In Search of Global Identity: The Challenges of Culture

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In Search of Global Identity: The Challenges of Culture

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the challenges of culture on global identity, which is an emerging concept in this era of globalization. Using Social Identity Theory, three options were examined in this study, namely; the cosmological viewpoint that provides an important source for global identity; otherness, which is located either in our own past or alternatively (in-groups and outgroups) in our contemporary being, when seen from a point of view of a possible future position in world history, and, thirdly, a need to rethink the basic ontological identity from a perspective that is compatible with big history. Employing secondary data on global identity, it was revealed that scholarship has often been mute on the construct, which indicates a research need to extend and review the earlier works of scholars in this subject area. The paper concludes by outlining a cosmic, temporal, relational and ethical conception of global cosmo-political identity that is based on both positive and negative elements that seek "GlobaliCITY".
Keywords: *cultural policy; global identity; cosmological; in-groups/out-groups; social identity theory.*

INTRODUCTION

In search of solutions to the many pressing social, legal, environment, economic, political and technological issues, individuals, corporate bodies and government institutions have often sought global interdependencies (Hubert, Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). This is a result of ideological shifts in internal politics, institutional changes, technological advancement, opened physical borders and social boundaries. These occurrences have necessitated an introspection of globalization and how it has been impacted by self and identity.

Notwithstanding the increased attention given by scholars and practitioners to cultural discourses, the issues relating to the field of global identity and self has often been relegated to the background (Hong, Morris, Chiu & Benet-Martinez, 2000; Lehman, Chiu & Schaller, 2004; Chiu & Hong, 2006; Chiu & Cheng 2007; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). In addition, despite the increasing interconnectedness of societies, economies and cultures on contemporary social life; comprehensive literature searches and seminal work on global identity and culture have reveal a disconnect for the past decade. The question is, to what extent does culture influence global identity? To bridge this gap and find an answer to this pertinent question, the paper discusses global identity and cultural challenges facing the world as man seeks to globalize, identify and transform the society in which we live.

Using the Social Identity Theory (SIT), we argue that the globally-oriented consumer shares cosmopolitan values and identifies with the global community. In this sense, cosmopolitanism is considered a value orientation describing a person's openness to other cultures, while global identification captures the degree of psychological and emotional investment in the global community (Cannon & Yaprak, 2002; Der-Karabetian & Ruiz, 1997).

In the sections that follow, the theoretical background to global identify is reviewed followed by determinants of global identify and the challenges of culture in achieving global identify. We conclude with some remarks on global identity and make proposals for continua work on the theoretical development of the construct that underlies both the dynamics of global crises (for example, rising inequality and climate change), and possibilities for ameliorating them through rethinking of cultural policies (Bennett, 2009). The term "GlobaliCITY" is introduced to mean globalization as a multifaceted process, and its effects are elaborated with respect to identity, culture and collective action.

Global Identity

Searching for a more pragmatic definition of global identity, the term cosmopolitanism has featured in many studies. Historically, global identity has also been thought to be an aspect of cosmopolitanism, which is an older term used in literature (for example, Harris, 1927; Lammers, 1974; Lentz, 1950; Singer, 1965). Appiah (2006) also considers cosmopolitanism as an early idea resembling global identity. Consistent to this view, reference to cosmopolitanism as simply being a citizen of the universe or cosmos has been made and, therefore, it has been given three fundamental postulations. Firstly, that homo-sapiens are recognized as individuals, rather than the group or family, and as the ultimate unit of moral concern. Secondly, moral concern applies equally to every human being, and, thirdly, human beings are of special moral concern to everyone, not only to fellow citizens (Pogge, 1992).

Global identity has also been defined in many different ways by academics and practitioners in the space where business and globalization converge. The United Nations (UN) offers the best conceptualization of global identity, and defines global identity as "consciousness of an international society or global community transcending national boundaries, without necessarily negating the importance of state, nation, or domestic society" (Shinohara, 2004, p.1). The aim of such an identity within the parlance of the UN is to foster cooperative action meant to counter the negative ideological effects of global phenomena in the form of wars, sicknesses, poverty, discrimination, environmental degradation, and to promote positive outcomes such as global justice, education and mobility (Shinohara, 2004) to aid in transforming society. Accordingly, global identity has been seen as a means of relating to the global in its entirety and is often used synonymously with "universal" or "worldwide" and "cosmopolitanism".

