

Second-generation Arab Immigrants and Differentiation

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts degree in Counselling and Spirituality

Counselling, Psychotherapy, and Spirituality
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Abstract

This master thesis explores the widespread use of the concept of differentiation and related assessment tools, and whether these concepts and measurements can be reliably and validly used for second-generation Arab immigrants. This qualitative study focuses on Bowen's concept of differentiation, and in particular using the revised version of the Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI-R). The purpose of the study is to learn more about how second-generation Arab immigrants experience differentiation and how they perceive specific items in the DSI-R. To gather the data, interviews were conducted with 10 second-generation Arab immigrants, followed by the completion of the DSI-R. Follow up interviews were conducted based on the results of the DSI-R to better understand their experience of differentiation, as well as the scale. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed, and four meaning units were extracted from the data: decision making, connection, self, and duality. These themes will be helpful in better understanding this population's experience of differentiation and its relevance to them, and will help inform culturally-sensitive approaches to psychotherapy.

Introduction

Bowen's family systems theory

Murray Bowen was an American psychiatrist at the National Institute of Mental Health, and later at Georgetown University. Bowen's family systems theory began with a focus on families with a schizophrenic member. He realized that the patterns he was observing in these families were present in all families in varying degrees of functioning. This continuum of functioning became one of the main tenants of Bowen's family systems theory and the basis for the concept of differentiation of self (Kerr and Bowen, 1988). Bowen argued that families with a schizophrenic member might be quantitatively different, due to the severity of the observed symptoms, but not qualitatively different than other families with problems. He indicated that "there is a little schizophrenia in all of us" (p.12) and that qualitatively, "we continually make decisions and do things that tend to impair as well as promote the functioning of others" (Kerr and Bowen, 1988, p.12). Bowen explained that we all experience emotional instability; the difference is in the degree to which we experience it. When a certain quantitative level of emotional intensity is reached, the person becomes more symptomatic and serious problems arise, such as schizophrenia.

Since the introduction of Bowen's concept of differentiation in 1960 (Bowen, 1966; Kerr and Bowen, 1988; Schmitt & Skowron, 2003), extensive research has been conducted to test Bowen's theory including the development of the Differentiation of Self Inventory by Skowron and Friedlander (1998) as a clinical assessment tool. The Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI) used in this study is based on Bowen's Family Systems Theory (Schmitt & Skowron, 2003). The development of the DSI aimed to measure a person's level of functioning on a continuum with the two extremes being cutoff, and intertwined (Kerr and Bowen, 1988). The concept of

differentiation and a continuum of functioning were essential to Bowen's theory and "conveyed the fact that not all families were the same in terms of emotional functioning" (p.12). Bowen described family therapy as a movement which began with the idea that the family is important, however, there needed to be a new way to conceptualize the family that was not possible using individual theory. Bowen saw the person as "a segment of the larger family system" (Bowen, 1966, p.349) where "change in one part of the system is followed by a compensatory change in other parts of the system" (p.351). The therapist was also considered as part of the family system throughout the therapy process. According to the Family Systems Theory, families are fluid and always changing and adjusting at various degrees.

When Murray Bowen first introduced the family systems theory, there were six original concepts: nuclear family emotional process, multi-generational transmission process, family projection process, differentiation of self, triangulation and sibling position. In the 1970's the concepts of emotional cutoff and societal emotional process were added, for a total of eight Bowenian concepts.

According to Bowen, the relationship system within the nuclear ego mass is based on the experience of each individual in a couple and their experience in their family of origins (Bowen, 1966). Initially, Bowen described the child and adult being fused into "emotional oneness" (Titleman, 1998 ,p.9) as undifferentiated family ego mass. A family ego mass consists of separate individuals that are connected, and sometimes fused, at a deeper level. After adolescence, each individual works towards being more autonomous either by acting independently while continuing to live with the family of origin, or physically creating distance. The family ego masses these individuals developed in their family of origins carries on into their romantic relationship and is fused into a new family ego mass. The new family ego mass is shaped based

on the mechanisms within the system that each member contributes from their family of origin, as well as external mechanisms with extended family members (Bowen, 1966). Later on, Bowen chose to change the terminology of family ego mass to nuclear family emotional process as it became evident that the theory was multi-generational (Titleman, 1998). Bowen indicated that there are three main mechanisms used by a couple to manage their anxiety: marital conflict, dysfunction in one spouse, and transmission of the problem to one or more children (Klever, 2005). Conflict often involves not giving into the other and wanting more of a say. Dysfunction results when one individual gives in to the other, or more than the other. This can lead to a loss of self. The transmission of the problem to children occurs when there is conflict between the couple, and usually one child is more involved in the conflict than the others (Bowen, 1966). These relationship patterns contribute to marital problems, and may have physical, emotional, and social implications (Klever, 2005).

This leads to the concept of multigenerational transmission process, which is the notion that parents pass on some of their immaturity to one or more of their children. The child that receives the most immaturity whether from one parent or as a combination from both, generally scores lower on the differentiation scale (Bowen, 1966). Family projection processes, which are a result of the new family ego mass, also contribute to multigenerational transmission. Family projection happens when a parent or both parents transmit their emotional problems to their child or children. The projection process consist of 3 steps: 1) scanning, when the parent puts their focus on the child out of fear that something might be wrong with the child, 2) diagnosing, when the parent interprets the child's behavior as a confirmation of their fear, 3) treating, when the parent treats the child as if something is actually wrong with the child. These projections can have a

great impact on the child's development and behavior as they grow to embody the fears and perceptions of their parents (Kerr, 2000).

The central concept of this theory is differentiation in the family; this is what the DSI-R aims to measure. Differentiation in the family can be demonstrated by knowing each other's feelings and experiencing comfort and closeness. Bowen describes differentiation as "an attempt...to classify all forms of human functioning on a single continuum" (Bowen, 1966, p.12) with differentiation of self on one end and un-differentiation or ego fusion on the other. According to his theory, differentiation is the highest level of functioning (Bowen, 1966) and involves the internal ability to distinguish between the feelings and thoughts, and an interpersonal ability to connect with others while having an autonomous sense of self (Bowen, 1978). Having an autonomous sense of self includes making self-directed choices while remaining emotionally connected to important relationships (Haefner, 2014).

For the purposes of this study, Bowen's original definition of differentiation will be used; Bowen (1978) described differentiation as the internal ability to connect with others while having an autonomous sense of self (Bowen, 1978). That being said, during the interviews, the terms differentiation and the DSI-R were avoided to ensure that this did not affect the participants' responses. The language chosen to ask about the participants' experience of differentiation came from both Bowen's original definition as well as a more modern and broad definition of differentiation where differentiation is defined as balancing the concept of having an autonomous self and individuality, and the concept of connectedness and intimacy (Kerr & Bowen, 1988; McGoldrick & Carter, 2001; Rovers, 2007). This facilitated the wording of the primary interview as it is in line with of the language Bowen uses to describe the concept. The concept of differentiation of self, according to Bowen, is a dialectic between those two

counterbalancing life forces: individuality and togetherness (Kerr and Bowen, 1988, p.59). These forces are defined in relation to a person's investment in a relationship or their relationships in general. The individuality force involves "directing [one's] own life independent of the relationship" (p.66), while the togetherness force is "the degree to which [one's life] is governed by that relationship" (p.66). These terms, individuality and togetherness, are more widely used in the literature today and are better understood by the general public.

A more differentiated individual would be able to engage with others while having a solid sense of self. This solid sense of self is characterized by an individual identity, personal beliefs, opinions and a strong conviction of what should be done or not done based on their own life experiences and reasoning (Bowen, 1978). Differentiated individuals "have a stable sense of self, react calmly in emotional situations, think things through, and make decisions based on their own beliefs and intellect" (Murdock and Ross, 2014, p. 485). They are not overwhelmed by emotion and are able to take "I positions". This entails being able to own their thoughts and feelings and state what they believe without needing to conform to others or please them. Furthermore, those who are differentiated do not feel the need to cut off emotionally and are able to have relationships with healthy boundaries (Alaedin, 2008).

On the other hand, feelings of comfort and closeness in relationships can turn into anxiety and discomfort "as the self of one [is incorporated] into the self of the other" (Bowen, 1966, p.355) resulting in hostility and possible rejection; this is what Bowen described as undifferentiated. An undifferentiated person is considered someone who is emotionally reactive and overwhelmed by emotion when triggered by external stimuli. They cutoff interactions and intimacy if the relationship is too intense, and are more likely to be fused with people they have close

relationships to. Bowen (1978) believed that this discomfort resulted in anxiety within the system which lead to triangulation; a problematic way of relating.

Triangulation, another Bowenian concept, is described as the “building block of any emotional system” (Bowen, 1966, p.356). Bowen explains that during calm times, two members of the family may have a comfortable emotional connection while the third is an outsider seeking to win over one of the two. During times of tension, Bowen believes that the outsider gets increasingly involved (Bowen, 1966). Triangulation is seen as the introduction of a third person in order to manage anxiety in the system by avoiding conflict and responsibility, or forming an alliance against a specific person. Within the therapeutic setting, de-triangulation often happens when the client becomes aware that the anxiety is what is driving the system, and starts to work on an alternative way of relating to various members of that system (Rootes et al, 2010).

According to Bowen, the concept of differentiation is particularly important due to its connection to chronic anxiety. Bowen believed that there is a correlation between an individual’s level of differentiation and their level of chronic anxiety; the lower the level of differentiation the higher the level of chronic anxiety (Bowen, 1978). This makes individuals with lower levels of differentiation more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, or other psychological and physical symptoms when under stress. To the contrary, people with higher levels of differentiation are believed to have the capacity to better adjust during times of stress and have lower levels of distress (Bowen, 1978). Schmitt and Skowron (1998) found that higher levels of differentiation predicted higher levels of marital satisfaction. Kim et al. (2015) found this to also be the case for the Korean population, living both in South Korea and the United States. Higher levels of differentiation were associated with healthy family functioning and communication, as well as family satisfaction. Peleg and Zoabi (2014) found social anxiety to be associated with

differentiation regardless of ethnicity or religion. It also claimed that “well-developed differentiation of self appears to help regulate emotions and lower social anxiety levels regardless of ethnicity, religion or gender” (Peleg and Zoabi, 2014, p.227).

Differentiation of self scale. When the Family Systems Theory was first introduced, Bowen (1966, 1988) mentions his Differentiation of Self Scale which consisted of a continuum where “complete differentiation of self” was scored as 100 and “no self” or the “highest level of undifferentiation” was scored as zero (Bowen, 1966, p. 357). This being said, Bowen does not believe anyone can be totally differentiated. Bowen does not describe how exactly the scale was administered or what it entailed. He says the scale “is an attempt to establish a normal for emotional functioning” (Bowen, 1966, p.357). He indicated that the lower end of the scale from 0-25 was characteristic of those who had a high degree of ego fusion, are undifferentiated and in “a feeling world”, or are flooded with emotion and no longer have the ability to feel. Bowen explains that these people make their decisions based on their feelings. People that fall into this category are also typically using all their energy on maintaining relationships that they have no energy for anything else.

Subsequently, those who fall into the 25-50 range may be beginning to differentiate, and therefore have some awareness of their opinion and beliefs, although they may also adapt the dominant ideology. However, this category still base decisions on feelings and give more weight to approval from others, whether a superior or someone they are in a relationship with, than the value of their efforts. Bowen indicates that the main difference between this category and the previous one is that people who fall in the 25-20 range have some capacity to raise their level of differentiation (Kerr and Bowen, 1988).

People in the third category, from 50-75, have lower levels of ego fusion and higher levels of differentiation. People in the above 50 category, have more awareness of the difference between feelings intellect (Kerr and Bowen, 1988). Bowen describes this category as having their own opinions and convictions; however, under pressure they may give in and conform to the majority opinion. People in this category “make feeling decisions rather than risk the displeasure of others by standing on their convictions. They often remain silent and avoid stating opinions that might put them out of step with the crowd and disturb the emotional equilibrium” (Bowen, 1966, p.358). These people tend to be more goal-oriented than invested in the emotional system.

Bowen does not believe that many of his clients, if any, are in the highest category from 75-100. He indicates that even in his personal life people who fit in this category are rare. This category was added for theoretical purposes. Those who fit between the 85-95 range have most of the characteristics of a differentiated person. “These are principle-oriented, goal directed people” (Bowen, 1966, p.359) who take responsibility for themselves. They have strong personal beliefs and opinions but are also able to modify them after evaluating others’ opinions and beliefs (Bowen, 1966).

