

Ethnopsychological Method and the Psychological Assessment of Mexican Americans

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This article reviews the theoretical and methodological development of ethnopsychology, which is founded on the principle that distinct cultural groups share basic common beliefs and values that differentiate them psychologically from other cultural groups. The distinctness of a cultural group is rooted in a series of historical, sociocultural experiences and perceptions of oneself and the group as a whole. The development of ethnopsychology is summarized through the contributions of Rogelio Diaz-Guerrero and his early exploration of the fundamental premises and tenets that guide ethnopsychological theory and method. The contributions of other theorists, focusing on the uniqueness of bicultural/bilingual groups such as Mexican Americans, are also summarized. The author supports the application of ethnopsychological theory and method to enhance psychologists' understanding of bilingual/bicultural groups in the United States. Specifically, she reviews current psychological assessment methods and their ethnopsychological adaptation for Mexican Americans.

A major area of concern in researching Latino mental health lies in the development of proper methods for uncovering and understanding the issues relevant to this population. Specifically, prior research has tended to treat this population as an undifferentiated entity rather than account for or integrate the diversity of the population. For example, at the macroscopic level the Latino population in the United States consists of several distinct groups—65.2% Mexican American, 9.6% Puerto Rican, 4.3% Cuban, and 14.3% Central and South American (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2000). In addition to these broad-level distinctions of nationality, there are several factors to consider within each Latino group, such as acculturation level, generation, language/bilingualism, and the moderating effects of age, gender, education, and socioeconomic status. Given the diversity of U.S. Latinos as a whole and of the cultural subgroups in particular, the field of psychology has had difficulty identifying a consistent and consolidated

approach to researching mental health issues for these populations. In response to the lack of available method/approach, there has been a trend toward the development of an ethnopsychology for Latino groups in the past three decades.

Although ethnopsychology has been an emerging force during the past several decades in the area of cross-cultural psychology, it has not been popularized as a theory or method to be applied to bicultural/bilingual groups. The purpose of this article is therefore twofold. First, this article highlights the historical development of ethnopsychology and its application internationally. Second, this article focuses on how ethnopsychological method has been used in current psychological research and how this method has been manifested in the psychological assessment of Mexican Americans. Furthermore, the importance of such methodology for improving the diagnosis and treatment of Mexican Americans is considered.

The Development of Ethnopsychological Method

The methodology and theory of ethnopsychology originated with the works of Rogelio Diaz-Guerrero (1977, 1982, 1992, 1993, 1995). In his earliest works, Diaz-Guerrero analyzed the nature of Mexican traditions and mainstay beliefs of the Mexican family. For example, in his work *Psychology of the Mexican: Culture and Personality* (1967), Diaz-Guerrero applied psychoanalytic theory to the dynamics of the traditional Mexican family. Within his analysis, Diaz-Guerrero examined and questioned the place of the Eurocentric theoretical ideals in appropriately evaluating the functionality of the *mestizo* (indigenous and European) family system in Mexico. His early works inspired Diaz-Guerrero to investigate more seminal questions of behavioral origin and maintenance, including basic cross-cultural differences in personality and cognition between Mexicans and U.S. populations—the United States being the cauldron of emerging theory that was being universally applied.

In the next several decades between 1970 and 1990, Diaz-Guerrero, along with his colleagues and students, completed a series of studies on differences in personality (Diaz-Guerrero, 1984a, 1991; Diaz-Loving, 1999; Spielberger & Diaz-Guerrero, 1983), coping style (Diaz-Guerrero, 1984b; Diaz-Loving, Rivera-Aragon, & Sanchez-Aragon, 2001; Holtzman, Diaz-Guerrero, & Swartz, 1975), and cognition (Diaz-Guerrero, 1990; Holtzman et al., 1975) between samples in Mexico and the United States. In all these studies, essential and significant differences emerged that were not attributable to moderating factors such as age, gender, education, or socioeconomic status. For example, a longitudinal developmental study of children Grades 4 to 10

repeatedly found that among Mexican children there was an emphasis on respect, social connection, and cooperation rather than on competition or performance, which was more typical of U.S. children (Holtzman et al., 1975). Furthermore, a series of studies presented in Diaz-Guerrero's work *Understanding Mexicans and Americans* (1991) indicates that when given the same concept such as family, students in these two countries consistently attached significantly different meanings and values to the ideas. Mexican students tended to view family as central to their identity, with mother and father deserving unquestioned respect and obedience, whereas American students tended to view family as important but saw themselves as independent actors within the family, having free will and the right to contradict parents.