The concept of global identity continues to be important in both political and developmental debates centering on human rights and justice (Hesmondhalgha, Nisbett, Oakley, & Lee, 2015) particularly when the focus is on how to assign moral values to human beings (Nussbaum, 1996; Waldron, 2000; Calhoun, 2003; Featherstone, 2003; Held, 2005; Appiah, 2006). Sociologists also study cosmopolitanism, mostly in the context of understanding social roles in a global culture (Merton, 1968; Gouldner, 1957, 1958; Hannerz, 1990) and trans-national social movements (Tarrow & McAdam, 2005; McAdam, Sidney, & Tilly, 2001; McCarthy, 1997; McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996).

Arrow and Sundberg (2004) studying global peace and conflict, support the notion of international identity and assert that identification with all peoples of the world forms the core of global identity. They maintain that important pathways leading to international identity include relationships with people who live abroad, dual citizenship and international travel. Consistent with this notation, recently, Turken and Rudmin (2013) empirically developed a 10-item global identity scale (GIS-10) and found a two factor orthogonal solution, one factorial sub-scale representing cultural openness, and the other representing non-nationalism.

However, within the context of the UN, the term global citizenship has surfaced, which is different to global identity and globalization.

Global Citizenship and Globalization

Global citizenship has been defined as a tension between both a moral thinking and an ethical character that guides individuals or group's ways of understanding local and global contexts and their responsibilities within different communities. It is also determined through an intricate set of commitments to natural interests (love of family, communal fairness, self-interest) and a way of universal equality with notions of caring for one another and society in totality. The term globalization is not a new phenomenon (Broad & Heckscher, 2003), and has been used variously in both popular and academic literature to describe a process, a condition, a system, a force and an age (Steger, 2009). Whereas some see globalization as a mere economic process that involves the opening and crossing of borders as an aspect of economic integration (Castles & Davidson in Chryssochoou, 2005), others see globalization as a more comprehensive process that affects not only economic but also social spheres of life through an increase in cross-border social, cultural and technological exchanges (Globalization Guide, 2005). As a process, Norris (2000) defines globalization as "a single 'place' in its own right". That is to say, "globalization is understood as a process that erodes national boundaries, integrating national economies, cultures, technologies, and governance, producing complex relations of mutual interdependence" (Norris, 2000, p. 2). There seem to be a conspiring Government and the political class deprived to act in a concrete fashion to move from their status quo as a result of globalization (Burgi-Golub, 2009).

Global Identity as a Transforming Agent

Like global citizenship, global identity can also promote working for the good of the whole, with its emphasis on universal human rights. At its best, it inspires coordination and cooperation among the people of all nations to improve the quality of life for all. Globalization also has the ability to make people alert of the existence of their psychological alternatives, thus increasing their national attachment and ethnic pride (Turken & Rudmin, 2013). On the other hand, globalization opens a wide range of options for groupings, even groups that are geographically dispersed, allowing almost infinite ways of identification with each other.

However, well-intentioned internationalists may over-generalize a practice that has proved useful in their own country and take an inappropriate "one-size fits all" approach that is actually based on ethnocentric assumptions. Less well-intentioned internationalists may take an imperialist view of the world as a field of operations for themselves and their country, often with scant regard for the aspirations of people whose interests are not in harmony with their own. Therefore, the anti-globalization movement can be viewed as a protest against a dark side of global identity by people who are, paradoxically, themselves motivated by a broad identification that could be classified as global human identity.

Social Identity Theory

The social identity theory posits that society categorizes itself into groups (Brown, 2002). Within this categorization is the social comparison process of comparing in-groups with out-groups, which, in turn, provides incentive to achieve positive group distinctiveness that leads to the enhancement of the in-group's image, prestige and resources or, in negative terms, resulting in such issues as derogating and discriminating against the out-groups (Esses, Dovidio, Semenya & Jackson, 2005).