Bowen constantly refers to measurements on the scale as what “[he] would assign” (Bowen, 1966, p.359), making the process subjective. This makes the scale very difficult to use as an assessment tool or as a basis for treatment. The literature talks about how this is often a limitation of the Family Systems Theory as Bowen demonstrated its effectiveness based on clinical reports and treatment outcomes, and not as much on empirical research (Charles, 2001).

Prior to the development of the DSI-R, other scales existed that aimed to provide more objective tools and empirical evidence to measure differentiation and emotional cutoff more concretely. Eric McCollum developed the Emotional Cutoff Scale to measure an important

concept of Bowen's theory that lacked any empirical measures. He described emotional cutoff as the manner in which people create distance, whether physical or emotional, to regulate unresolved attachment to their parents (McCollum, 1991). McCollum found this concept particularly important because of Bowen's hypothesis that emotional cutoff with parents resulted in short term relief, but ultimately effected present relationships causing emotional disturbance. Kerr (1981) also found that people that were cut-off from their parents were more likely to develop physical illnesses. There were many limitations to this study; McCollum's study, which was used to develop the Emotional Cutoff Scale, included 48 undergraduate students from the same academic cohort. Eighty-three percent of the participants were female, ages 20-41. There was no mention of culture or ethnicity (McCollum, 1991). It has become evident that the issue of the lack of diversity and cultural sensitivity in studies used to develop universal assessment tools is more widespread in psychological research and is not limited to the DSI-R.

Schmitt and Skowron (1998) argued that Kear's Differentiation of Self Scale had many limitations as the research was conducted using only 50 participants and 72 scale items. They also commented on missing components as the items "reflect only interpersonal components of differentiation and ignore quality of relations with a spouse or partner" (Schmitt and Skowron, 1998, pg.236) As for McCollum's Emotional Cutoff Scale, it accurately measures a specific aspect of differentiation in relation to parents and cutoff. Schmitt and Skowron (1998) found that the scale did not address other aspects of differentiation and focused on relations with parents only while ignoring emotional cutoff in current relationships.

This lead to the development of the Differentiation of Self Inventory using both intrapsychic and interpersonal dimensions meaning thinking-feeling, as well as separateness-togetherness. A total of 482 participants were used for the two parts of the study. Schmitt and Skowron (1998)

believed that in order for Bowen's theory to continue to contribute to the field, it must be tested and modified using empirical means.

The subscales of the self-reported scale were created based on 96 items the researchers extracted from the literature and narrowed down based on the participants' ratings. The four subscales that were created were Emotional Reactivity, taking I Positions, Emotional Cutoff and Fusion with Others (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). The Emotional Reactivity subscale measures a person's ability to remain calm in the presence of the emotionality of others and not make decisions based on what they are feeling in the moment (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). Bowen describes emotionally reactive people as being stuck in an emotional world (Bowen, 1966). Individuals usually react to the emotionality of those around them either by fusing with others or emotionally cutting off, therefore the subsequent subscales are Fusion with Others and Emotional Cutoff. Those who are fused are stuck in the same position they were in in their families of origin, and often find separation distressing; those who are cutoff are often isolated and claim that family is not of great importance. To the contrary, cutoff individuals may experience intimacy or close connection as distressing or threatening (Schmitt and Skowron, 1998). The last subscale is the "I Positions" subscale. A more differentiated individual is able to take I positions, which involves the ability to stick to personal convictions and have a strong sense of self (Bowen, 1966).

The results of the study confirmed Bowen's theoretical concept of differentiation and its effect on anxiety levels and marital satisfaction. The subscales of Emotional Reactivity and Emotional Cutoff were found to be "predictors of global maladjustment" (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998, p.7). Researchers found that differentiation scores showed a strong relationship with marital satisfaction, particularly the Emotional Cutoff subscale. The scores also

predicted trait anxiety; which is consistent with Bowen's theory as he related lack of differentiation with increased anxiety (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

Although the scale was revised by Schmitt and Skowron (2003) to increase the reliability and validity of one of the subscales, all the research was done in a Western context. Only 10% of the participants were considered minorities and of those 3.2% were in the "other" category in which the Arab ethnicity could have been placed (Schmitt & Skowron, 1998). In the second study, 4.9% of the sample were considered biracial/multiracial, however there was no mention of any Arab participants (Schmitt & Skowron, 2003). Michael Kerr, who was trained by Bowen "acknowledge[s] that no empirical support exists for Bowen theory being effective across cultural and racial lines" (Fraser, McKay and Pease, 2010, p.105). Nonetheless, the DSI-R is one of the most recognized and widely used differentiation measurements, and the theory it is based on has been deemed by many as one of the most comprehensive psychological theories to date (Schmitt & Skowron, 1998; Lam & Chan So, 2015; Anchia, Gonzalez & Skowron, 2015). It is used as a clinical instrument to evaluate progress within the therapeutic setting as well as treatment outcomes (Schmitt and Skowron, 1998). Clinicians and researchers around the world have used the Bowen's Family System Theory without taking culture into consideration. This begs the question of whether or not the same assessment tools can be used with second-generation Arab immigrants and whether or not the existing tools are culturally specific. Applying the concept of differentiation of self to clients without ensuring that the client's culture is taken into consideration or that the tools used are universally valid is not culturally responsive therapy (Kim et al., 2014).

Having said that, the DSI-R is a great contribution to the Family Systems Theory. After the original DSI-R was developed, it was used as a foundation for the development of many other

measurement tools. A Spanish DSI (S-DSI) and a Turkish DSI (DSI-T) were developed to provide more culturally specific measurements. This will be explored in detail later on in the paper. Adjustments were also made not only for the DSI to be more culturally specific, but also in relation to profession and workplace stress; a DSI was developed for nurses (DSI-N) to better understand burnout as lower levels of differentiation were associated with more burnout (Beebe and Frisch, 2009).

Empirical Support. Many studies (Charles, 2001; Jankowski & Hooper, 2012; Skowron & Friedlander, 1998; Schmitt & Skowron, 1998) have been done in order to determine whether there was empirical support for Bowen's theory. Richard Charles (2001) confirmed several Bowenian concepts such as that anxiety effects the closeness or distance of an emotional relationship, and that fusion experienced in the family of origin effected current relationships. Charles noted that more research needed to be done in order to empirically test Bowen's concepts. He also pointed out that the samples in the studies reviewed were primarily female and Caucasian. Jankowski and Hooper (2012) focused on validating the concept of differentiation of self, and confirmed the internal structure of the ER, IP and EC subscales, as well as the use of the 46-item DSI-R score as an indicator of the intra and interpersonal dimensions of differentiation of self. Skowron (2000) also conducted a study about marital satisfaction in which she demonstrated that higher scores of differentiation of the DSI increased marital satisfaction. Previous studies (Skowron and Friedlander, 1988; Jankowski and Hooper, 2012; Knauth and Skowron, 2004) had been conducted confirming the internal validity of the DSI, and external validity in relation to its consistency in its association with the theory. The initial validation was conducted by Skowron and Friedlander (1988), the developers of the scale, who found that "differentiation scores are strongly associated with overall psychological adjustment" (p.244).

Jankowski and Hooper (2012) “confirmed the internal structure of three factors of the DSI-R: the ER, IP and EC subscales” (p.240). However, Schmitt & Skowron (2003) and Jankowski & Hooper (2012) both indicated that the Fusion with Others scale needed to be further examined to increase its validity, particularly for other cultures.

The scale was later revised by Schmitt and Skowron(2003) to increase the reliability and validity of the Fusion with Others (FO) subscale as empirical evidence suggested it lacked compared to the other three. “Fusion is characterized by over involvement with significant others in decision making and difficulty formulating opinions or perspectives independent of one’s parents or significant others” (Schmitt and Skowron, 2003, p.210). One of the main concerns was that unlike other measures of fusion, there was no significant correlation between FO scores from the DSI and psychological adjustment, problem solving or relationship satisfaction (Schmitt and Skowron, 1998, 2003). The subscale was revised by looking at the literature to expand the definition of fusion, and 26 items were extracted including 5 of the original FO items. These items were rated by experts in the field and narrowed down to 22 items, which were given to participants. The study found that the FO subscale did improve psychometrically. It assessed FO in more detail particularly when it came to making decision by relying on others, having few personal beliefs and emotional over involvement (Schmitt and Skowron, 2003).

No research has been done to date to determine if the revised version of the DSI improved psychometrically for other cultures as well. In fact, the items that were focused on in the revised version aimed to measure emotional overinvolvement with parents such as “I want to live up to my parent’s expectations of me” and “I feel it’s important to hear my parents’ opinion before making decisions.”, and relying on others when making decisions such as “I often feel unsure when others are not around to help me make a decision” (Schmitt and Skowron, 2003, p.214).

Murdoch and Ross (2014) described “[Fused individuals as] emotionally overinvolved with family members or significant others and take on their attitudes, values, and opinions without question” (Murdoch and Ross, 2014, p.486). The key words here are “without question”. Many individuals in collective cultures may take on their parents’ values and opinions, however that does not mean they don’t have their own convictions that they are able to act upon as well. The extent to which an individual relies on others for decision-making and takes their parents expectations and opinions into account play out very differently and serve a different function in collective cultures.

Collective cultures such as “Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Native American Indian societies” (Skowron, 2004, p.447) are described as putting an emphasis on a person’s identification with a group and ability to conform to social expectations and moral obligations. Uniformity and group harmony are valued over uniqueness and individuality (Carducci, 2012). On the other hand, individualistic cultures, such as “North America and Western European countries” (Carducci, 2012, p.414), place an emphasis on uniqueness and personal characteristics and actions. “People have considerable societal flexibility to join many different groups and exercise a wide range of choices in the expression of various social roles” (p.414). That being said, within any given culture, how an individual presents may vary.

Purpose of thesis. The purpose of this study is to better understand the experience of differentiation for Arab immigrants in order to suggest revisions to the differentiation of self-inventory (DSI-R) and include ethnic and cultural items pertinent to the target population. The research questions are: 1) How does the Arab population view differentiation? 2) Is the construct of differentiation valid for this population? 3) How are the items on the DSI-R (see Appendix A) understood or perceived by this specific population?

Our hypothesis is that differentiation is experienced differently for the second-generation Arab population, particularly when it comes to individuation. Bowen described individuation as an individual's ability to have their own thoughts, beliefs and convictions and to act upon them (Kerr and Bowen, 1988). However, second-generation Arab immigrants often experience a collective culture in which goals and decisions are reached collaboratively (Hwa-Froelich and Vigil, 2004). We also hypothesize that certain items will be less reliable or valid, particularly in the Fusion with Others subscale. Researchers (Jenkins et al., 2005) have suggested that the fusion subscale in the DSI-R be revisited to ensure that the measurement was accurate (Chung and Gale, 2009). Specific items, such as item number 9, "I want to live up to my parent's expectations of me", 45, "I feel it's important to hear my parents' opinion before making decisions.", and 33, "I often feel unsure when others are not around to help me make a decision" (Schmitt and Skowron, 2003, p.214) may be perceived differently due to cultural differences.

Family roles and expectations. This is especially the case taking into consideration the understanding of the meaning and role of family and the greater society in a person's development in Arab cultures. The term family often has a broader meaning in collective cultures. In Arabic, the word *ahl* is often used to describe family or "the people [sharing] a house or dwelling" (Bakar, 2011, p.20), also known as *ahl-ul-bayt*. Traditionally, this did not include only immediate family, but was used to refer to the whole clan. The term expanded to include larger dwellings such as the people inhabiting a town (*ahl-ul-qura*) or country (*ahl-ul-balad*) (Bakar, 2011). As for the role of family and the greater society, often they are seen as teachers, advice givers, and elders to consult with and gain wisdom from. Bakar (2011) describes three levels of schooling that a child goes through that include schooling in the home by parents and

elders, schooling in the educational system by teachers and schooling by the community and society.

The differences in how family is perceived and the roles and expectations are an essential component to effective, well-informed therapy. Therapists who were trained from a European or American perspective may have values reflecting the importance of independence, equal power and encourage risk-taking and exploration. Often these values conflict with the values of interdependent cultures where there is a collective responsibility and communication includes collective goals, collaboration and seeking consensus (Hwa-Froelich and Vigil, 2004). Power differentials are also an important distinction and are viewed positively. Individuals know their role and position in various social interactions and how to act accordingly. It is often seen in the interaction with elders, including older siblings. Risk-taking and uncertainty can be seen a danger to survival and success for these interdependent cultures. Instead of encouraging questioning and risk-taking, individuals are given positive role models and are encouraged to practice and imitate the positive behaviors modeled. Roles and obligations are taught from a young age and expected, including dependency on adults and elders as a model and source of knowledge. Therapists need to be aware of their own values and the hidden values certain interventions promote to ensure that the therapy is in line with the clients values and the client feels respected and understood (Hwa-Froelich and Vigil, 2004).