In the process of discovering these emerging, consistent differences in beliefs and values, Diaz-Guerrero began to develop a framework for understanding how these systems of beliefs and values emerged and how they were maintained within cultures. He began to lay the foundational pieces of ethnopsychology. Diaz-Guerrero described the Mexican culture (and other cultures) as having an ecosystem that was dynamic and consisted of historical and sociocultural events that created a unique existence. He termed the foundational beliefs of these groups as *Historico-Socio-Cultural Premises* (HSCPs). Similar to a biological model of proteins, the HSCPs are viewed as the building blocks of cultural existence. The HSCPs represent the shared experience or perceptions, whether historical, political, social, economic, constructed, or actual. For example, among Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans, the shared premise of *respeto* (respect) persists regardless of generation or acculturation level and delineates the nature of relationships between elders and the younger generation (Diaz-Guerrero, 1989; Martinez, 1988; Shartrand, 1996). Furthermore, the HSCPs hold qualities unique to the group. For example, *respeto* combines the ideas of reverence, deference, and status as well as incorporates the sentiment of fear in Mexican ecosystems (Diaz-Guerrero, 1989). That is, in the Mexican descent family, the parent is not only revered but also feared as a sign of respect.

The tenets of ethnopsychology, as proposed by Diaz-Guerrero (1992), revolve around three primary requirements: the definition of an ecosystem, the operationalization of culture, and the exploration/definition of HSCPs within the group of interest. Diaz-Guerrero posited (in his first two tenets) that the first order of business in developing an ethnopsychology is to establish the existence of an ecosystem unique to the group. In other words, the group shares a common environment or experience that may motivate particular behavioral outcomes. Furthermore, the ecosystem is dynamic, having multiple influences including biological, psychological, and sociocultural. The subsequent three tenets of Diaz-Guerrero's theory focus on operationally

defining culture as a measurable aspect of the ecosystem. Culture in this case would include verbal/expressive affirmations (traditions, beliefs) and structural factors (organizations, institutions). In the final five tenets, Diaz-Guerrero explained how the HSCPs are a medium through which the culture of the ecosystem may be measured. HSCPs are shared by the majority of the people, have permanence and meaning, and show intracultural differences in the form of variation with age, generation, gender, education, and socioeconomic status. Of course, the HSCPs should show predictable differences cross-culturally as well, distinguishing one cultural group from another. Through his analysis of HSCPs, Diaz-Guerrero was able to show essential cultural differences in belief and behavior between Mexican and Anglo American populations. However, although Diaz-Guerrero did include Mexican American comparison groups in some of his cross-cultural studies of development, he did not distinguish the Mexican from the Mexican American ecosystems or address their possible differences in HSCPs. Diaz-Guerrero was a vanguard in recognizing that the two Mexican-descended groups were culturally and ecologically different, but he did not expand his study design to include an analysis of Mexican Americans as unique in comparison with Mexican and Anglo-U.S. populations.

The theory of ethnopsychology has been explored by several researchers (Hofstede, 1980; Kirkpatrick & White, 1985; Triandis, Kurowski, Tecktiel, & Chan, 1993; White, 1992). However, the focus of previous investigations has been on describing the parameters of a national or regional character (e.g., values orientations of Mexicans as opposed to the Japanese, the Americans, or the Argentineans). Other theory has been developed out of the study of isolated groups, such as the work of Kirkpatrick and White (1985) with rural Mexican descent families in the Southwest. Despite these advances, the idea of ethnopsychological theory has not evolved in terms of internally diverse bicultural groups, such as Mexican Americans. Bicultural groups have traditionally been treated as cultural subgroups and not as unique, separate entities.

As indicated above, the field of ethnopsychology focuses interest on researching a population as unique with a defining or identifiable worldview rather than as a study of sociocultural factors hindering a population from fitting within mainstream concepts of normalcy. Within this model, the sociocultural factors that have been the primary interest of past research continue to be important but represent only a few of many intricate pieces constituting a population's collective psychology and mental health. Such approaches are defined as ethnopsychological, focusing on a particular cultural group as unique and distinct in itself and not in relation to or comparison with another cultural group. Ethnopsychological method describes the personality, values,

and experience of a group using concepts and language native to that population and analyzes the heterogeneity of cultural expression within the group as well (Kirkpatrick & White, 1985; White, 1992). Thus, the interest is not only in finding or defining the native constructs of belief within a group but also in examining how these constructs vary given different moderating variables (i.e., gender, socioeconomic status, and age).

