

**CPA CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT SYMPOSIUM  
ABSTRACT SUBMISSION –**

WHY SHOULD WE NEED TO BELONG TO CULTURAL GROUPS? EXPLORING THE  
RELATION BETWEEN MARGINALIZATION, SELF-ESTEEM AND LIFE SATISFACTION

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Understanding reactions to immigration is crucial, especially in Canada since more than three million Canadians immigrated from another country. Most immigrants strongly identify to their heritage culture, host culture or to both ; however, some of them lowly identify to both – that is, they marginalize (Berry, 2006). Because many needs are fulfilled through group membership, research has traditionally assumed that marginalization should lead to the poorest outcomes. However, past studies have provided mixed results regarding the association of well-being and marginalization (positive ex: Virta, Sam, & Westin, 2004; negative ex: van Oudenhoven & al., 1998).

To explain these mixed results, we suggest that some fundamental needs might be met otherwise than through group membership. For instance, the need for a distinct identity, usually fulfilled through belonging to a distinct group (Brewer, 1990 ; Tajfel, 1978), could also be met by feeling like a unique individual (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980). Feeling detached of social groups, as marginalized immigrants feel, could be a manner to fulfill the need for a distinct identity for those who value individuality. Thus, we predicted that marginalized immigrants who value uniqueness experience higher well-being. Regressions performed on data collected among self-reported questionnaires of 129 immigrants provided support for our hypothesis.

keywords : identity, acculturation, need for uniqueness