This study's contribution is important since better understanding the differentiation of this population allows therapists to provide more culturally sensitive therapy. Better understanding the cultural context in which an individual is parented and the implications for differentiation allows therapists to avoid judgmental attitudes and be more open to understanding the collective

or authoritarian background specifically. This may result in more culturally sensitive and empathic interventions (Dwairy & Menshar, 2006).

An article by Dwairy and Menshar (2006) on *Parenting styles, individuation and mental health of Egyptian adolescents*, has shown that parenting and individuation differ in western and collective societies. Arabs live in an authoritarian cultural system, and the parenting style often differs based on gender. It was found that among Arab-Palestinians, girls experienced a more authoritative parenting style, and boys a more authoritarian one (Dwairy and Menshar, 2006). Even within an authoritarian society different parenting styles are more dominant based on geographic location and economic status. In Egypt, the parenting styles in the village for boys and girls were the opposite of those in the city. Similar to the Palestinian example, in the villages boys were parented primarily with an authoritarian style while girls were parented with an authoritative style. In the cities, the opposite was true (Dwairy and Menshar, 2006).

What is considered best practice or healthy in a Western society, and based on White Caucasian samples, may not be what is necessarily the most beneficial or healthy for other populations. For example, Dwairy and Menshar (2006) concluded that it seems like the meaning and impact of the authoritarian parenting style within a culture characterized as authoritarian and collective is very different than the meaning and impact of this parenting style in a liberal and individualistic society. They indicated that among Palestinian and Egyptian participants, there was no association between the authoritarian parenting style and poor mental health as was indicated in previous research in the Western context. This may indicate that this style of parenting is not as harmful in an authoritarian culture versus a liberal one (Dwairy & Menshar, 2006). In addition, one interesting cultural difference is the inconsistency between the reports in the Western literature that associate the authoritative parenting style with individuation, when it

seems like with Arab adolescents it creates connectedness (Dwairy and Menshar, 2006). This further emphasizes the notion that what is considered “healthy” may vary from culture to culture.

The immigrant populations in general have difficulty reconciling between their ethnic identity and their new national identity (Kunst et al, 2012; Baffoe, 2011). The research shows that more recent immigrants tend to prefer their ethnic identity and identify more strongly with their ethnic group. This is particularly the case if any discrimination is experienced. As time passes, many immigrants, particularly those attending college or university, are drawn into the common culture (David et al., 2003). The difficult in reconciling between two identities is more often experienced by youth. Youth may experience “tension and internal struggles when they had to juggle competing and opposing cultural values” (Baffoe, 2011, p.479) from their ethnic group and the society around them. Ideally, this new national identity becomes a multi-cultural composition of the immigrants’ ethnic identity and the norms and culture of the new country they are living in. However, this is not always the case as many immigrants experience isolation, as they are not accustomed to the new environment and norms (Kunst et al, 2012). It is even more challenging for second generation immigrants since they identify with two different cultures strongly and try to fit in to both. What makes the need for more research on the relevance of differentiation to this population particularly important is the notion that faulty measurements may result in treatment plans that are dismissive of their heritage culture and that work towards making them conform to the mainstream culture. This can be counterintuitive as the research has shown that “those who involve themselves in both their heritage culture and that of the national society (by way of integration) have the most positive psychological well-being” (Berry and Sabatier, 2009). In order to foster positive psychological well-being for this population, the cultural and ethnic differences must be taken into consideration.

The challenge for Arab immigrants has been even greater in recent years due to stigma. In the early 1900's, Arab Americans were able to better assimilate through their Christian faith (Ajroush and Jamal, 2006). However, today most Arab immigrants are Muslim. One of the most critical aspects to this population's identity development is the negativity associated with Islam, which also becomes critical in how they integrate within the society. Particularly since 9/11, Islam has been a prominent religion mentioned in American's everyday lives, however in an increasingly more negative manner. This is similar to the case with the Italian immigrant population, when the US was at war with Italy in the early 1940s. One researcher, Child (1943), emphasized the risk associated with second generation Italians rejecting their American identity if they encountered negative or anti-Italian messages from the government or public. This includes feelings of rejection by a therapist when normative Anglo-Saxon concepts are used to tell the client what a healthy relationship looks like. Child performed interviews in order to better understand both the rebellious reaction, where association with the ethnic background was avoided at all costs, and what he called the in-group reaction, in which the individual associated strongly with their minority group and very little with the American society (Child, 1943). Muslims today often feel unwelcomed due to anti-Islamic messages from the government and public, which, as Child mentioned, may result in stronger affiliation with the minority group and little integration (Ajroush and Jamal, 2007).

One major aspect in which the collective and individualistic cultures differ, and which is very important in terms of differentiation, is the concepts of individuation, connectedness, and interpersonal dependency. Adolescents in the West are expected to separate and individuate from their parents and families, whereas in a collectivist or authoritarian culture they are not encouraged to do so. There isn't the same expectation to go through individuation and have a

differentiated sense of self (Kwan et al, 2002). There is more of a social self and identity which may result in enmeshment with the family in adulthood (Dwairy and Menshar, 2006). Due to the limited research on the Arab population, it is of benefit to explore findings with other collective cultures. Similarities were found with the Chinese culture as a person is considered a social being where development is assessed by a person's ability to connect and not to differentiate (Chan-So & Lam, 2015).

An essential aspect of family connection in collective cultures is the importance of respecting ones parents; this is both emphasized in the Arab culture and Islamic teachings. Treating your parents well and holding them in high regard is a moral obligation including getting advice and moral support especially in times of need or dispute. In the Qur'an, "treating your parents with kindness" (Qur'an, 17:23) is mentioned before all other good acts and comes right after worshiping God alone (Bakar, 2011). This emphasis on parental respect and viewing them as a source of wisdom and guidance may be interpreted as unhealthy fusion, or enmeshment, when taken out of cultural context.

In one study of Arab youth done in Arabic, most Arab youth indicated that they followed their parents' footsteps in almost all major aspects of their lives including occupation, political preference or social behavior. Interestingly, they did not report that they were unsatisfied, to the contrary they enjoyed this way of life (Dwairy and Menshar, 2006). As eluded to in the article on the Chinese DSI, these differing concepts of differentiation and satisfaction remind therapists to consider the client's understanding of self when using assessment tools and conceptualizing (Chan-So & Lam, 2015). This is why culture-inclusive or specific tools are of value. The meaning of differentiation, what is considered healthy, and the specific scale items contribute to the validity of the tool being used for that population. Chinese culture was characterized as

integrative versus the differentiative Western culture. This may be accurate for collective cultures in general (Chan-So & Lam, 2015). The notion that “meanings which families and individuals bring to therapy cannot be understood without attention to their cultural origins” (Pare, 1996, p.1) has been present in the literature for years, however the practical tools and best practices are still lacking.

The DSI-R for different cultures. The question remains whether the claim that the DSI-R is a universal assessment tool is founded, as these assessments typically should be used only within the context in which they were developed. Chan-So and Lam’s (2015) research on the validity of the Chinese version of the DSI, found that translating the differentiation of self-inventory (DSI-R) may not be appropriate for different cultures, or for this particular study, the Chinese culture. The researchers (Chan-So & Lam, 2015) also found that the FO subscale in particular, needed to be culturally specific. When the DSI-R was administered to Jordanian male and female students to test the universality of Bowen’s Family Systems Theory, the scores were significantly different than the American sample. The Jordanian students “reported more emotional reactivity, less emotional cutoff, and less ability to take an “I-position,” [and the] total differentiation scores, differ significantly” (Alaedin, 2008, p.479). Alaedin (2008) concluded that the construct of differentiation was valid for the Jordanian population as lower levels of ER and the ability to take I positions were associated with fewer negative symptoms; however, he indicated that more research was needed to “[clarify] the role and function of differentiation of self in diverse Middle Eastern culture family systems” (Alaedin, 2008, p.498).

This research is particularly necessary since, as was demonstrated above, some of the basic assumptions of the Family Systems Theory have not been tested or validated with a more diverse population. In an interview on Bowen’s Theory and Family Therapy, Michael Kerr argues that

the basic emotional patterns of functioning of Bowen's theory are universal. He describes emotional distance, conflict, and triangles as the basis of the emotional system and concludes that "since the emotional system is a product of evolution, theory predicts that the basic emotional patterns will be present in all human families" (Fraser, McKay and Pease, 2010, p. 105). Many researchers have spoken about the universality of the theory, and there is much evidence in support of that the emotional system is present in all human beings, however the way the emotional patterns are played out and the characteristics Bowen assigns to different levels of differentiation including what is considered more differentiated or healthy may vary. This is even more pertinent for the therapy setting as treatment plans and interventions are based on these concepts. This is a particular concern for measuring family functioning as different family cultures may cause behaviors to cluster into different patterns in different countries (Manzi et al., 2006).

Various studies have found that most of the theories and interventions in mental health have been used across cultures with inadequate research or examination. Even the research that has been done on different cultures or ethnic minorities has been questionable as Western constructs were used which resulted in clinical assessments that overestimated or minimized the ethnic clients' pathology (Chan-So and Lam, 2015; Kim et al., 2015). Determining the degree of pathology must take into consideration the ethnic culture's norm. In the case of differentiation, "both differentiation and integration are valued in both collectivist and individualistic cultures, but there is a difference in the degree of value between cultures" (Murdock and Ross, 2014, p. 487). Cross-cultural psychologists have emphasized the importance of using comparable measures when constructs are compared in different cultural settings. When using a measure in a new cultural setting, scale items may have different meanings or may be differentially relevant to

the construct of interest compared to the culture of origin (Manzi et al., 2006). Kwan et al. (2001) argue that the validity of a scale should be analyzed at the item level to determine the appropriateness of each item. In order to have an unbiased instrument, any biased or culturally specific items should be removed and other items that are sensitive to the particular culture examined should be added (Kwan et al. 2001).

Although the main tenets that the Family Systems Theory is based on may be universal, another challenge is in determining how differentiation should be measured. In one study on *Differentiation and Healthy Family Functioning of Koreans in South Korea, South Koreans in the United States, and White Americans*, the research found that the results suggest that the balance between togetherness and individuality, characteristic of a differentiated person, might be at a different point than White Americans” (Kim et al, 2015). Kim et al. (2015) found this particularly troubling since no cross-cultural studies to date had evaluated whether or not the DSI-R was consistently measuring differentiation similarly across cultures.

Prior to the development of the DSI-R, Chun and Macdermid (1997) suggested that certain levels of connectedness or less individuation may be more appropriate for collective societies. The possibility of faulty measurements or misinterpretations of client strengths or deficits can be detrimental. They found that what would be considered a lack of family differentiation may have less of an effect, or maybe even the opposite effect, in a collectivist society. Korean adolescents who scored higher on individuation also reported lower self-esteem. To the contrary, those who scored higher on connectedness reported higher self-esteem (Chun and Macdermid, 1997). Chun and Macdermid speculated that “[these] finding[s] may reflect cultural variance and may challenge the theoretical base of family therapy developed in the U.S., which contends that

psychological separation or individuation from the family of origin is a prerequisite of functional individual development and adjustment” (p.460).

The literature also demonstrates the need for more research in regards to the concept of differentiation in particular and how it is measured. The construct of differentiation of self was developed in the United States, where the society is primarily individualistic, and the sample participants were also continuously predominantly White Americans (Kim et al., 2015). A critical question has been raised by many researchers about whether items in a survey or questionnaire used to measure a concept have the same meaning to members of different groups (Kim et al, 2015). One study examining the validity of the Chinese Version of the DSI-R (Chan-So & Lam, 2015) found the word differentiation and various scale items had different meanings for other cultures including different cultural contexts. The authors recommended that further studies be done including qualitative interviews to ensure the development of ethnic and culturally sensitive items (Chan-So & Lam, 2015). Kim et al conducted a study comparing the differentiation of South Koreans living in South Korea, South Koreans living in the United States and Americans. The study mentioned the need for qualitative data in order to better understand differentiation of self in South Koreans (Kim et al., 2015).). Similarly, Chan-So and Lam (2015) suggested that qualitative interviews be done in order to incorporate ethnic and culturally sensitive items to the differentiation scale. After conducting research to determine the validity of the DSI-R and the concept of differentiation for people of color, Elizabeth Skowron, one of the developers of the DSI-R indicated that “examination of the cross-cultural validity of many basic constructs in family systems theories has been scarce” (Skowron, 2004, p.447) and that “qualitative methods may be particularly amenable to determining the meanings that differentiation of self and

specific DSI items hold for members of distinctive ethnic/cultural groups” (Skowron, 2004, p.454).

