian identity levels, and over half whose mothers were from Italian or Portuguese backgrounds had a low British-Canadian identity level. Over half of respondents whose mothers were from Italian or Portuguese backgrounds had high or medium Italian-Canadian identity levels, and over half whose mothers were from English or Irish backgrounds had a low Italian-Canadian identity level. Over 67% of the respondents whose mothers were from one of the four backgrounds had a low Middle Eastern-Canadian identity level. Over 77% of the respondents whose mothers were from Italian, Irish, or English backgrounds had a low South American-Canadian identity level.

Regarding fathers, 69 respondents had fathers from Italian background, 42 from Portuguese, and 38 from Canadian. In total, the group comprised 27.1% of the respondents. It is in this sub-group of the sample that the relationship between cultural background (defined in terms of fathers' background) and cultural identity levels was considered. Statistically significant differences in the respondents' identity levels were found in connection with 4 of the 13 listed items. They consisted of the African-Canadian (χ^2 = 12.57, df = 4, p = .01), Italian-Canadian (χ^2 = 46.56, df = 4, p = .00), Middle Eastern-Canadian (χ^2 = 11.27, df = 4, p = .02), and South American-Canadian (χ^2 = 14.76, df = 4, p = .00) ways of life. Although statistically significant, the χ^2 value for the Canadian identity cannot be considered valid due to expected value of less than 5.

Close to 78% of respondents whose fathers were from Italian or Portuguese backgrounds and 60.5% with fathers from a Canadian background had a low African-Canadian identity level. In decreasing order, 55.1% of the respondents whose fathers were from Italian background, 11.9% from Portuguese, and 10.5% from Canadian backgrounds had a high Italian-Canadian identity level. Responses of those from Canadian and Portuguese backgrounds followed a similar pattern. In the low Middle Eastern-Canadian identity level, 84.1% of respondents from Italian background, 65.8% from Canadian, and 64.3% from Portuguese backgrounds had the corresponding level. Responses of those from Canadian and Italian backgrounds followed a similar pattern. In the low South American-Canadian identity level, 76.8% of respondents from Italian, 71% from Canadian, and 47.6% of respondents from Portuguese backgrounds had the corresponding level. Based on these statistically significant findings and patterns of cultural identification, the hypothesis predicting that there would be no difference in cultural identity levels by cultural background was not supported among the selected cultural backgrounds (using parental cultural background) and in relation to several cultural groups.

The relationship between respondents' acculturating group and cultural identity levels was also considered. The participants' immigration status was used as an indicator of their acculturating group. Different patterns of identification emerged between Canadian-born (79.1% of respondents) and migrant (20.5% of respondents) groups. Among Canadian-born respondents, in decreasing order, the high cultural identity level was associated with the Canadian (selected by 64.6% of respondents), Other 1 (22.3%), Italian-Canadian (12.9%), Other 2 (10.1%), and the remaining listed items (ranging from 5.1% to 2.1%). Among migrant respondents, in decreasing order, the high cultural identity level was associated with the Other 1 (selected by 48.7% of respondents), Canadian (14.2%), Other 2 (12.4%), Chinese-Canadian (11.5%), and the remaining listed items (ranging from 7.1% to 0.9%). Statistically significant differences between the two groups' identity levels were found for the Chinese-Canadian (χ^2 = 31.34, df = 2, p = .00), French-Canadian (χ^2 = 12.63, df = 2, p = .00), Italian-Canadian (χ^2 = 6.79, df = 2, p = .03), South American-Canadian (χ^2 = 9.70, df = 2, p = .01), and Other 1 (χ^2 = 26.20, df = 2, p = .00) ways of life. Although statistically significant, the χ^2 values for the Canadian identity cannot be considered valid due to the expected value of less than 5. A higher percentage of Canadian-born respondents were in the high and medium cultural identity levels for the French-Canadian and Italian-Canadian way of life. A higher percentage of migrant respondents were in the high and medium cultural identity levels for the Chinese-Canadian and South American-Canadian ways of life. With regard to the Other 1 way of life, 22.3% of the Canadian-born respondents, as compared to 48.7% of the migrant respondents, were in the high level.