Social identity theory argues that people have as many social identities as there are groups to which they feel attached (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005). This attachment, in the context of globalization, introduces greater complexities of in-group and out-group options. More fundamentally, they shape the self, social (or collective) identity and define the contribution of social group membership to the self-concept. In

other words, social identity allows individuals to fulfill motivations for self-worth and distinctiveness, by drawing favorable comparisons between the in-group and out-group on relevant and valued dimensions.

Whereas social identity theory has commonly been associated with intergroup discrimination, competition and conflict, it provides a comprehensive methodological framework for viewing how people manage their group identity within the context of social status and power between groups (see, for example, Reicher, 2004). In addition, social identity has often been formulated from the perspective of disadvantaged groups (for example, minority groups) and used to describe the psychological and structural dimensions that help group members to challenge the status quo (Tajfel & Turner, 1979 & 1982; Tajfel, 1982).

This "social identity approach" is arguably the most influential perspective for understanding both intragroup and intergroup processes, making reference to culture. However, a noteworthy caveat is the assumption of a clear division between in-group and out-groups exists between the "us" and "them" as argued by Hornsey and Hogg (2000). This assumption is most readily applied to distinct identities that have well-defined stereotypical and normative content. In many real-life settings, however, these distinctions and definitions are blurred, and this is especially true with respect to cultural groups.

Culture has been conceived as "a package of traditions that defines individuals and groups of individuals and an agent that shapes them in certain and predictable ways" (Markowitz, 2004, p. 330). When referring to national culture, the main target is on key issues that reflect on the way nations differ in empirically verifiable ways as argued by Hofstede (1984). Hall (1996) shows that culture affects everything people do in their society because of their ideas, values, attitudes, and normative or expected patterns of behaviour. Culture relates the nature and diversity of arts and the humanities and their concern with what it means to be a human (Oancea, A, Florez-Petour, T., & Atkinson, J., 2015) making it a rich area for enquiry and nit just a terminology on values.

In addition, culture is not genetically inherited, and cannot happen on its own, but is always shared by groups in society. Culture, therefore, pervades society and shows itself in the way groups believe, assume, consume, interact, react, express themselves, design, value, care, associate and dissociate with one another. In effect, as observed way back by Hofstede (1984, pp. 21-23), culture is "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another". This collective programming is passed from generation to generation, and changes all the time because each generation adds something of its own before passing it on. It is usual that people take their culture for granted and assumed it to be correct because it is the only one, or at least the first, to be learned.

Culture in groups is formed around systems of meaning as a result of to human interaction that continuously produces and reproduces culture (Kashima, 2007, 2008). Thus, whereas clear distinctions between cultural in-groups and out-groups occur (Hammack, 2008; Kashima, 2007, 2008), an individual's sense of cultural identity is usually vaguer, and represents degrees of attachment to many (possibly conflicting) cultural worldviews (Mok & Morris, 2012). Moreover, because of this elasticity, cultural identities carry the possibilities of cultural rejection or resistance (Gjerde, 2004; Hammack, 2008). Cultural rejection relates to an existing culture of reference, such as today's globalized culture. However, the individual's identity is juxtaposed from this reference point, a possibility generally not measured in traditional social identities. Whereas identification indicates "who and what we are", rejection emphasises "who and what we are not" (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). These potentialities of "affirmative" or "rejection" cultural characteristics make them especially applicable to the psychological study of globalization, which propagates cultural content across established group boundaries.

It would be useful to consider all these cultural characteristics and issues while studying consumption patterns, as well as other contextual issues, such as biological framing, locality, language, population and socio-cultural traditions when investigating the challenges of culture in relation to global identity. Against this background, Fitzgerald (2009), argues that the real challenge of identity of reaching beyond culture seems to touch on issues particularly when it comes to recognizing, appreciating and respecting cultural differences where they exist.

The Cultural Challenges

Etymologically, the word culture is derived from the Latin root word "cultura" or "cultus" which means to "inhabit, cultivate, or honor", which, in a general, sense refers to human activity. Culture is defined as a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that define a group of people, such as the people of a particular region, and includes the elements that characterize a particular peoples' way of life. Different definitions of culture reflect different theories for understanding, or criteria for valuing human activity. From an anthropological perspective, culture is used to mean universal human capacity to classify experiences and to encode and communicate them symbolically. Since culture is learned, people living in different places have different cultures. There can also be different cultures in different countries, and there can also be shared cultures among continents. Table 1 provides a categorization of cultural elements that have the tendency to influence the way people live and group.