Therefore, the need for this study is strongly articulated in the research. A qualitative method was applied in this study in order to further understand what aspects of differentiation or specific items needed to be adjusted for different cultures.

Based on the research, people raised in a collectivist culture typically define themselves more interdependently, while those raised in an individualistic culture typically define themselves more independently (Murdock and Ross, 2014). This makes it difficult to administer the same scale to both groups and still get valid results. Murdock and Ross (2014) also found that higher levels of differentiation of self correlated with people who defined themselves more independently and negatively correlated with those who defined themselves more interdependently. Generalizing these findings to other cultures is particularly concerning as the research has shown that in collect cultures self-definition or identity is in relation to others (Chan-So and Lam, 2015). Are we then saying that this form of self-definition or identity is less favorable? It also becomes particularly problematic since the scale was created primarily based on individuals from an individualistic culture. Therefore, distinguishing between a lower score due to differences in culture and a lower score due to a lack of differentiation would be challenging. There were 295 participants in the study of which 214 were Caucasian White or European American. The remainder in decreasing order were Black/African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, multiracial, and Native American. Approximately 11% of the participants were from collective cultures. As for Arabs specifically, if any Arabs had participated in the study, they would be one of the 2 people that were in the “other” category that accounts for 0.7% of the original sample (Murdock and Ross, 2014).

That being said, within each culture, both collective and individualistic, some people will have high levels of independent self-definitions and others will have high levels of interdependent self-definitions (Murdock and Ross, 2014), so there needs to be an awareness of the tendency to generalize when it comes to a specific culture. The question remains, how is high independent or interdependent self-definition measured, and according to what or whom? These concepts should not be thought of as either/or, and this becomes particularly difficult when using scales where numbers and measurements are reflective of complex concepts. Looking for similarities and differences between the various cultures' experience of differentiation may be more effective than an either/or position (Murdoch and Ross, 2014).

In a study looking at the relation between Erik Erikson's developmental stages and Bowen's concept of differentiation of self, "results suggest that higher levels of fusion (i.e., emotional over involvement with others) seem to lead to a more stable identity (i.e., identity versus identity confusion) and to more intimacy (i.e., intimacy versus isolation)" (Jenkins et al., 2005, p.258). The researchers concluded that a re-examination of the concept of fusion is necessary as there is a lack of clarity in regards to what the ideal amount of fusion would be, especially in different contexts. In other words, when does fusion become unhealthy, and under what conditions is it considered harmful? (Jenkins et al., 2005).

It has definitely been argued that both autonomy and individuality are universal needs, though the types of behaviors that exasperate or fulfill these needs may vary significantly across cultures (Manzi, Vignoles, Regalia & Scabini, 2006). When asked about the universality of the concept of differentiation for collective cultures, and particularly individuation, Kerr indicated that "Individualism, like rebellion, is a coping style that is unrelated to basic level of differentiation. Differentiation is reflected in the variation in levels of emotional functioning (roughly, emotional

maturity) that exists in every culture. Every culture has its better functioning and poorer functioning families. Oriental families are not an exception.” (Fraser, McKay and Pease, 2010, p. 106). Since, every culture has its better functioning and poorer functioning families, measurements have to be adjusted to capture the concept of differentiation accurately for that population. Further cross-culture research needs to be done, using ethnic measures to fully understand the nature of family enmeshment and individuation and how it is expressed in different contexts. Manzi et al (2006) speculate that some aspects of family enmeshment will be similar across cultures and some will vary with culture, as was the case in their study where “cohesion and enmeshment showed different associations with identity threat and psychological well-being among [Italian and British] adolescents” (Manzi et al., 2006, p.685).

The fact that higher differentiation scores have been associated with lower levels of anxiety (Bowen, 1978) and higher levels of marital satisfaction (Skowron, 2000) and psychological adjustment make the DSI-R valuable to therapists and important in measuring treatment outcomes. However, these associations are not necessarily universal. Italian adolescents that reported greater family enmeshment did not suffer from more depressive symptoms or anxiety that are typically associated with more enmeshment (Manzi et al, 2006). The researchers speculated about whether the concept of differentiation from the family and the value placed on autonomy are specific to Anglo-Saxon cultures. They also found that their “results provide the strongest evidence to date that the relationship between family differentiation and psychological well-being is moderated by culture and mediated by identity processes” (p.687). Using identity processes as a mediator allowed the researchers to highlight the differences between the two cultures. The UK sample experienced enmeshment in their families of origin as constraining leading to difficulties developing an independent identity. The lack of a secure sense of identity

increases the likelihood of external changes causing stressors as these changes are seen as threats to the formation of their identity. The researchers found that family enmeshment has a negative impact on the identity of the UK sample, but not the Italian one (Manzi et al, 2006).

Adaptations of the DSI-R. In one study that developed a Spanish adaption of the DSI-R, the DSI-R was translated to Spanish and an exploratory factor analysis was done. The results indicated that some items were measuring different dimensions for the Spanish sample. Item number 6, “When someone close to me disappoints me, I withdraw from him/her for a time” was moved from the ER subcategory to the EC category. Items 29, “arguments with my parent(s) or sibling(s) can still make me feel awful”, 44 “sometimes I feel sick after arguing with my spouse/partner” and 46 “I worry about people close to me getting sick, hurt, or upset” were moved from the FO category to the ER category. Some items were deleted all together. Item 38 under ER, “I often wonder about the kind of impression I create” was deleted because of the difficulty in finding an adequate translation. There was no clear relationship between two items in the FO category, item 13, “when my spouse/partner criticizes me, it bothers me for days” and item 25, “I often agree with others just to appease them” and any of the subcategories, therefore, they were also deleted. The subcategories “I positions” and “Fusion with Others” were deleted as the empirical and conceptual analysis indicated that these factors were very different in Spanish culture and the items listed did not demonstrate any particular pattern. The final version of the S-DSI consisted of 13 items under Emotional Reactivity and 13 items under Emotional Cutoff, for a total of 26 items. Confirmatory analyses on the Spanish DSI-R (S-DSI) were administered and it confirmed that the 4 subcategory model was inadequate for the data presented. On the contrary, the 2 subcategory model the researchers had developed fit well with the observed data (Anchia, Rodriguez-Gonzalez, Skowron, 2015).

Another valuable contribution is the development of the Turkish DSI-R. Turkey has become more urban and has gone through economic development. This puts Turkey in a transitional period where the culture demonstrates characteristics of both collective and individualistic cultures (Bulduk and Isik, 2015). This is similar to second generation Arab immigrants' experience of culture as they are often experiencing varying degrees of their collective ethnic culture, and their individualistic societal culture.

The Turkish DSI-R (DSI-T) was developed because the researchers found that the data they collected from their sample of 221 Turkish adults did not support the original 45-item DSI-R. Similar to the Spanish DSI-R, the DSI was first translated to Turkish, and exploratory and confirmatory analyses were performed. Although the 4 subscale model fit well for the Turkish data, the data did not fit well for the DSI-R overall. The findings resulted in a revised 20 item scale with 4 subcategories. The new scale, the DSI-T was cross-validated with a sample size of 187, and it was concluded that the DSI-T is a valid and reliable scale to measure differentiation of self (Bulduk and Isik, 2015).

One major finding that has come to light from the literature reviews and limitations in the research is the idea that there isn't one way of being healthy, normal or functioning well. Not only does it differ from client to client, but it also varies to an even larger extent from culture to culture. "Considering how the functional family is conceptualized might lead to awareness of some differences across different cultures, and we may learn that normal family functioning should be measured differently across cultural groups" (Chung and Gale, 2009, p.22). Therefore more research needs to be done in order to pave the way towards more culturally informed therapy that fits with the values and experiences of clients from various cultural backgrounds.

Methods

A qualitative research design was used for the purposes of this study. The qualitative method “provide[s] a broad explanation that anthropologists use to study the culture-sharing behavior and attitudes of people” (Creswell, 2014, p.64). It allows for a focus on personal meaning and gives importance to a more complex understanding of the issue or theory at hand (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative method was also chosen as an exploration of how the target population perceives the questions in the scale is necessary to provide commentary for a scale revision for this population. Qualitative data is particularly valuable since the research indicates the difficulty in the development of sound measures of Bowen’s concepts due to their complexity (Schmitt & Skowron, 2003). This methodology is also found in the research, particularly in Chan-So & Lam’s (2015) article on the validity of the Chinese version of the DSI-R.

Sampling and participants. The participants were second-generation Arab immigrants. A second-generation Arab immigrant was defined as an individual whose parents emigrated from any of the 22 Arab State, and who was born in Canada. The 22 Arab States include: “Algeria, Bahrain, Comoro Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen” (Britto, 2008). The participants were required to register on an online google form where they were asked if they were born in Canada, their age, and where each of their parents were born. To qualify the participant had to be born in Canada and both their parents had to be born in one of the 22 countries mentioned above.

The study specified second-generation immigrants in order to avoid limitations involving the translation of the DSI-R and possible language barriers (Kim et al., 2015). If the scale were to be translated, invariances need to be ensured. Second-generation immigrants are also an interesting

target population as they are often caught in between an individualistic society and a collective home and community environment. Research has shown that the society they live in is more individualized, and can often pressure them to differentiate or develop autonomy from their family of origin as a developmental task or expectation of the society (Chung and Gale, 2009). Therefore, exploring how this population views differentiation and autonomy will be telling, especially if it does not line up with societal expectations.

The target group within this population is young adults, ranging from the ages of 20-25. The majority of research done related to the DSI-R was conducted with University based samples. The concept of differentiation is a developmental construct, which makes this age group particularly significant as “the re-negotiation of family of origin relationships” (Janskowski & Hooper, 2012, p.226) typically occurs at this age, emerging adulthood. Bowen also indicated that a person’s level of differentiation is usually well-established by adolescence (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

The sample size was 10 young adults. Six of the participants’ parents were born in Lebanon, 2 were born in Syria, 1 was born in Kuwait and another was born in Palestine. They were recruited through community organizations, clubs on university campuses and word-of-mouth.

Data collection. Ten participants were recruited for the first part of the study which involved answering open-ended questions (see Appendix B) about how they experienced young adulthood and what their relationships looked like. These questions aimed to address both their own experiences and understanding of what being an adult entailed, as well as what it means within their family systems. The first encounter was introduced as an interview in regards to connectedness and separation in relationships; the term differentiation was not used. After the participants were reminded of the process, and consent was given, the interviews were audio

recorded. Four interviews were done over skype due to the inability of the participant to be present in person. The skype interview was in video format in order to allow consistency between the interview forms. At the end of the interview the participants were asked to fill out the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R). The title of the scale as well as the legend were removed before the DSI-R was administered. All interviews and DSI-R's were labelled using a number ranging from 100-109 to ensure confidentiality. The first interview lasted from 10 minutes to 20 minutes depending on the participant. Of the 10 participants, the ones with the highest two and the lowest two scores were selected for further interviewing addressing the specific items on the scale. This allowed for further analysis to determine what aspects of differentiation are demonstrated in those with higher levels of differentiation, and those with lower levels of differentiation in this population, and whether their understanding of healthy differentiation differed from each other or Bowen's theory. The participant with the second highest score was not available, therefore the participant with the third highest score was selected for a second interview instead. Using the specific scale items in the second interview resulted in a better explanation of what perceptions and understandings lead to the participants' responses. The second interviews were also audio recorded with the permission of the participant. The duration of the interviews ranged from 25 minutes to 2 hours.