When the high and medium identity levels were combined, at least 15% of Canadian-born respondents and at least 10% of migrant respondents had high or medium identification with all of the cultural groups. When the group with the lowest identification was removed from the Canadian-born responses, over 16% of the Canadian-born respondents had high or medium identification with the remaining 12 cultural groups. When the group with the lowest identification was removed from the migrant responses, over 17% of the migrant respondents had high or medium identification with the remaining 12 cultural groups. Based on the above analyses, the hypothesis predicting that adolescents in the sedentary group (Canadian-born) would have higher cultural identity levels than adolescents in the migrant group (immigrants and visa students) was not supported. Each group had a different pattern of identification, with a larger proportion of Canadian-born respondents having a high Canadian identity level and a larger proportion of migrant respondents having a high Other 1 identity level.

The open-ended space for the Other 1 item was completed by 53.3% and the Other 2 was completed by 30.9% of respondents. Table 2 presents the grouped identities for Other 1 and Other 2 identifications. The list includes identities associated with regions of the world and ethnic groups originating from these areas (e.g., Asian, African, Canadian, and provincial), Hyphenated Canadian identities (e.g., Croatian-Canadian, Portuguese-Canadian, Vietnamese-Canadian), Hyphenated Other identities (e.g., African-

American, Irish-Scottish), and Religious identities (e.g., Catholic, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim). The Teenage and other identities consist of responses such as "Athletic," "Bad," "Being different," "Cool," "Correct," "Fast," "Fun," "Gen-Next," "Immigrant," "My own," "Social," "Student," "Teenage," "Traditional," and "Youth" way of life.

Discussion

Individual and Environmental Influences on Adolescent Cultural Identity

The lack of a consistent association in this study between the individual influences of age and gender and cultural identity is in keeping with the empirical literature. For example, whereas Verkuyten and Kwa (1994) found no age or gender differences in self-identification in their study of ethnic self-identification among Turkish and Chinese adolescents in the Netherlands, Ying and Lee (1999) did find age and gender differences in ethnic identity statuses and ethnic identity outcomes in their study of Asian-American adolescents. Older adolescents and females appeared to have progressed further through the stages of ethnic identity statuses and outcomes. Future research in adolescent cultural identity, therefore, requires that the influences of age and gender on cultural identity levels be reconsidered. Specifically, if researchers working with different cultural groups in different regions of the world used the same cultural identity measurement instruments, they could shed light on the relationship between individual attributes and cultural identity levels. The differences found across previous studies may be a reflection of the varying measurement tools used instead of inconsistent associations between age, gender, and cultural identity levels across various samples. However, the different findings may also suggest that the variables interact in unique ways across diverse geographies of place, time, and cultural values.

When the influence of environmental attributes (cultural background, acculturating group) on cultural identity levels was examined, cultural identity levels were found to vary by cultural background among the selected cultural backgrounds and in relation to several cultural identity groups. Parents' cultural background, instead of respondents', was used in the analysis because there are indications that it may be closely related to adolescents' cultural identity. Results in other studies varied as well. For example, although Rosenthal and Cichello's (1986) study of Italian-Australian adolescents and Rumbaut's (1994) study of children of immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean in the United States demonstrated an association between parents' cultural background and the adolescents' ethnic identity, Ying and Lee's (1999) study of

Table 2
Identification with Other Identities

Identity	Responses	
	Other 1	Other 2
European	22.7%	9.6%
Asian	5.3%	2.7%
African, Latin, Central and South American, Carribean, Oceania, Aboriginal, Canadian and provincial, Hyphenated Other	4.0%	3.3%
American	3.4%	2.5%
Hyphenated Canadian	9.6%	4.2%
Religious	2.5%	1.3%
Teenage and other	5.6%	7.3%
Missing value	46.7%	69.1%
Total	100%	100%

Asian-American adolescents found no association between adolescents' birthplace and their ethnic identity status or ethnic identity outcome.

Neighbourhood Concordance

The emerging pattern in the statistically significant findings related to parental cultural background and respondents' cultural identity levels indicated that a higher proportion of respondents with mothers from English or Irish backgrounds had higher British-Canadian identity levels and that a higher proportion of respondents with mothers from Italian or Portuguese backgrounds had higher Italian-Canadian identity levels. Similarly, over half of the respondents whose fathers were from Italian or Portuguese backgrounds had high or medium Italian-Canadian identity levels.