Ethnopsychology proposes that cultural groups should be studied within their own value systems and realms of experience (Diaz-Guerrero, 1992, 1995; Ramirez, 1983, p. 11; White, 1992). Although there exists very little empirical research done in the realm of Mexican American ethnopsychology, there have been theoretical advances. Most notable is the work of Ramirez (1983). Ramirez proposed the existence of a Mestizo worldview. By Mestizo he meant mixed, both genetically and culturally, as is typical in Latin American populations (particularly Mexico—95% Mestizo population, having mixed indigenous and European heritage). Ramirez posited that all peoples of the Americas are Mestizos to some degree; however, Mexican Americans represented a group of particular interest because not only were they a product of an initial mixing with European culture, but they were now undergoing a second “Mestizaje” due to the processes of migration and acculturation in the United States. As a result of these changes affecting Mexican Americans, Ramirez described this group as having a distinctive and complex psychological development.

The unique quality of Mexican Americans is expressed in multiple ways. Mexican American culture includes the fusion of indigenous beliefs and the values of European *conquistadores*. Of course, this blending of cultures is typical of traditional Mexican culture as well. However, for the Mexican American, this historical *mestizaje* (mixing) is superimposed on a current process of integrating (through both acceptance and resistance) dominant U.S. culture. Because of this dynamic of integration, Mexican Americans have developed varying bicultural (as acculturative process) identities, language orientations, and expressions of self as well as a culturally bound social existence as minorities in the United States. Recalling that Diaz-Guerrero (1993) postulated his initial tenets of ethnopsychology as defining a “specific human ecosystem” (p. 46) with its own biological, psychological, and sociocultural dispositions and given their history and cultural experience, it would seem that Mexican Americans qualify as a specific human ecosystem. Indeed, Ramirez (1983, 1998) described this group as not only bicultural and bilingual but also bicognitive, indicating a unique merging of cultural norms and language orientation as well as a unique mode of thought.

Ramirez contended that due to the unique cultural mixture found among Mexican Americans, this population should be considered distinct with an

identifiable ethnopsychology. This, he said, would require an investigation of the Mestizo worldview. The development of an ethnopsychology entails an understanding of how Mexican Americans approach life, their value systems, and beliefs. This information can be used to define psychopathology and normalcy for this population from an internal point of view. Empirical data from the population itself would be used to determine what is expectable thought or belief within the group and what is psychological distress. Although the next natural step would be to study the specific cultural values and paradigms that guide the behavior and belief of the population, there has been little done in the area of psychology.

There has been significant development in the theory of ethnopsychological method; however, there remains a gap in the actual implementation of the approach. To date, the research on the ethnopsychology of Mexican Americans remains deficient. Multiple studies have focused on the HSCPs of Mexicans (Diaz-Guerrero, 1989, 1993; Diaz-Loving & Andrade-Palos, 1984; Holtzman, 1979) and on comparisons between the values of Anglos and Mexicans, but few articles have been published on the specific experience and cultural premises of Mexican Americans as a bicultural group. Most large comparative studies have been international, offering an understanding of value differences between Mexicans and Anglo Americans in the United States. Some research has focused on the difference in values, worldview, and attitudes between U.S. dominant culture and several minority groups (e.g., see Carter, 1991). In the latter case, the minority populations have been defined as subgroups of the dominant culture (therefore not having a unique ecosystem). In addition, these larger scale studies have not included an analysis of intragroup variation (therefore not acknowledging the diversity within the group).

Ethnopsychological Method in Testing and Assessment

Given the above limitations in terms of clinical or treatment application, it is important to note that psychological assessment has been an area where there has been some opportunity for the application of ethnopsychological methods, to differing degrees. The advancement of appropriate psychological assessment for Mexican Americans through the use of ethnopsychological methods has been addressed in three general ways in the current available literature: measure adaptation, renorming/restandardization, and the creation of new tools.