Instruments. The Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised was administered after the first interviews. The items on the DSI-R were also the focus of the second interview, and participants' perceptions of the items were elicited. The revised version of the DSI that was used consists of 46 items, and 4 subcategories. The 4 subcategories are: Emotional Reactivity, taking I-Positions, Emotional Cutoff and Fusion with Others (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). The Emotional Reactivity subscale, consisting of 11 items, measured the extent to which a person reacted to

external stimuli with “emotional flooding, emotional lability, or hypersensitivity” (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998, p.5). The I-Position subscale, also consisting of 11 items, addressed the person’s sense of self and ability to stick to their convictions when challenged. Emotional Cutoff, consisting of 12 items, measured a person’s feelings of threat around intimacy and constant vulnerability in relationships with others (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). The Fusion with Others subscale, also consisting of 12 items, addressed “emotional over involvement with others, including triangulation” (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998, p.5). The Internal consistency of the scale and subscales was high: “DSI-R full scale = .92, FO = .86, ER = 39, IP = 31, EC = 34” (Schmitt & Skowron, 2003, p.214). The scores on the DSI-R range from 1-6, with higher scores indicating more differentiation which is a characteristic of the ability to take more I-Positions in a relationship, and less emotional cutoff fusion with others, and emotional reactivity. The scores are calculated by reversing all the Emotional Reactivity and Emotional Cutoff items, as well as item 35 for I-Positions, and all the items on the Fusion with Others scale except item 37. The scores from each subscale are then added up and divided by the number of items in the subscale. The score for the DSI-R scale overall is calculated by adding all the scores from the four items, reversing the ones that were mentioned above, and then dividing by 46. The higher the score (1-6) the more differentiated the person is (Schmitt & Skowron, 2003).

Analysis. The method used to analyze the data collected was based on Creswell’s data analysis method for qualitative research found in his book on qualitative inquiry and research design (Creswell, 2013). First, both the first and second interviews of the chosen four participants were transcribed. The automatic transcription tool originally used was VoiceBase (<https://www.voicebase.com/>); however, the accuracy was less than 50%. Therefore, the interviews were transcribed in person using a software called ExpressScribe

(<http://www.nch.com.au/scribe/>) to slow down the playback speed. After the transcription was complete, all the interviews were read several times in order to get a sense of the data in its entirety before beginning the analysis. The data was visited once more and coded; notes were added in the margins, such as “short phrases, ideas, or key concepts that occur to the reader” (Creswell, 2013, p. 183). Before continuing the data analysis, the inter-coder reliability was determined using Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Bracken’s (2002) method to ensure the reliability of the initial coding protocol. The sample used to determine coding reliability “should not be less than 50% units or 10% of the full sample” (Assessing and Reporting Inter-coder Reliability, Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Bracken, 2002, para. 8) of interviews. In this case, participant #106’s interview accounted for 12.5% of the full sample, and was used to conduct the inter-coder reliability test. After the sample was determined, two or more coders are asked to extract emerging themes from the sample. For the purposes of this study, the two coders consisted of the researcher and a co-worker. The coding was done independently, with no communication. After comparing the results given by both coders, a calculation was done to determine the inter-coder reliability rate.

$$\text{Inter-coder reliability rate} = \frac{\text{identical or synonymous themes}}{\text{total number of emerging themes}} = \frac{13}{20} * 100 = 0.65$$

A discussion ensued with both the colleague and supervisor around the differing themes and possible changes in order to reach an agreement. An inter-coder reliability rate was re-calculated at 0.75. Although the rate is not between the 0.9-0.8 range, a coefficient of 0.7 is considered “appropriate in some exploratory studies” (Assessing and Reporting Inter-coder Reliability, Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Bracken, 2002, para. 5).

Initially, each interview consisted of 20-25 codes, also known as emerging themes. This was later reduced 8-12 emerging themes per interview. Subsequently, the emerging themes were revisited allowing for the reflection on the larger themes presented throughout the data in order to create categories, also known as meaning units. Creswell describes these meaning units as “a family of themes” (Creswell, 2013, p.186). The recommendation is to have no more than 5-7 meaning units. For the purposes of this study, four meaning units were identified.

The frequency of each code or emerging theme was determined, and histograms were developed to further analyze and better represent the data. A general description of the themes, based on the data collected, was included with each graph. The data was discussed based on the information collected from the interviews, previous literature and the researcher’s interpretation.

Results

In this section, the results of the DSI-R scores, as well as the emerging themes and meaning units will be presented. There are four meaning units: decision making, connection, self and duality. Histograms were developed for each respective meaning unit in order to provide a visual representation of the data and allow for further analysis.

Participant #	Emotional Reactivity	I statements	Emotional Cutoff	Fusion with Others	Total
100	2.18	3.73	5.0	2.58	3.39
101	4.0	4.09	4.83	2.67	3.89
102	2.64	3.90	4.42	2.58	3.39
103	3.54	4.09	4.83	3.58	3.96
104	2.18	3.09	4.42	2.17	2.98
105	3.64	3.0	4.17	4.17	3.76
106	1.54	3.82	5.17	2.42	3.26
107	3.91	3.54	3.92	3.58	3.74
108	3.45	4.54	4.33	4.0	4.08
109	3.27	3.73	3.92	3.0	3.48
Average	3.04	3.75	4.50	3.07	3.59

Table 1: Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) Scores

The average total score of 3.59 was slightly lower than the average score of 3.74 from the DSI-R initial validation study (Friedlander and Skowron, 1998).

	Highest scores		Lowest scores	
	Participant #103	Participant #108	Participant #104	Participant #106
Emotional Reactivity	3.54	3.45	2.18	1.54
Fusion with Others	3.58	4.0	2.17	2.42

Table 2: Main differences between most differentiated and least differentiation participants based on scoring.

The major difference between those who scored the highest on the DSI-R and those who scored the lowest was observed in the two sub-categories Emotional Reactivity and Fusion with Others.

Participant #101	Interview # 1		Interview #2
Emerging themes	<i>Family -oriented</i>	Emerging themes	<i>Self-motivation and development</i>
	<i>Rely on family for support</i>		<i>Identity and values</i>
	<i>Reciprocal caring, supportive relationships</i>		<i>Space to assess/resolve conflict</i>
	<i>Deep connection require time and effort</i>	Meaning Unit	Self
	<i>Don't see separation from family</i>		
Meaning Unit	Connection	Emerging themes	<i>Approval and opinion from family/parents important</i>
			<i>Conscious of how people see me</i>
Emerging theme	<i>Independence does not involve opinion/support of others</i>	Meaning Unit	Decision Making
Meaning Unit	Self		
		Emerging themes	<i>Go to family for support</i>
			<i>Relationships require dependence & space is frowned upon</i>
		Meaning Unit	Connection

Table 3: Emerging things and Meaning Units for Participant #101

Participant #104	Interview # 1		Interview #2
Emerging themes	<i>Connecting with family always exists</i>	Emerging themes	<i>Want more control over own life</i>
	<i>Dependence is important not a bad thing</i>		<i>Doing what's right/values</i>
Meaning Unit	Connection	Meaning Unit	Self
Emerging themes	<i>Separate from family because of different values/opinions</i>	Emerging themes	<i>Living up to parents' expectations</i>
	<i>Fighting for what she wants</i>		<i>Avoiding conflict</i>
	<i>Independence needed to feel like you have some control over your life</i>		<i>Need other's approval/opinion</i>
Meaning Unit	Self	Meaning Unit	Decision making
Emerging theme	<i>Parents approval important</i>	Emerging theme	<i>Family won't walk away/can't be lost</i>
Meaning Unit	Decision making	Meaning Unit	Connection
Emerging theme	<i>Being separate/different is a problem</i>	Emerging theme	<i>Conflicting values and beliefs</i>
	<i>Tradition/culture connects</i>	Meaning Unit	Duality
Meaning Unit	Duality		

Table 4: Emerging things and Meaning Units for Participant #104

Participant #106	Interview # 1		Interview #2
Emerging themes	<i>Family connected to all aspects of life</i>	Emerging themes	<i>Others involved in decision making</i>
	<i>Family support</i>		<i>Living up to parents expectations</i>
	<i>Connectedness based on ethnicity</i>		<i>Wanting acceptance/encouragement from others</i>
	<i>Dependence is positive</i>	Meaning Unit	Decision making
Meaning Unit	Connection		
		Emerging theme	<i>Two cultures/communities</i>
Emerging theme	<i>Separate professionally/physically</i>	Meaning Unit	Duality
Meaning Unit	Self		
		Emerging theme	<i>Family knows everything</i>
Emerging themes	<i>Completely different person at work, feels separate</i>	Meaning Unit	Connection
Meaning Unit	<i>Word dependence comes with negative connotation</i>		
	<i>Cultural differences and norms</i>		
Meaning Unit	Duality		

Table 5: Emerging things and Meaning Units for Participant #106

Participant #108	Interview # 1		Interview #2
Emerging themes	<i>Connection mutual understanding and support</i>	Emerging themes	<i>Taking others and their opinions into account before making a decision</i>
	<i>Connection is consistent/daily</i>		<i>Living up to parents' expectations important</i>
	<i>Dependence relying on and helping each other</i>		<i>Seeking approval</i>
Meaning Unit	Connection	Meaning Unit	Decision Making
Emerging theme	<i>Separateness due to different schedules</i>	Emerging theme	<i>Need to act differently around different groups</i>
	<i>Independence based on own motivation</i>	Meaning Unit	Duality
Meaning Unit	Self		
		Emerging themes	<i>Sticking to values/beliefs</i>
			<i>Importance of independence</i>
			<i>Space</i>
		Meaning Unit	Self

Table 6: Emerging things and Meaning Units for Participant #108

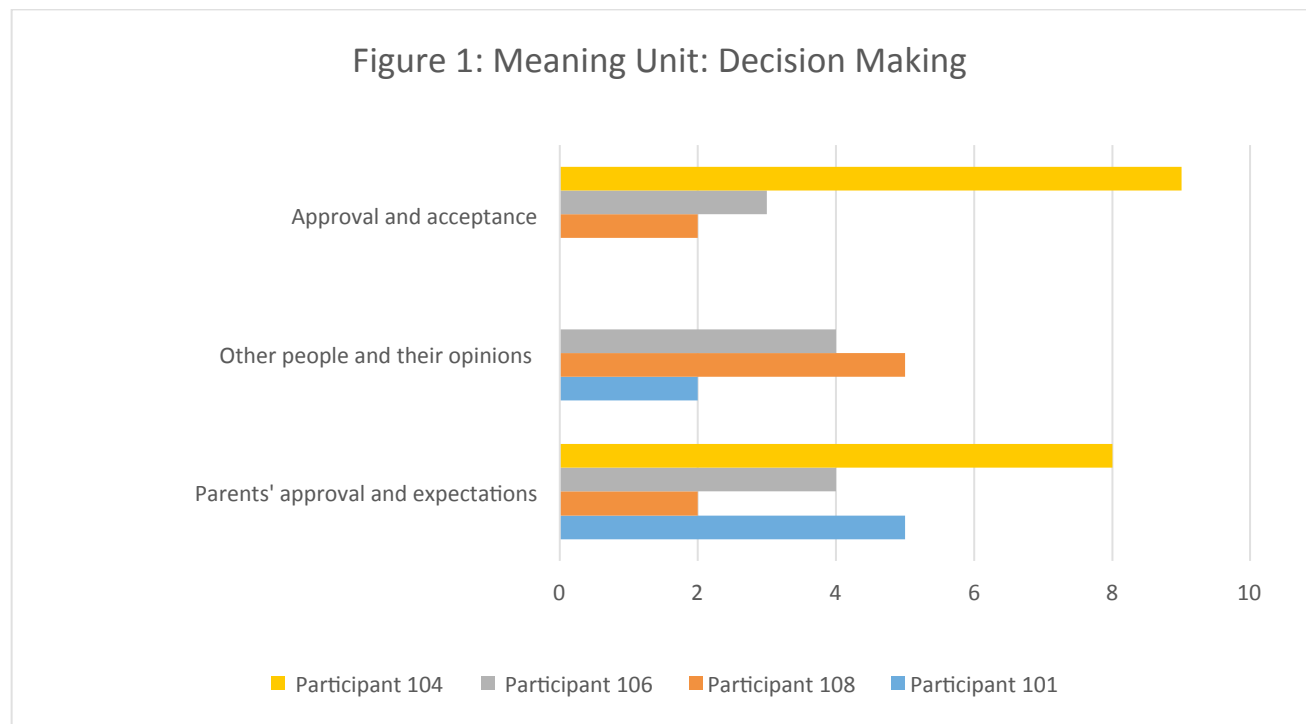


Figure 1: Meaning Unit: Decision Making

The term “decision making” was chosen based on the data collected from the interviews as several factors contributed to the decision making process. There is a distinction between different motivations behind the decision made, all of which regularly included others. These are: Parents’ approval and expectations, Other people and their opinions, and Approval and acceptance.