Table 1: Categorization of cultural elements

Culture and Humanities	Arts and Entertainment	Performing Arts	Visual Arts	Games and Toys	Sports	Mass media
Classics	Arts and crafts	Circus	Architecture	Board games	Basketball	Broadcasting
Critical theory	Celebrity	Dance	Comics	Card games	Canoeing and kayaking	Film
Cultural anthropology	Censorship in the arts	Film	Crafts	Dolls	Cricket	Internet
Folklore	Festivals	Music	Design	Puppetry	Martial arts	Magazines
Food culture	Humor	Opera	Drawing	Puzzles	Motorcycling	Newspapers
Food and drink	Literature	Storytelling	Film	Role-playing games	Running	Publications
Languages	Museums	Theatre	Animation	Video games	Surfing	Publishing
Literature	Parties		New media art		Tennis	Television
Museology	Poetry		Painting		Football	Radio
Mythology			Photography		Soccer	
Philosophy			Sculpture		Ruby	
Popular culture						
Science and culture						
Tradition						

According to social identity theory, group-level challenges to a social order require (a) that social mobility of individuals is supposed to be unachievable (namely, individuals cannot persuasively hope to exit their lower position and enter into the dominant one); and (b) that lower-status groups can envisage an option to an illegitimate social order (Reicher, 2004).

The interface of culture and biology provides one foundation for an understanding of cultural identity. How each individual's biological situation is given meaning becomes a psychobiological unit of integration and analysis. Humanity's essential physiological needs, for example, food, shelter, clothing, sex, avoidance of pain are one part of the reality pattern of cultural identity. Another part consists of those drivers that reach out to the social order. At this psychosocial level of integration, general needs are directed and organized by culture. The needs for affection, acceptance, recognition, affiliation, status,

belonging and interaction with other human beings are enlivened and given recognizable form by culture. For example, the intersection of culture and the psychosocial level of integration in comparative status responses are clearly evident.

The capacity for language is also universally-accepted as biologically given. Any child, given unimpaired apparatus for hearing, vocalizing and thinking can learn to speak and understand any human language. Yet the language that is learned by a child is contingent to the place and the manner of upbringing. This is evident from the way grammar and phonetic systems and the patterns of language affect the expression of thoughts and, very possibly, more essential ways of thinking. Language in itself may not be merely an inventory of linguistic items but rather itself the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual's intellectual activity. For example, anthropologists learn to communicate in another language in order to do field work. Language, therefore, reflects the way we think, interpret and transmit information as well as understand and add meaning to communications.

Norton (1997, p. 409) describes the relationship between language and identity as "intriguing" as when language is spoken not only is information being exchanged, speakers are also "constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world", therefore, they are "engaged in identity construction and negotiation" (Norton, 1997, p, 410).

There is also close relationship between language and culture, as a result, the terminology used by a culture primarily reflects that culture's interest and concerns. Therefore, language features not only influence culture but social identity including in-groups and out-groups.

It is the unwritten task of every culture to organize, integrate, and maintain the psychosocial patterns of the individual, especially in the developmental years of childhood. Each culture causes such patterns in ways that are unique, comprehensive and logical to the conditions and predispositions that underlie the culture. This imprinting of the forms of interconnection that are needed by the individual for psychosocial survival, acceptance, and enrichment is a significant part of the socialization and enculturation process. For example, respect for the aged is often imprinted by culture. In many Asian societies, as age indicates status, contempt or disrespect for old people represents a serious breach of conduct demanding face-saving measures

In the United States economic status is demonstrated by the conspicuous consumption of products while in other countries status is gained by giving all possessions away generously.

Yet of equal importance in the imprinting is the structuring of higher forms of individual consciousness. Abraham Maslow (1962) has long suggested that, human needs form a hierarchy in which the most pre-potent motivations will monopolize consciousness and will tend, of themselves, to organize the various capacities and capabilities of the organism. In the sequence of development, the needs of infancy and childhood revolve primarily around physiological and biological necessities, namely, nourishment by food, water and warmth. Correspondingly, psychosocial needs are most profound in adolescence and young adulthood when the people engage in establishing themselves through mar "un-becoming" something different from before while yet mindful of the grounding in their primary cultural reality.