The proportion of respondents from a Portuguese background who had a medium level of identification with the Middle Eastern-Canadian and South American-Canadian cultures may indicate that due to certain cultural characteristics of, or cultural influences on, Portuguese culture, the adolescents felt some level of identification with these other cultures. Such influences may have occurred in the adolescents' or their parents' country of origin, in this case Portugal, or they may be currently at work in the neighbourhoods and communities in which the adolescents reside. That is, adolescents from a Portuguese background who are exposed on a daily basis to Middle-Eastern and South American cultural influences through shared neighbourhoods may indicate some level of identification with these groups. This argument suggests that the concept of *neighbourhood concordance* should be considered among the explanations for emerging response patterns in future studies of cultural identification. Neighbourhood concordance implies that individuals from the same neighbourhood will identify more with the cultural groups residing in that neighbourhood. This notion extends the possibilities for cultural identification to cultural groups residing in a particular neighbourhood, thus, making it particularly relevant to multicultural communities. Although the concept of neighbourhood concordance makes intuitive sense, it requires further investigation in future studies in which information on the cultural characteristics of the respondents' neighbourhoods has also been collected.

When information on respondents' immigration status was used to examine the relationship between acculturating group and cultural identity, statistically significant differences emerged between Canadian-born and migrant respondents' identity levels. Although a higher percentage of Canadian-born respondents were in the high and medium cultural identity levels for the French-Canadian and Italian-Canadian ways of life, a higher percentage of migrant respondents were in the high and medium cultural identity levels for the Other 1, Chinese-Canadian, and South American-Canadian ways of life. The findings indicated that the Canadian-born respondents had a higher level of identification with European backgrounds, whereas the migrant respondents identified with various backgrounds. The sample's demographic characteristics can provide an explanation for the emerging differences. The parental cultural backgrounds of the Canadian-born respondents consisted of European (69.2%), Asian (4.8%), and other backgrounds (20.4%). Among immigrant respondents, a smaller proportion were from European backgrounds (33.3%), and a larger proportion were from Asian (36.4%) and other backgrounds (24.2%), which reflects the changing immigration patterns to Canada. In addition, the concept of neighbourhood concordance should also be considered. The cultural mix of the neighbourhoods in which the Canadian-born and the migrant respondents resided may have differed. While the Canadian-born respondents may have resided in neighbourhoods with a significant number of families from an Italian background, those in which the migrant respondents lived may have had families from diverse backgrounds. Finally, the higher percentage of Canadian-born respondents with high and medium French-Canadian identity levels may reflect Canadian-born youth's identification with the French component of the major official linguistic groups present in Canadian society.

Information from other sections of the questionnaire provided a broader understanding of the participants' cultural identification. Responses to the demographics section indicated the adolescents' awareness of various forms of ethnic and cultural identification, as it was the adolescents who provided information on their parents' ethnic or cultural backgrounds. In addition to ethnic or cultural identification by geographic location (e.g., Austrian, Hong Kong), the other forms of identification that emerged from the responses consisted of hyphenated identities (e.g., Irish-Scottish, Korean-Canadian), provincial identities (e.g., Newfoundland), racial identity (White), and religious identities (e.g., Hindu, Muslim).

Cultural Identity as an Aspect of Adolescent Self-Concept

The TenST offered a powerful tool to assess respondents' self-attitudes across a variety of domains, which was evident in the diversity and richness of the adolescents' responses. The focus in this discussion is on the following sub-themes directly related to cultural identity: (a) four (Ethnicity/National origin, Migration status/Residency, Race, and Language) from the Social

Identity category; and (b) one (Cultural and political) from the Ideological Beliefs category. Among the total sample, 3.6% of the responses were related to cultural identity. The emerging cultural identities included all four types of ethnic self-identities found in Rumbaut's (1994) study of children of immigrants. The Ethnicity/National origin sub-theme alone contained the ancestral, hyphenated, national, and panethnic identities referred to by Rumbaut. In addition, the Migration status/Residency sub-theme contained responses describing the migrant identity and the Race sub-theme consisted of responses describing racial identity.