Attaining parents’ approval and meeting their expectations was described by participant #106 as part of the Arab culture; “the Arab culture in general, females or male, they just want to live up to what their parents want even more than what they want” (Interview 106-2, pg.11). Some examples of parents’ expectations and the need for approval included work (Interview 101-2), studies (Interview 101-2; Interview 108-2; Interview 106-2), dress code (Interview 108-2; Interview 106-2) and choice of partner (Interview 101-2; Interview 104-2).

Taking other's views or perspectives into consideration and listening to their opinions before making a decision was described as a way to make a more informed decision, particularly if the person's opinions were respected. Participants #106 and #108 respectively described the purpose of getting these opinions as a form of "help...if you need the extra help or opinions" (pg.14), as well as "their advice or their input on it to get their views" (pg.6). Taking others into consideration involved assessing the impact the decision may have on other people including family (101-2, 108-2, 106-2, 104-2), and extended family, such as cousins (106-2).

Seeking other's approval and acceptance while making decisions includes "giving the best impression" (Interview 108-2, pg.11) and making others happy (108-2, 106-2). Additionally, participant #103 described the approval of people around them as a need "to be able to do something comfortably" (pg.3).

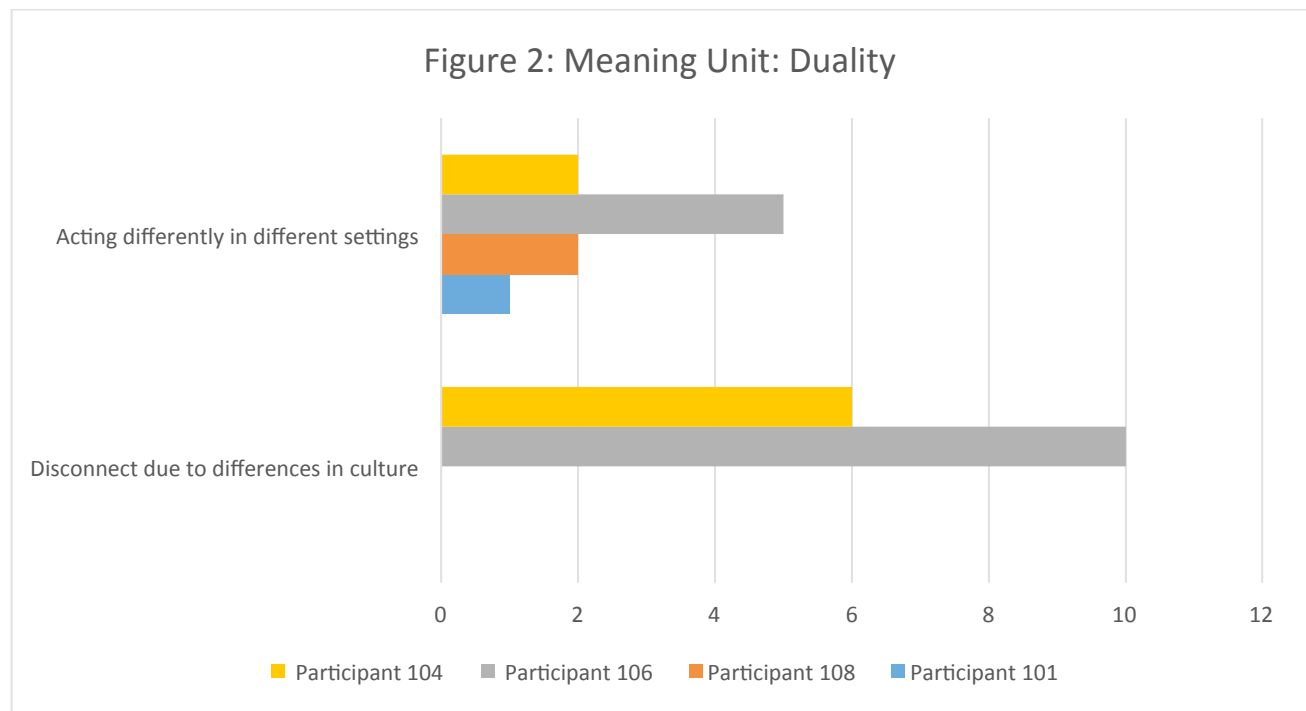


Figure 2: Meaning Unit: Duality

The term duality was deemed appropriate due to the descriptions of dual roles or cultures the participants experienced as well as the previous literature indicating that second generation immigrants identify with two different cultures strongly (Berry and Sabatier, 2009), and experience varying degrees of both their ethnic culture, and their societal culture. Duality was demonstrated in two ways: Disconnect due to differences in culture, and Acting differently in different settings.

Participant #106 described her experience of this duality as being “active in my community, my culture, and even my religion...and being raised in a Western culture, being born here...it’s hard sometimes” (Interview 106-2, p.3). The difficulty of maneuvering both cultures was often experienced as being disconnected or misunderstood by both Arabs and non-Arabs (106-2, 108-2). This disconnection or lack of understanding was described by participant #104 as an outcome of being born and raised in different countries and having different social circles.

“There are other things that they just don’t understand because of where they were born or how they were raised or just who they associated themselves with. And I think that conflicts with the things that I want because I’m born and raised and associated completely different than my parents (Interview 104-2, p.6).

Acting differently in different settings was based on an awareness of what behaviors and reactions were appropriate and accepted based on the social setting or group. Participant #108 talked about subconsciously acting a certain way when she’s around different groups of people “because different people take things differently” (Interview 108-2, p.104). When at work, participant #106 indicated that she’s “a completely different person” (Interview 106-1, p.4) than when she’s at home.

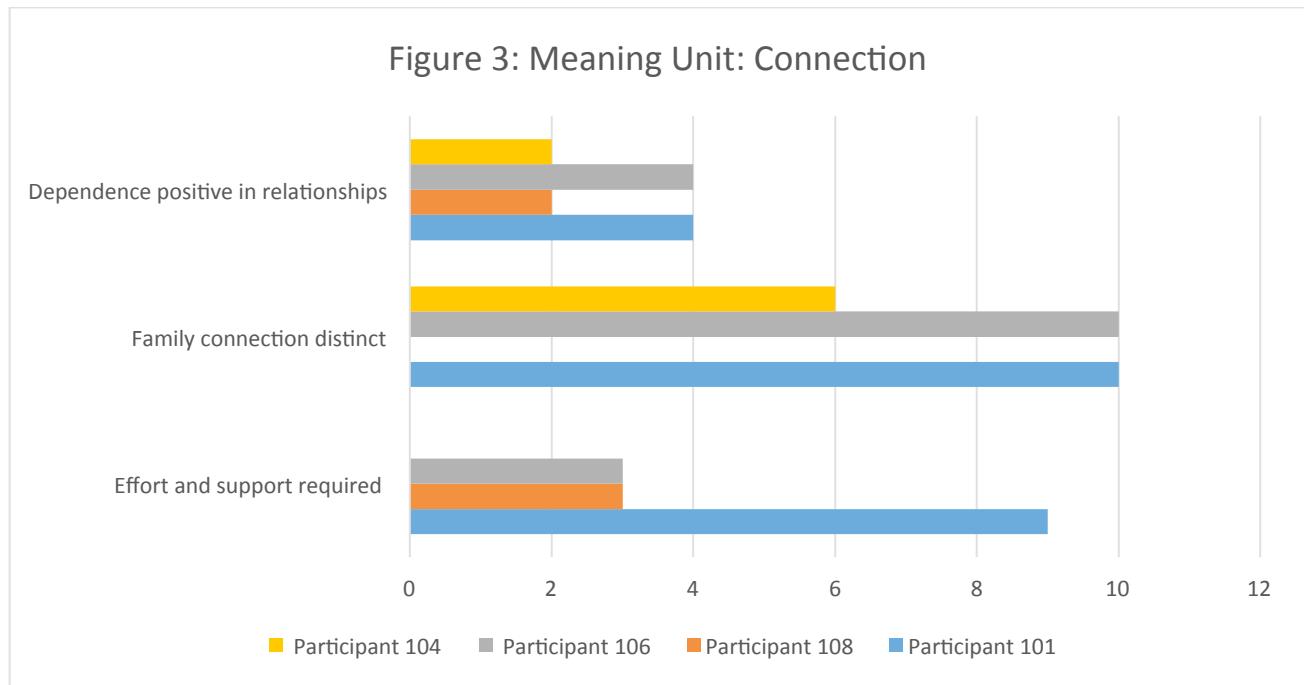


Figure 3: Meaning Unit: Connection

The term “connection” was chosen based on the data collected from the interviews as it was one of the main concepts discussed and was given great importance by the participants. Connection was described as effortful, was experienced differently among family, and involved dependence in a positive light. This led to the following categories: Effort and support required, Family connection distinct, and Dependence positive in relationships.

Effort and support being required for a connection included holistic relationships that were not limited to one scenario (Interview 106-1), but were built over time (Interview 101-1). Reciprocal support and caring (Interview 106-1; Interview 101-1; Interview 108-2) were also a requirement as demonstrated by participant #101’s description of healthy relationships: “we keep in touch. I’m there to support them, they are there to support me umm just sort of just look out for each other sort of thing” (Interview 101-1, p.1)

Family connection was viewed as distinct as family was often described as the primary support (Interview 101-1; Interview 106-1) and connected to all aspects of the participants' life (Interview 106-1). Participant #106 described her family's support: "even the things I volunteer and help in they help me too, they come to all my events. They support me. Anything that I am organizing they attend" (Interview 106-1, p.3). Although participant #104 did not describe her family as a primary support, she felt "the most connected to them because they are my family" (Interview 104-1, p.1).

Dependence was seen as a positive way to "support [each other] but at the same time you are helping each other become better" (Interview 108-1, p.3). Participant #104 described her perspective on dependence: "for me I think that having people to depend on is important for example like family I'm dependent on them for so many things like support and love and I feel like that's a good dependence" (Interview 104-1, p.3).

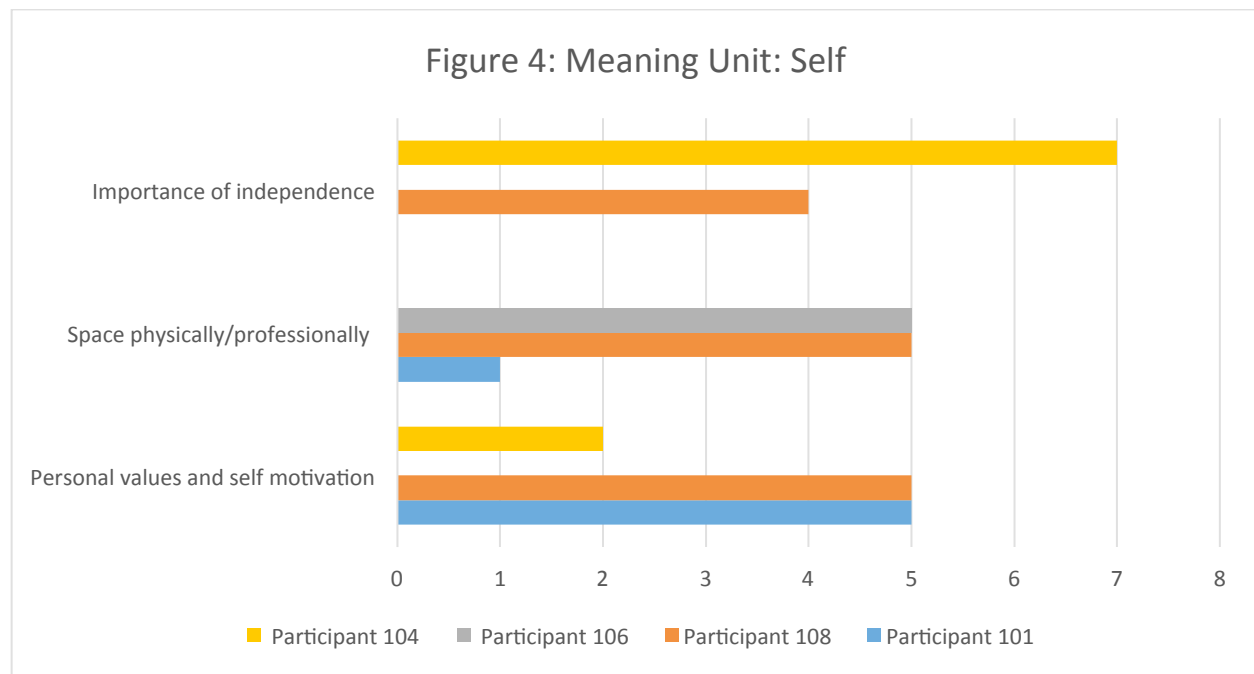


Figure 4: Meaning Unit: Self

The term self refers to the participants' sense of self. This concept was chosen to demonstrate the participants' experience of being separate, this includes their own thoughts, values and motivations outside of other people's influence. The participants' demonstration of their sense of self was seen primarily in three ways: Personal values and self-motivation, space physically and professionally, and importance of independence.