To be a citizen of the world, or an international person, has long been an idea toward which many strive. The multicultural individual is propelled from identity to identity through a process of both cultural learning and cultural un-learning. As a result, the multicultural person is always recreating his or her identity. He or she moves through one experience of self to another, incorporating here, discarding there, responding dynamically and situationally. This style of self-process, is characterized by an interminable series of experiments, discoveries and explorations, some shallow, some profound, each of which can readily be abandoned in favor of still new, psychological quests. For West (1992), identity relates to

desire - the desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation, and the desire for security and safety. Such desires, West (1992) asserts, cannot be separated from the distribution of material resources in society. People who have access to a wide range of resources in a society will have access to power and privilege, which will in turn influence how they understand their relationship to the world and their possibilities for the future. Thus the question "Who am I?" cannot be understood apart from the question "What can I do?" West (1992) suggests that it is people's access to material resources that will define the terms on which they will articulate their desires. In this view, a person's identity will shift in accordance with changing social and economic relations.

The multicultural person is always in flux, the configuration of loyalties and identifications changing, the overall image of self perpetually being reformulated through experience and contact with the world. Stated differently, life is an ongoing process of psychic death and rebirth.

Consistent with the tenants of social identity theory, when considering economic phenomenon, the interaction between different communities cannot be overlooked. This is the aspect of globalization that has with it, cultural over-spill as it were, that sees a greater threat than its purely economic aspect. One of the strongest challenges of global identity originates from the fear that such a process might challenge national cultures and individual identities. For example, mass consumption of merchandise instituted by Foreign Direct Investment and International trade, in cultural and other sectors may be seen as negative because it diminishes self-produced, traditional and locally-manufactured goods and services or tends to reduce the perceived value of these local goods to their so-called "pure" market value. Similarly, migration flows may be perceived as endangering local cultures and creating local political tensions over the provision of public goods in local receiving communities. Nevertheless, the increasing flow of immigrants from other countries, particularly since 2000, (Villarroya, 2012) and 2015 has resulted in a strengthening of identity issues.

In contemporary socio-cultural conditions, where an individual is often 'constrained' to be in constant search for identities, he or she cannot stay focused on one and the same identity for a long period of time. The use of the word "identity" or "original identity" clearly infers an express contravention against modernity and stands for tradition as an obviously safe spot against contrasts and uniqueness. It is very clear that such an argument sees society in an inflexible, fetishistic way, yet this stand for traditional or original identity is vital to what degree these terms have an esteem today.

The utility of a blocked concept of cultural identity has far more harmful consequences in comprehensive literature searches and seminal work on global identity and culture have revealed disconnect for the past decade practice. It is no coincidence that the constructive idea of multiculturalism has turned today into a growing problem and is even negatively valued. It is, therefore, obvious that neither "globalization" nor "identity" are neutral concepts, but barely fought for constructs determining each other and which also define different points of view and a number of diverging phenomena.

However, globalization cannot be reversed, whether we are in favor of globalization or are against it, it is definitely an ever-expanding process. Globalization can be seen from three dimensional perspectives, which encompass political, economic and cultural aspects. From a political standpoint, we tend to be confronted with the world media with its agenda reflecting the downfall of the national state model and with the prevalence in recent times of the terms and fears known as cultural "homogenization" and micro-nationalism. In recent years, with the process of globalization, the international media has begun to present the national state model as an old-fashioned style of management. Today, in place of referring to total independence, countries speak of their mutual dependence on each other or interdependencies rather than total independence which has become impossible and is viewed as old order thinking.

Cultural Economies Influence

Perhaps the most important dimension that has an influence on global identity is economies, which have an effect on every sphere of life including politics. Political issues, consequently, affect economics and both of these influence the cultural dimension of globalization. The cultural exchange of goods and services between countries is carried out within a structure of a worldwide economic framework.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2014), the global market value of industries with strong creative and cultural components is estimated at US$ 1.8 trillion. The industry has grown since the 2000s at an annual compound rate of over 7%. Cultural and creative industries have also taken up a key position in the countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with an annual growth rate of between 5% and 20%, as well as in a number of leading developing countries and countries in transition (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2014). Globally, these industries are estimated to account for more than 7% of the world's GDP and the forecast to grow roughly at the same pace over the next three years reaching US$ 2.7 trillion (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2015).