The small proportion of responses related to cultural identity parallels Kinket and Verkuyten's (1997) findings on the ethnic self-identification of Dutch and Turkish youth in the Netherlands. When they used the TenST to assess for ethnic self-description, they found that "most children do not refer to their ethnicity when asked to describe themselves in any term they like" (p. 349). In the current study, 2.5% of the responses were related to the Ethnicity/National origin sub-theme. The small portion of responses should be considered within the overall findings from the TenST. The Ethnicity/National origin sub-theme was the most frequently occurring sub-theme of the Social Identity category. Also, findings from the questionnaire's demographic section indicated that focusing on results from one instrument does not provide a broad enough picture of adolescents' cultural identity. For example, despite the finding that close to 80% of respondents were born in Canada, the adolescents demonstrated an awareness of their parents' cultural heritage, in several cases indicating up to four ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Thus, in addition to the TST or TenST, future studies of adolescent cultural identity could benefit by using several measures of cultural identity.

More male responses (4.1%) than female (2.9%) were related to the cultural identity sub-themes. Kinket and Verkuyten (1997) similarly found that females were less likely to refer to their ethnicity. They suggested that this was possibly related to males being more concerned regarding "differences in status and prestige which are related to groups in general and ethnic groups in particular" (p. 351). However, an examination of the current study's findings from the TenST indicated that Kinket and Verkuyten's possible explanation was not sufficient for the adolescents participating in the study. The Social Identity category of the TenST contained responses related to social groups, roles, classifications, and relationships, some of which are related to status and prestige. Although, the findings indeed indicated that a higher proportion of male responses (17.8%) compared to female responses (15.4%) fell under the Social Identity category, a higher proportion of females identified with

several sub-themes of the category. For example, more female responses were related to the Kin relations, Occupation, Gender, Age, Physical specification, Friends, Migration status/Residency, and Religious membership sub-themes. Therefore, while the gender differences point toward differing emphasis on components of the adolescents' social identity, they do not indicate that females had less concern for status and prestige, because embedded in each of the social identity sub-themes are individual and societal valuations of its status and prestige.

The emergence of sub-themes related to cultural identity in the TenST responses points toward the overt awareness of cultural identity as an aspect of self-concept among some of the respondents. The TenST was located in Section 2 of the questionnaire, preceding the cultural identification items and the demographic questions about the respondents' migration status and their parents' cultural or ethnic background. Therefore, it can be assumed that these self-attitudes emerged spontaneously in the respondents' replies to the TenST.

Study Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Two study limitations were related to the cultural approach utilized and measurement. A cultural process, instead of cultural content, approach was used to examine cultural identity levels among adolescents from diverse cultural backgrounds and acculturating groups. According to Oetting and Beauvais (1991), cultural process theories are more generalizable and applicable across multiple cultural contacts. In this regard, the limitation on generalization imposed by the study's non-random sampling was balanced by its process orientation. Therefore, other researchers examining adolescent cultural identity processes among other cultural backgrounds in multicultural and immigrant-receiving settings could use findings from the study.

It is acknowledged, however, that the process approach has the disadvantage of not being able to explain the culturally specific findings in a large sample. For example, the explanation provided in the discussion section regarding respondents from a Portuguese background who identified with other cultural identities is a deduced explanation that requires validation through culturally specific data. Including the Other 1 and Other 2 cultural identity items in the questionnaire was an attempt to provide those respondents who did not find the listed items relevant or sufficient with an opportunity to identify their own items. The emergence of several statistically significant findings in relation to the Other 1 and Other 2 identities indicates that in a process-oriented study, including open-ended items in

a questionnaire can be useful to allow the respondents to construct cultural identity items that are more meaningful for them. Future studies in which Oetting and Beauvais' (1991) cultural identity measurement instrument is used could benefit from including such open-ended items to thereby capture identifications that researchers did not predict during questionnaire construction. In addition, findings from cultural process-oriented studies could be enriched by concurrent studies that focus on cultural content.

The study's concepts and measurement instruments may have been prone to culturally embedded assumptions because theoretical frameworks and empirical studies originating from, and conducted in, a Western context influenced the study. Referring to theory and research on adolescent development, Chubb, Fertman, and Ross (1997) observed that "it is important to acknowledge that most of the theories of adolescent development are based on research with a limited population: primarily white, male subjects" (pp. 113-114). Esman (1990) contended that the concept of adolescence itself can be culturally bound: "adolescence—its duration, its behavioural characteristics, its place in family and social organization—is in large measure culturally determined" (p. 39). To reduce the cultural and gender bias referred to by Chubb et al., researchers could explicate the theoretical premises guiding their empirical work. In addition, researchers' individual experiences may influence their interpretation of findings. In my case, for example, my cross-cultural theoretical interests and mental health promotion perspective (Khanlou, 2003, 2004a, in press; Khanlou et al., 2002; Khanlou & Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 1999) may have influenced my interpretations of the findings. My professional clinical background as a registered nurse in psychiatry and also my immigrant and multilingual background may too have influenced them. Although it is not possible to reduce such influences on different parts of the study to specific incidences, the emphasis on conducting research that avoids the stereotyping of youth from diverse cultural and migrant backgrounds along cultural terms is a manifestation of the combination of these influences.