Personal values and motivation stemmed from a focus on doing what's right from the participant's perspective and standing for what they believe in. Participant #101 described the motivation behind his actions: "If I feel like I'm doing something right and I feel like it's what's best for me than I'll do it" (Interview 101-2, pg. 8). Similarly, participant #104 indicated that she would most likely do "what [her] heart thinks is right" (Interview 104-2, p.23). Participant #108 also emphasized the importance of standing for what she believed in and how she was "not gonna change what [she] stands for because of somebody else" (108-2, p.4).

Space was a reoccurring concept in the data, and was described as physical space and space as a result of career. Participant #106 indicated: “the only thing that is completely separate from my family is work so what happens at work is work and then I come home” (Interview 106-1, p.3). Likewise, participant # 108 explained that being separate from family members was due to scheduling: “We have different schedules. We all have responsibilities so we don't really have the time to do things together because we all like have different responsibilities. One is in high school, I am in university, dad goes to work, mom does other things, so we don't always have the time to be together kinda thing” (108-1. p.2)

The importance of independence was described as a need for more control by participant #104, and an ability “to do things on [her] own” (Interview 108-2, p.7) by participant #108. Participant #104 indicated that “everybody needs some type of independence in their life because it makes you feel like you have control over some aspects of your life and having some independence I feel like can make you happy in a way” (Interview 104-1, p.3-4).

Discussion

This section will answer the original research questions presented and discuss the results from the data collected using previous literature on the topic, including Bowen's theory, and reflecting on future implications. The research questions are: 1) How does the Arab population view differentiation? 2) Is the construct of differentiation valid for this population? 3) How are the items on the DSI-R (see Appendix A) understood or perceived by this specific population?

Research question 1: How does the Arab population view differentiation?

Differentiation is the interplay of the two life forces, individuality and togetherness. Bowen's explanation of individuality is the ability to "direct [one's] own life independent of relationship[s]" (p.66); this includes making decisions based on one's own intellect, values, and beliefs. When first asked about being a separate individual from family, 3 out of 4 participants understood this as physical separateness throughout their day. This was evident when participant #106 indicated that "the only thing that is completely separate from my family in my life is work because they can't come to work with me" (Interview 106-1, p.3).

In many instances participants understood being separate from their family as being different than them, which was perceived negatively. Participant #101 remarked that "separate would be sort of differences" (Interview 101-1, p.3), and that he didn't feel different because they were really close. Although participant #104 also indicated that being a separate individual was being different or having differences, she described this as being problematic for her. Participant #104: I don't know maybe because our values and beliefs are different, but I wouldn't want to disappoint my parents and show them who I really am (Interview 104-2, p.2). In this case, having her own beliefs or values did not necessarily mean that her decisions were based on these values

independent of her family; the participant later indicated that she “usually just agree with them or [does] what they want just to make them happy” (Interview 104-2, p.2).

The participants’ view and expectations of what individuality entails was also evident in the meaning units of the self, and decision-making (see Results: figure 4&1). When it came to the participants’ sense of self, they primarily described directing their own life independent of other relationships when it came to their professions and, in some cases, financial stability. Participant #101 indicated that independence was favorable and valued for him when it was financial: “I like to be financially independent...I pay my own tuition so I work to get my own tuition I don't really like to take money from other individuals” (interview 101-1, p.5). Being independent from family members or intimate partners seemed odd for him. On the other hand, participants #104 and #108 felt that there was a need for independence in order to have control over one’s life and be able to do things on their own.

As can be seen on the histogram (see Results: figure 1), the participants’ decision making involved others to one degree or another. Parents’ approval and acceptance was deemed of utmost importance in comparison with other relationships for all participants. Overall, whether participants indicated that they had identical values and beliefs as their parents (101, 106), had some differences (108) or conflicting values (104), all the participants indicated that they asked for their parents’ opinion and approval before making major decisions. For these participants, valuing parents’ input and opinion was part of their value system, which begs the question of whether being able to consult with family members, or seek their approval is in fact making decisions based on their values, except in this case they are collective values that are shared within the family or community.

The other life force Bowen describes is togetherness. The togetherness force is “the degree to which [one’s life] is governed by [the] relationship” (p.66); this includes being able to rely on one another without becoming fused.

Participant’s described connecting in holistic relationships that involved reciprocal caring and dependence, and were not situation specific. This took place by spending a lot of time together, updating each other on how their days went, being there for each other in times of need and keeping each other’s secrets. Participant #101 and #106 indicated that a lot of their social circles and close friends were family friends. Likewise, participant #104 remarked that it was easier to connect with someone who was Arab or spoke Arabic.

All participants considered connection with family unique (see Results: Figure 3). Many of the activities that they mentioned when connecting with others such as dinners and everyday conversations were also pertinent when it came to family. However, connecting with family included spending more time with them and discussing more details (Interview 101-1, 106-1). There was also the idea of innate connection with family members that was not the case with others; “if you don't really have time to communicate with your family members obviously you still feel very connected to them” (Interview 108-1, p.2). This included family members overseas, where the connection was not as strong since there was no face-to-face interaction; however staying connected over social media (facebook, whatsapp) was essential. Family connection also involved connecting through culture and traditions (Interview 104-1, 106-1); this included family gatherings with extended family (Interview 101-1, 108-1), and visits to family friends for various cultural and religious occasions. Participant #106 described how important her volunteer work was for her as she connected to other members within her ethnic community, and how her parents often attended or participated in these events (Interview 106-1).

Togetherness for this population involved everyday interactions with coworkers and friends that required time and effort, as well as an innate family connection that included extended family. These family connections often expanded to connections within the community due to traditional celebrations or cultural events. Overall, second generation Arab immigrants described individuation primarily as physical distance and career, and found differences problematic when family was involved. Togetherness involved reciprocal caring and dependence, while family connections were considered innate and unique.

Research question 2: Is the construct of differentiation valid for this population?

In order to determine whether Bowen's construct of differentiation of self is valid for the participants, the original definition will be used. Bowen (1978) described differentiation as the internal ability to connect with others while having an autonomous sense of self (Bowen, 1978), which is "the ability to be self-determined" (Kerr and Bowen, 1988, p.70). Bowen's theory also views differentiation as an "attempt to classify all human functioning on a single continuum" (Bowen, 1966, p.12). The validity of the construct includes the concept of differentiation, the continuum of functioning and the term differentiation itself.

Concept. Bowen (1978) described his theory as universal and indicated that differentiation, as a construct, is applicable to all individuals. As originally hypothesized, the concept of differentiation was pertinent for this population, although the participants' understanding or experience of it differed.

The participants scored slightly lower than the original sample in the study by Skowron and Friedlander (see Results: table 1). This variance is not significant as the sample sizes varied greatly. However, the Turkish sample size and US sample were similar. The results of the

Turkish sample, of 3.66, for the development of the Turkish DSI (Bulduk and Isik, 2015) were even closer. One possible explanation for the similar results with the U.S. and Turkish sample is that both collectivistic and individualistic cultural characteristics and values were present in this second-generation population. The results were also consistent with US and Turkish samples in that females were emotionally more reactive, and emotionally more overinvolved with significant others when compared with males (Schmitt & Skowron, 2003; Bulduk and Isik, 2015). These consistent and similar results may be regarded as evidence of external validity of the DSI-R, however this would need to be confirmed with larger samples.

Continuum. When comparing the results of the participants with the highest scores on the DSI-R and those with the lowest scores (see Results: table 2), it became evident that Bowen's concept of different levels of functioning along a continuum was applicable to this population. This was particularly evident in the meaning units "Decision making" and "Duality".

Participants with higher levels of differentiation described the ability to take decision based on what's best for them and what they believe in, however they also emphasized the importance of obtaining a second opinion or advice from family. Those with lower levels of differentiation indicated that they would not do anything that was totally against their values or in participant #104's case, that she "doesn't want to do from [her] heart" (Interview 104-2, p.17). However, participant #106 talked about being easily influenced and at times not voicing her opinion if the other person does not agree. Participant #104 also described not being able to be herself or voice her actual opinions when around family, and conforming to their values and beliefs. In summary, participants that scored higher on the DSI-R owned the decision making process and used family and friends as supports or resources throughout, while those who scored lower often felt like

their decisions were influenced by external pressures or a strong need to conform or seek approval.

Participants #104 and #106 also described being easily swayed or conforming in order to avoid conflict as it resulted in anxiety or difficulty functioning. This is in line with Bowen's understanding of lower differentiation. "The greater the fusion the less flexibility a person has for adaptation to stress from outside sources. Persons in a highly fused relationship experience significant anxiety due to the fear of rejection if the independent decision or action could potentially cause emotional separateness" (Haefner, 2014, p.837). Accordingly, these participants scored the lowest in the subcategories of "Emotional Reactivity" and "Fusion with Others". Participant #104 described her anxiety during times of conflict and said that: "it also comes back to making everyone happy. I just can't stand the thought, it makes me feel not good" (Interview 104-2, p.24). Likewise, participant #106 talked about not being able to function: "I think I have some type of anxiety so if there's something on my mind if someone upset me whether it's a friend or a family member I can't function properly" (Interview #106-2, p.6). Participant #101 and #108 described being stressed at times of work or school, however anxiety or an inability to function was not mentioned. This demonstrates the applicability of the continuum to this population as Bowen (1978) indicated that lower levels of differentiation resulted in higher levels of chronic anxiety.

Although what is considered fusion may differ for this population in terms of the role of parents and family throughout an individual's life, anxious over-involvement and inability to express one's beliefs and opinions due to fear of rejection is a characteristic of fusion. This was also seen in the literature with the Spanish population, as "well differentiated young adults in Spanish society are likely more involved with their parents, consider their parents opinions and

input, in ways that extend beyond that typically observed in U.S. culture” (Anchia, Skowron, Rodriguez-Gonzalez, 2015), however it does not extend to emotional or anxious over involvement.

Another major difference seen in the results was in regards to the meaning unit of duality (see Results: figure 2). All the participants were in agreement that different settings warranted different behaviors or actions. This was explained as an adjustment or adaptation to the different perceptions various settings and social groups had. The main disparity was seen when participants that scored lower on the DSI-R described feeling disconnected from people of a different ethnic culture or “White coworkers”. Participant #104 indicated that if someone is raised completely different than you then it’s hard to connect to them (Interview 104-1, p.1). Similarly, participant #106 indicated that her coworkers often did not understand her lifestyle or had negative reactions to it; she indicated that she gets “a lot of negative stuff” at work because she still lives with her parents and depends on her mother for many household chores. Although the research indicates that this duality or difficulty understanding the other culture is often a reality of most second-generation immigrants, “those who involve themselves in both their heritage culture and that of the national society (by way of integration) have the most positive psychological well-being” (Berry and Sabatier, 2009).

Term. While the construct was applicable to this population and a continuum seemed appropriate, the term “differentiation” may be viewed negatively by second-generation Arab immigrants. Bowen described differentiation as differentiating from the family (Kerr and Bowen, 1988). During the first interview, when participants were asked about what being a separate individual looked like in their family, the responses for participant #101, 106, and 108 ranged from confusion and misunderstanding to shock. Participant #101 responded saying: “separate?!”

What do you mean by separate?...I wouldn't say I act separately or different versus with my family" (Interview 101-1, p.3). Likewise, participant #108 asked: "what do you mean by that? How are we separate individuals? So I guess because we have different schedules" (Interview 108-1, p.1-2). As previously mentioned, participants primarily understood being separate from family as physical distance.

The literature discusses the potential negative impact of separating language when addressing collective societies. For other collective societies such as the Philippines and China, differentiation is not necessarily separating from the collective, or family, rather it is developing a personal identity within this collective society and being able to have a voice in the family (Chan-So and Lam, 2015). This also seems to be the case for second-generation Arab immigrants and was evident when comparing those who scored higher on the scale to those who scored lower. Those who scored lower on the DSI-R did not want to necessarily "differentiate" from their family, however they described a need to express themselves and voice their opinions within the family. Using a term that implies integration instead of differentiation would be more fitting for this population.