The information-society's most important component is the cultural industry, which is expanding at an incredibly rapid rate. Just as the products of these industries can create cultural values, or change them, as well as function to strengthen cultural identity, they can also hasten their disappearance.

In order to understand the fundamental importance of this issue, the portion of lives that is encompassed by cultural goods and services needs to be examined. For example, cultural goods consist of a variety of products such as books, magazines, multimedia products, software, records, CDs, films, videos, audiovisual programs and fashion designs. Cultural services are comprised of libraries, documentary centers, museums, theatres, orchestras, circuses, press, cable news broadcasts and satellite broadcasts.

In the year 2000, nearly half of the world's cultural industries were located in the USA, 30% were located in Europe, with the remainder being located in Asia. Today, 85% of movies seen in the world are made in Hollywood, whereas on the African continent, an average of 42 films are produced a year. In Africa, Chile and Costa Rica, 95% of the films viewed are imported from the USA.

As of 2014, the World's facts book identifies Britain as the largest cultural exporter in the world, even surpassing the United States. Cultural exports include music, television shows and video games. With bands such as Arctic Monkeys, the Kooks and Maximo Park, the manufacture of computer games, books such as the Harry Potter series and top TV programs such as Pop Idol (which became American Idol in the US), Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? And, The Office and Strictly Come Design (all shows which became hits in the US) Britain currently leads the world in cultural innovation.

Cultural goods and services delivered by rich and powerful nations have occupied the greater parts of the world's business sectors, to the extent of putting individuals and societies in different countries, which are not able to compete at a disadvantage. The result is that these nations are not able to enter the range of impact possessed by multinational organizations of developing economies.

As long as the rules of international business perceive cultural goods and services as equal with other goods, and as long as on the global economic level, the powerful and the weak enter into competition under equal trade conditions, the cultural diversity of developing countries will be a challenge. Therefore, when mankind's situation is considered today, the diversity of race, sex, language, class, age and religion cannot be ignored. In the day-to-day lives of people, these significant cultural diversity factors have accumulated for hundreds of years and form the pattern of the cultural identities of societies.

Global identity challenges the authority of states as well, and even changes the nationalistic awareness of people. The truth is that, the roots of the identities of societies and cultures may be forced to change a great deal. But it is to be noted that the struggle for identification on the local (micro) level has increased. Who would want to break off all cultural ties in order to be a world citizen? As a result, throughout the world, in the midst of the discussion on globalization, it is increasingly being claimed that globalization brings with it homogeneity, and that the identity of countries, in short, their cultures, are becoming destroyed.

Another area that has attracted a lot of concern is culture policies that allow us not to probe just one historical form of culture-shaping but also what government will see as explicit and implicit political waves (Bennett, 2009)

As today's global economy continues to expand, how to protect cultural identity at the local level, and how to prevent local nationalism is not known. What is known is that if an economic standard of comfort is not ensured, then developing countries will face even more hardships in the future. As long as the countries, which are in control of the global economy do not share the same concerns as those of less fortunate nations, the destruction of local cultures in underdeveloped countries will continue and waves of local nationalism will become a serious challenge to world peace.

The change creativity, innovation and development of new technologies continue to be instrumental in changing the way we live, the way we communicate, the way we respond to our environment, the way we express our thoughts, our ideas. In short technology has highly influenced the dynamic development of our cultural identities, and global trade (Ahmed, 2016).

The world during the 22nd Century will be less colorful and picturesque than the one that has been left behind today. Local commemorations, dress, customs, ceremonies, rites and beliefs that in the past have contributed to the rich panoply of human folklore, entertainment and ethnological variety are fading away or becoming the preserve of minority and isolated groups, whilst the bulk of society abandons them, adopting more practical habits better suited to these times. This is a process that to a greater or a lesser degree is experienced by all countries of the globe, not because of globalization but because of modernization that eventually causes globalization. This phenomenon can be regretted, and nostalgia for the eclipse of tradition and past ways of life can be felt from the comfort of present situations, which are deemed attractive, original and colorful.