Measure Adaptation

The validation of an assessment tool within a culture requires that the tool be properly developed or specifically adapted for the cultural group of interest. During the early stages of measure adaptation, the primary concerns revolve around translation, review, revision, and piloting/field testing (Geisinger, 1994). Translation is the initial step in test adaptation for linguistic minorities and bilingual populations. This process includes the translation and back-translation of an instrument not only for linguistic reliability but also for the construct (meaning) of items. Ideally, the translated instrument should be reviewed by bilingual colleagues for content and construct quality (Dana, 1993; Geisinger, 1994) and revised accordingly. It is most useful to have colleagues within and outside the field review a translation. This approach provides feedback in terms of general understandability of the items and the construct being measured. The measure should also be piloted or field tested among small samples of the group of interest to ensure reliability and construct validity.

According to Dana (1993), measure adaptations should also account for functional equivalence, metric equivalence, and construct equivalence (see also Butcher & Han, 1996). Functional equivalence pertains to different behaviors developed in different cultures to cope with similar problems. That is, a similar stimulus can provoke different reactions among culturally diverse groups, but the reactions are equally culturally effective in dealing with the stimulus. For example, in the case of stress, Anglo culture may typically engage a very active and overtly interventive coping style (more person over nature, and internal locus of control; for review of general Anglo American cultural values, see Carter, 1991). Meanwhile, in traditional Mexican culture, the activity of coping may center on acceptance and waiting to see how the situation settles out on its own (nature over person and external locus of control; see Carter, 1991; Diaz-Guerrero, 1989; Diaz-Loving & Andrade-Palos, 1984). Metric equivalence refers to the presentation formats of scales, questionnaires, and personality measures. Cross-culturally, the question of metric equivalence centers on the idea of distance between responses. That is, does the difference between *somewhat satisfied* and *satisfied* on a Likert-type scale have the same meaning in another cultural context? Construct equivalence centers on the meaning of items within a measure. Does the item have the same meaning or purpose in the culture for which it is being adapted? Closely linked to construct equivalence is linguistic equivalence, which emphasizes construct-relevant translation incorporating culturally appropri-

ate value and affect responses rather than the literal translation of a questionnaire item.

Associated with the above issues of equivalence (functional, metric, and construct) is the issue of validity. Any adaptation or development of a tool requires careful attention to the validity of the new measure. Validation of a tool can come from three sources: content related, criterion related, and construct related (Geisinger, 1994; Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 1997). Content validity refers to how well the items of a measure are an adequate representation of the conceptual domain that is being evaluated. That is, are the items included in a measure reasonably related to the concept of interest? A depression tool may reasonably include items of affect and physical symptomology but not items related to shoe size, for example. Criterion-related validity is based on the principle of predictability: How well does the measure (predictor variable) forecast the quality being assessed (criterion)? Shoe size does not likely predict depression, but feelings of sadness may. Criterion validity serves as a primary technique for evaluating measure usefulness (predictive ability) but is not generally the most useful approach in answering questions of interest to cross-cultural research (such as equivalence of item meaning) (Geisinger, 1994). For example, a criterion-related item for depression on an Anglo American tool may read, "Are you blue?" This item, which may well have good predictive ability for dominant culture English speakers, would have poor predictive ability when translated into Spanish. The term *blue* does not have a connection to depression in Spanish-speaking culture. Therefore, for the monolingual or Spanish dominant Mexican American the item would be a better predictor of thought disorder rather than mood disorder.

The third form of validation, construct-related validity, refers to a construct being defined as part of a tool and being meaningfully measured. For example, if the construct of attention is being measured, not only is it desirable to have items that seem to cover that domain (content validity; i.e., "Do you have trouble completing simple tasks?") and items that seem predictive (e.g., digit span—criterion validity) but also to make sure the items are meaningful in assessing the construct across cases (thus, items that assess the same construct should be closely interrelated in meaning, even cross-culturally). For example, in the case of the Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE) a common short-term memory task includes the repetition of a familiar phrase such as, "No ifs, ands, or buts." Cross-culturally for the Mexican American (depending on level of linguistic acculturation), this may be an unfamiliar phrase and therefore require more encoding than just short-term memory. Furthermore, the direct translation of this phrase to Spanish, in the case of monolingual Mexican Americans, makes no sense. In either case, the item is no longer measuring the construct it was intended to measure.