Based on the participants' scores and responses, the concept of differentiation is valid for this population, and the continuum of functioning was evident when comparing the results of those who scored lower and those who scored higher on the scale. However, how differentiation is described and what is considered healthy, particularly in regards to decision making and the role of parents, may differ for this population.

Research question 3: How are the items on the DSI-R (see Appendix A) understood or perceived by this specific population?

The participants were asked what came to mind when they heard each of the items on the scale, and what is it that they liked about it or what did not fit for them. There were two items that the participants had difficulty understanding: item #36 and item #46. Item #36 was asking whether the participant often felt smothered when with their spouse or partner. This item was graded using a reverse score indicating that feeling smothered was considered less favorable or negative. To the contrary, all the participants (#101, #104, #106, #108) perceived being “smothered” as something positive, and participant #106 asked if smothered meant spoiled. She indicated that she did not like the question because it was not understandable (Interview 106-2). Participant # 108 equated feeling smothered with when she felt loved or cared for by her partner. She also indicated that she “didn’t like the question because [she] feels like there could have been a better use of a word instead of smothered” (Interview 108-2, p.11).

Item #46 was: “I worry about people close to me getting sick, hurt, or upset” (DSI-R, p.2). This was also graded based on a reversed score, as the item does not indicate that the worry is founded or time bound. None out of ten participants involved in this study rated this item at a 5/6 including the highest scoring participants. Participant #101, 104 and 106 indicated that this was very true with a score of 6, and participant #108 scored a 5. When asked about this particular item, participant #101 said: “[This is] very true. Yah I care a lot about my family and my friends so obviously I care about their well-being” (Interview 101-2, p.11). Similarly, participant #104 indicated that she “would be worried if someone would get sick” (Interview 104-2, p.25). Participant #106 and 108 also described how they would feel if something were to happen to someone they cared about. The participants found this question easy to answer, however they

perceived the question differently; the participants' answers were based on how they would feel if they know someone was sick, hurt or upset.

Some items may not be as relevant or may need to be reworded due to cultural differences. This was also the case during the development of the Turkish DSI (T-DSI) as the researchers indicated that the deleted items might be due to cultural differences (Bulduk & Isik, 2015).

Several items touched on the topic of parents such as items # 9, 22, and 45. Item #9, "I want to live up to my parents' expectations", was scored at a 5 for participants #101, 104, and #108, while participant #106 scored a 6. Item #22 is similar but inquires about trying to live up to parents' expectations instead of wanting to. Participants #101, 104 and 106 talked about making their parents proud. Participant # 106 related this sentiment to culture: "I think that also that's very in our culture too. Like the Arab culture in general, females or male, they just want to live up to what their parents want even more than what they want" (Interview 106-2, p.3). Several participants indicated that they knew their parents wanted what was best for them, and that pleasing their parents and making them happy was a good thing. This included asking for their parents' opinion before making major decisions, which was addressed by item #45: "I feel it's important to hear my parents' opinion before making decisions". Participants #101 and 104 scored 6 on this item, while participants #106 and 108 scored 5 and 4 respectively. Although all the participants agreed that living up to parents' expectations and asking for their opinion was favorable, participant #108 described sometimes feeling restricted like "there's certain things that [she] can't do because of [her] family" (Interview 108-2, p.1). Likewise, participant #104 questioned whether she had to live up to her parents' expectations and whether these expectations were fair (Interview 104-2). The respect the participants had for their parents and their opinions did not negate their need to be able to make their own choices and decisions.

It is recommended that the items involving parent expectations and opinions be re-visited. One important distinguishing factor is whether the parents' expectations and opinions are in line with the participants. Participant #106 articulated this: "What I do, how I studied, how I act and dress, who even my friends are, it's very true of me. So this question I don't know for me I don't think it's a negative thing saying I live to my parents' expectation but I feel like when you answer yes or no or a scale it doesn't express the reality of it. It doesn't express how you feel about it" (Interview 106-2, p.9). Wanting and trying to live up to parents' expectations is engrained in the culture, however a distinction needs to be made between whether parents' expectations and values are in line with the participants' or not. This will be more telling in terms of the participant's level of differentiation as it will help determine whether the participant is making decisions based on shared values and beliefs or against their own.

Cultural implications were not only reflected in items addressing parents but also in the impression given to others. The Arab culture is a collective culture in which members are considered to have a collective responsibility to act morally, and thus reputation and impressions are very important (Hwa-Froelich and Vigil, 2004). When asked about item #38: "I often wonder about the kind of impression I create", all the participants scored a 6, with the exception of participant #101 who scored a 5. This item was also graded using reverse scoring. Participant #101 emphasized the importance of impressions: "Obviously I do care about what people think about me especially from a cultural viewpoint, from my family what they think about sort of thing" (Interview 101-2, p.9). One distinction that was made by higher scoring participants versus lower scoring participants was caring about impressions or wanting approval versus needing it and feeling uneasy or anxious without it. Impressions are important in collective cultures, however if they are a cause of anxiety and instability that becomes problematic.

Several participants (#104, #106, #108) indicated that one limitation of the scale is that it did not allow for further explanation and thus limited the participant's ability to respond appropriately. They also indicated that the questions about family were the easiest to answer, and other questions needed to be more specific as the response varies based on who is involved (i.e. parents, family, coworkers, general public). Participant #106 also felt that certain questions, particularly the ones related to dependence or parents' approval, "gear people to answer a certain way" (Interview #106-2, p.15).

Examining the separate items allowed for more insight into the participants' responses. Some items were misunderstood, or difficult to understand (item #36 and #46), while others needed to take into consideration cultural implications in regards to parents (item #9, #22, #45), or community and impressions as a whole (item #38). It is recommended that some of these items be re-visited.

Implications

The findings of this study are a significant contribution to the literature as they provide a better understanding of differentiation for second-generation Arab immigrants, including what to expect from emerging adults and what is considered within the developmental norm for this population. This research allows for a starting conversation on the possible implications for differentiation when the cultural context is taken into consideration and better understood. Whether during the administration of the DSI-R, or in therapy in general, shedding some light on the experience of second-generation Arab immigrants allows therapists to avoid judgmental attitudes and be more open to understanding the collective or authoritarian background specifically. Although there is no culture-specific DSI for this population to date, this study

highlights what differences to look out for or what may need to be discussed further if the DSI-R is administered with a member of this population.

Although the concept of differentiation as well as the continuum of functioning was pertinent to this population, the validity of a scale should be analyzed at the item level to determine the appropriateness of each item. This study provided commentary on specific items that the participants did not relate to as well, or found difficult to understand. In order to have a reliable instrument, any biased or culturally specific items should be removed and other items that are sensitive to the particular culture examined should be added. The analysis provided may be used in future studies to further explore item validity and work towards developing a DSI-R for this specific population.

Limitations and Future Direction

There were several limitations to this study, the most evident being the small sample size as there were only 10 participants. There was also low academic diversity as 90% of the participants were either university students or graduates. Socioeconomic status and gender were also not taken into account. Therefore, these findings cannot be generalized to all second-generation Arab immigrants' experience of differentiation. Another limitation of this study is the diversity that entails the Arab nationality. The twenty-two countries may all identify as Arab and exhibit characteristics of a collective society, however there are also many differences, from geographic location, as these countries can be found on different continents, to the ethnic practices and parenting styles. In addition, the questionnaires were self-administered so the data was based on the participant's report which could have been affected by socially desirable responses. There may have also been researcher bias in interpreting the results, as the researcher is a second-generation Arab immigrant. This was mediated by calculating inter-coder reliability with an individual outside the population being studied. There were also various reviews by the

supervising committee. Future studies should be conducted with larger, more diverse samples including participants with varying age groups and incomes.

Conclusion

To conclude, although the literature indicates that Bowen's theory is universal, there is little research on the applicability of differentiation to collective societies, and particularly second generation Arab immigrants. This study aimed to determine whether the concept of differentiation was valid for this population and contribute to the research by providing a better understanding of this population's experience of differentiation. This will allow for more client centered therapy and provide commentary for possible adaptations to the DSI-R for this population in the future. The study found that differentiation was valid for this population as a continuum of functioning was evident between participants with different DSI-R scores. However, the experience of individuation and togetherness was varied due to the unique role of family and the nature of collective communities. The terminology used whether in the DSI-R or counseling in general was found to be important, as encouragement of separateness may be harmful and against the client's values. Assisting clients in integrating within a collective community while developing personal identity and finding their voice within their families may be a healthier alternative for this population.

Appendix A

DSI-R

These are questions concerning your thoughts and feelings about yourself and relationships with others. Please read each statement carefully and decide how much the statement is *generally true* of you on a 1 (not at all) to 6 (very) scale. If you believe that an item does not pertain to you (e.g., you are not currently married or in a committed relationship, or one or both of your parents are deceased), please answer the item according to your best guess about what your thoughts and feelings would be in that situation. Be sure to answer every item and try to be as honest and accurate as possible in your responses.

	NOT AT ALL TRUE OF ME			VERY TRUE OF ME		
1. People have remarked that I'm overly emotional.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I have difficulty expressing my feelings to people I care for.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I often feel inhibited around my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I tend to remain pretty calm even under stress.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I usually need a lot of encouragement from others when starting a big job or task.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. When someone close to me disappoints me, I withdraw from him/her for a time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. No matter what happens in my life, I know that I'll never lose my sense of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I tend to distance myself when people get too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I want to live up to my parents' expectations of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I wish that I weren't so emotional.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I usually do not change my behavior simply to please another person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. My spouse/partner could not tolerate it if I were to express to him/her my true feelings about some things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. When my spouse/partner criticizes me, it bothers me for days.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. At times my feelings get the best of me and I have trouble thinking clearly.	1	2	3	4	5	6

15. When I am having an argument with someone, I can separate my thoughts about the issue from my feelings about the person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I'm often uncomfortable when people get too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. I feel a need for approval from virtually everyone in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. At times I feel as if I'm riding an emotional roller-coaster.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. There's no point in getting upset about things I cannot change.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. I'm concerned about losing my independence in intimate relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. I'm overly sensitive to criticism.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I try to live up to my parents' expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. I'm fairly self-accepting.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I often feel that my spouse/partner wants too much from me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. I often agree with others just to appease them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. If I have had an argument with my spouse/partner, I tend to think about it all day.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. I am able to say "no" to others even when I feel pressured by them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. When one of my relationships becomes very intense, I feel the urge to run away from it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Arguments with my parent(s) or sibling(s) can still make me feel awful.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. If someone is upset with me, I can't seem to let it go easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. I'm less concerned that others approve of me than I am in doing what I think is right.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. I would never consider turning to any of my family members for emotional support.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. I often feel unsure when others are not around to help me make a decision.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. I'm very sensitive to being hurt by others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. My self-esteem really depends on how others think of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. When I'm with my spouse/partner, I often feel smothered.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. When making decisions, I seldom worry about what others will think.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. I often wonder about the kind of impression I create.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. When things go wrong, talking about them usually makes it worse.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. I feel things more intensely than others do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. I usually do what I believe is right regardless of what others say.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. Our relationship might be better if my spouse/partner would give me the space I need.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43. I tend to feel pretty stable under stress.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44. Sometimes I feel sick after arguing with my spouse/partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45. I feel it's important to hear my parents' opinions before making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46. I worry about people close to me getting sick, hurt, or upset.	1	2	3	4	5	6

DSI-R Subscale Composition: (underlined means reverse scored)

Emotional Reactivity: 1, 6, 10, 14, 18, 21, 26, 30, 34, 38, 40;

"I" Position: 4, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 31, 35, 41, 43;

Emotional Cutoff: 2, 3, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 39, 42;

Fusion with Others: 5, 9, 13, 17, 22, 25, 29, 33, 37, 44, 45, 46.

Appendix B

Interview I

I will be asking you some questions related to your sense of self and your relationships.

1. How would you describe your relationships in general? What would the relationship look like if you felt really connected to the person?
2. How did you connect with your family? What did connectedness look like in your family overall? To what degree did it happen?
3. How were you a separate individual in your family? To what degree did it happen?
4. How is this the same or different than connectedness or separateness at work or school?
5. What does dependence mean to you? Can you give me an example or an incident?
6. What does independence mean to you? Can you give me an example or an incident?
7. What does interdependence mean to you? Can you give me an example or an incident?

Interview II

I will be reading different statements to you from a scale about relationships. I would like you to tell me what comes to mind when you hear the statement.

(Read each scale item)

What comes to mind? Follow up question: What is it that you liked about it/ What doesn't fit for you?

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