The fact is the world will continue to search for a common identity. Plagued with its enormous challenges, the world recently witnessed the formation of a new economic group, BRICS - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. BRICS remains a concept in search of a common identity and institutionalized cooperation. That is surprising, given that these countries have very different social, ideological, political systems, economies and national identity, and are located in very different parts of the world. Yet the five emerging economies pride themselves on forming the first important non-Western global initiative. The lack of common ground among BRICS has prompted sceptics to call the grouping an acronym with no substance. But to its protagonists, it is a product of today's ongoing global power shifts, and has the potential to evolve into a major instrument in shaping the architecture of global governance, the address of global identity.

The BRICS leaders have been focusing on the creation of joint institutions, particularly, a common development bank that can help mobilize savings between the countries. As it stands, BRICS countries constitute a loose, informal bloc. If their leaders fail to make progress on setting up an institutional structure, they will lend credence to the contention that it is merely a "talking shop" for countries so diverse that their shared interests, if any, cannot be translated into a common plan of action.

Proponents of BRICS concept nonetheless remain hopeful that the group can serve as a catalyst for global institutional reform, an epitome of global identity. With existing international arrangements remaining almost static since the mid-20th century (even as non-Western economic powers and nontraditional challenges have emerged), the world needs more than the halfhearted and desultory steps taken so far. In fact, the modest measures implemented in response to the changing distribution of global power have been limited to the economic realm, with the hard core of international ties and security remaining the exclusive preserve of a handful of countries.

The BRICS concept represents, above all, its members' desire to make the global order more plural. But it is uncertain whether the group's members will ever evolve into a coherent group with defined goals and institutional mechanisms. In the coming days, we might find out whether BRICS will ever be more than a catchy acronym or a major shift in global identity.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we argue that the standard identity-assumption appears increasingly narrow in the light of recent advancements in the sciences and global history. A unified theory of temporal emergence and increasing complexity through different layers of the universe locates human geo-history as an important but small and vulnerable part of a much wider whole. To what extent, therefore, is big history relevant to our understandings of possible self-other relations? To answer this question, the paper, examined three options.

Firstly, that otherness can indeed be placed outside the human species and planet earth. The cosmological viewpoint provides an important source, even a foundation for global identity, but it is not a sufficient solution to the problem of identity.

Secondly, otherness can also be located either in our own past or alternatively, in our contemporary being, when seen from a point of view of a possible future position in world history. As any process of identity-construction is temporal, this constitutes a fruitful perspective, but does not address all the main problems or tackle the ontological underpinnings of standard identity-theories.

There is thus, thirdly, a need to rethink the basic ontology of identity from a perspective that is compatible with big history. Utilizing the social identity theory, we conclude by outlining a cosmic, temporal, relational and ethical conception of global cosmo-political identity that is based on both positive and negative elements.

For future research, there are few questions still outstanding that need to be answered. Focusing on these areas will contribute to the debate of global identity and transformation of our society.

• Does history show that humanity is gradually, but irrecoverably, moving towards a larger and larger sense of a common identity?

• Is humanity, despite obvious setbacks and hiccups, moving towards a greater sense of moral obligation towards not only ones family, clan, or nation, but towards all humans and perhaps, in extension to this in some far-off future towards all living beings?

• Is a significant part of mankind thus any closer to calling themselves world citizens instead of citizens of this or that nation, area or religion?

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In summary, the paper is an attempt to integrate the multiple dimensions of global identity, which is finding a place in the current trend of globalization and global economy. But, as globalization clashes

with cultural identities, which are national heritages, these conflicts needs to be resolved. If not, globalization may impose a heavy cultural price.

By outlining a cosmic, temporal, relational and ethical conception of global Cosmo political identity that is based on both positive and negative elements, we seek a need concept, "GlobaliCITY". One might at least make the claim that we are getting there slowly, that man's consciousness has moved from being rooted in the family, to the clan, to the nation and now, to a degree at least, to be rooted in a supra-national, international, or global mindset or consciousness. But if we are interested in advancing such a global consciousness, how do we go about doing so, and is the UN a stumbling block or stepping-stone to achieving it?

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