Future research can also consider the influence of other ecosystemic influences on adolescent self-concept and cultural identity. In this study the influences considered were at the individual (age, gender) and environmental (cultural background, acculturating group) levels. Intermediate influences between individuals and their environment, such as the influence of siblings and peers on adolescent self-concept and cultural identity, need also be evaluated.

Cultural Identity Defined

The diversity of patterns found in the participants' responses provide support for the definition of cultural identity proposed in the study. Cultural identity was viewed as a dynamic aspect of the identity of adolescents who come into contact with multiple cultures in the society in which they live. Under this construction, cultural identity is considered to be a component of the identity of an individual who, through living in a multicultural context as a member of a major or a minor group, and through daily contact with other cultures, is aware of the cultural component of the self. The emergence of the concept of neighbourhood concordance among the interpretations of the findings reinforces the proposed contextual conception of cultural identity.

Due to its cross-sectional design, the reported study cannot ascertain that, over time and depending on context, all adolescent respondents participated in the dynamic process of emphasizing particular aspects of their cultural identity. Longitudinal studies are required to address the questions posed. Questions for future research that arose from this study, which are proposed within a viewpoint that sees cultural identity as being a dynamic and context-dependent process, include the following:

1. Do adolescents engage in various forms of cultural identification (such as ancestral, national, hyphenated, racial, and migrant) over time? If so, what are the individual and contextual conditions that lead to their using one type of identification over another?
2. How can the concepts of neighbourhood concordance and global valuation be measured? How well do these concepts explain the variations found in the cultural identity response patterns of adolescents?
3. What are the contextual conditions that lead adolescents to report high levels of identification with certain cultural group(s)?

Influenced by a contextual basis to cultural identity, an ongoing study (Khanlou, Siemiatycki, & Anisef, 2003) utilizes a longitudinal qualitative approach to explore in-depth what it means for immigrant youth to identify with different cultural identities. It considers if/how/why they engage in different cultural identification choices depending on context. Recognizing the link between globalization and transnational identities, youth's experiences and expression of multiple identities will be examined. A particular focus of the study will be on the concept of global valuation which is defined as the prevailing societal-esteem of cultural groups (Khanlou, 1999).

Conclusion

This study applied an eco-systemic perspective to examining individual and environmental influences on

adolescent cultural identity. The diversity of cultural identifications that emerged from participants' responses to the different sections of the questionnaire revealed their awareness of, and possibly engagement in, various cultural identities. As empirical work on cultural identity grows in Canada and other immigrant-receiving, multicultural societies, it may also be necessary to reconsider the language that is used for definitions and concepts. For example, the term *multiculturation*, instead of acculturation, could be more suitable in a multicultural context. I believe the term acculturation has embedded in it the notion that the acculturating individuals, or groups, acquire the mainstream culture and, at the same time, lose some level of their original cultural identity. The notion of multiculturation implies that the development of cultural identity is not limited to a linear path; yet it does not exclude a stage-oriented approach towards cultural identity development either. It recognizes that in multicultural and immigrant-receiving settings, a diversity of cultural identity development processes are possible and that such processes are influenced by context. Furthermore, such development is not limited to specific cultural or migrant groups. The concept of multiculturation entails an inclusive approach toward cultural identity development, one that can encourage respect of differences. It supports the perspective that in a multicultural context, all individuals are likely to be influenced, to various degrees, by other cultures, thus, contributing toward a society that embraces cultural differences and recognizes such differences as a normal part of human development.

Theoretical and empirical work in youth identity development has important and practical value for mental health promotion policies and initiatives. Mental health promotion efforts recognize the multiple systems of influence on adolescent development (Khanlou, 2003). Through joint efforts with youth, parents, educators, and policy makers, mental health practitioners can work toward best practices that recognize the close interplay between society and the individual and environmental influences on youth's psychosocial well-being.

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