Construct-related validity is arguably the most useful form of validity in the evaluation of measures cross-culturally because it attests to the general stability of the tool. That is, content and criterion can often change cross-culturally but construct meaning should remain the same. Geisinger (1994) illustrated how content- and criterion-related validity might differ cross-culturally. Imagine if a measure had been constructed to measure a given school subject (e.g., the content area of reading). It is not likely that the domain for the school subject would be the same cross-culturally because of differences in teaching style, language, and educational values. Similarly, with criterion-related validity, the criterion (e.g., scholastic success) may be differentially defined across cultures. One culture may value a concrete measure of success such as grades, whereas another may value more interpersonal properties such as communication abilities and manners. Thus, even when using the same measure, the criterion for prediction may vary.

Currently, many of the most popular psychological measures have been adapted linguistically for use on Spanish-speaking populations. For example, some adapted measures include the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), the Weschler Intelligence Scales (child and adult), and the Composite International Diagnostic Interview (CIDI), which have been widely used in the determination of psychological disorder or cognitive impairment in Latinos. These measures have been appropriately translated, evaluated for content, and backtranslated (Butcher, 1996; Dana, 1993; Gomez, Peidmont, & Fleming, 1992; Lucio-G.M. & Reyes-Lagunes, 1996). However, these instruments have not been tested for construct equivalence as proposed by Dana (1993). For example, the MMPI-2 and the Weschler Intelligence Scales have not yet been subjected to extensive factor analysis to ensure the internal integrity of constructs for Mexican Americans. To date, these measures have not been shown to overpathologize Latinos (mostly Mexican American; Hall, Bansal, & Lopez, 1999; Sacuzzo & Johnson, 1995), although given proportionate sampling practices, the sample size may not be appropriate to show effect. For example, in the case of the MMPI this conclusion was drawn on a sample of 500 Latinos, more than 31 years of research, and 25 clinical studies (Hall et al., 1999), which is likely not an accurate representation of how Latinos or Mexican Americans actually perform on the measure. Note too that the studies in these meta-analyses use a Latino participant pool and do not focus on Mexican Americans alone. Another concern is that many times these tools are translated in a linguistic dialect that is not appropriate for Mexican Americans. For instance, the CIDI was translated in Puerto Rico and the MMPI-2 and Weschler Intelligence Scales were translated in Mexico City. Linguistic differences between these populations and Mexican Americans (even recent immigrants from the prov-

inces of Mexico) may contribute to lessened construct validity of these tools for Mexican Americans.

Renorming/Restandardization

The subsequent stages of measure adaptation are focused on the norming and standardization of a tool for a new population. Whenever a new population is being evaluated with an adapted tool, it is requisite to ensure that the standardization and norming of the instrument is reformulated to fit the actual dimensions of the new population. For example, if a depression measure is adapted for Mexican Americans, especially the less acculturated, it is possible that the baseline or norm for the population is naturally higher (e.g., greater report of somatic symptoms in Mexican American women as an expression of their depression) than found in the traditional norming population. This dissent from the traditional norming population may likely be due to the underrepresentation of Mexican Americans in traditional general population norming techniques.

In addition, standardization of a measure not only includes the format in which the items are administered and the scoring of items but also the standardization of overall scores. That is, within the new population for which the measure is being adapted, a given overall score should ideally maintain the same interpretive outcome because the goal is to measure the construct equally across groups. A person of Mexican American descent may score differently due to norming anomalies and as such will not have his or her true potential or functioning appropriately reflected in the overall score. Taking the above example of a depression scale, if a first generation person (immigrant) answers items regarding attitude and belief in a traditionally Mexican manner, the results may indicate a fatalism and passivity that is characteristic of depression per *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)* standards. Furthermore, the depressive affect may be a reaction to the process of acculturation/immigration or complicated by the trauma of being a minority in a dominantly Anglo, English-speaking environment. Given these indications, one can see how a racial/ethnic population can produce results in assessment that are significantly different than when using a traditionally proportionate sample group for norming and standardization.

Again, as with general measure adaptation, there are few measures that have been appropriately renormed and restandardized for a Mexican American population. Indeed, Spanish language translations have been renormed and restandardized to some degree with native populations (usually in Mexico—such as the case of the Weschler Intelligence Scales and the MMPI) but not with a bilingual population (Dana, 1993; Figueroa, 1989; Lucio-G.M. &

Reyes-Lagunes, 1996). Furthermore, proportionate representation in sampling continues to be the regular practice in psychometrics—meaning that Mexican Americans are sampled per their representation in the general population, which results in the maintenance of previously established norms. That is, if there are not sufficient numbers of a minority group represented in a sample (more than just proportionate representation), the sample size remains insufficient to show difference in statistical norms for larger instruments such as the MMPI-2 and the Wechsler Intelligence Scales. To correct some of the discrepancy in knowledge regarding Mexican Americans and personality assessment, researchers such as Roberto Velasquez and his colleagues have completed multiple studies evaluating the between-group differences among Mexican American and African American adolescents (Gomez, Johnson, Davis, & Velasquez, 2000); Latin American populations, Mexicans, and Latino college students (Boscan et al., 2000; Cabiya et al., 2000); Central American and Mexican immigrants (Clark, Callahan, Lichtszajn, & Velasquez, 1996); and, of course, between Latino and White outcomes on the MMPI-2 (Velasquez, Callahan, & Young, 1993). These studies have been essential in establishing that cultural influences may be important in determining response styles on personality tests and that all Latino groups may not be collapsed into a single comparison group. More important, Velasquez and his colleagues have made advances toward applying ethnopsychological method in the adaptation of the MMPI and MMPI-2 for use with Mexican American populations. Specifically, they have completed studies focused on intragroup differences and emerging patterns. For example, Velasquez and Gimenez (1987) did a comparison of MMPI differences in three diagnostic groups of Mexican American inpatients, finding that the three diagnostic categories (Schizophrenia, Depression, and Antisocial Personality) did show some basic differences on only two clinical scales. The authors concluded that the MMPI was of only limited utility for differential diagnosis with a Mexican American inpatient population and that the MMPI may generate a large number of false positives among ethnic/racial minority groups. Velasquez, Callahan, and Carrillo (1991) compared MMPI differences between Mexican American men and women. They found significant differences on scales of Infrequency, Masculinity-Femininity, and Paranoia, which may reflect the influence of culturally bound gender roles in responding to assessment items. These studies were important in identifying areas in which the use of personality tests such as the MMPI may be affected by cultural and intracultural patterns and how the results of such testing may be utilized in treatment (Velasquez et al., 1997).

In addition to criterion-based personality measures, other tools such as TEMAS and the Hispanic Stress Inventory have emerged, which borrow

items and constructs from previous instruments but allow for a more appropriate cultural context. TEMAS (meaning *themes* in Spanish) is a thematic apperception tool constructed specifically for multicultural subjects (Costantino, Flanagan, & Malgady, 2001; Costantino & Malgady, 1999, 2000; Costantino, Malgady, Casullo, & Castillo, 1991; Costantino, Malgady, Colon-Malgady, & Bailey, 1993; Costantino, Malgady, & Vazquez, 1981; Flanagan & di Guiseppi, 1999; Malgady, Costantino, & Rogler, 1985). The test itself is similar to the original thematic apperception test (TAT) stimuli, in which one or several persons are depicted in different situations/environments and the subject is expected to develop a story about the stimulus card. However, TEMAS is different in three major ways from the traditional TAT. First, TEMAS is chromatic, with each card stimulus having full color range and showing children of different phenotype and ethnicity. Second, TEMAS shows the protagonist in specific dilemmas without the ambiguity of the original TAT stimuli. Third, TEMAS has more thorough psychometric qualities, including a well-delineated scoring system and established administration protocol. Additionally, children are allowed to give responses in either Spanish or English to this test. Initial standardization and norming studies of TEMAS indicated that this test shows increased verbalization and response scores with children of color as compared to the traditional TAT (Costantino & Malgady, 1983; Costantino et al., 1981; Flanagan & di Guiseppi, 1999).

Similar to TEMAS, the Hispanic Stress Inventory (HSI) was constructed taking into account symptomology/characteristics of stress/anxiety that have been shown to be particularly relevant with Latino populations (Cervantes, Padilla, & Salgado de Snyder, 1991; Padilla, Cervantes, Maldonado, & Garcia, 1988). The HSI has indicated greater sensitivity to some forms of anxiety among Latinos than the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), and has shown sensitivity to differences in stress between different Latino cultural groups (Salgado de Snyder, Cervantes, & Padilla, 1990). For example, a study of the HSI indicated higher levels of generalized distress and psychosocial stress among Central American immigrants as compared to Mexican immigrants (Salgado de Snyder et al., 1990). Such results suggest that the HSI may serve to illuminate intragroup differences in the express of anxiety or stress among varying Latino groups. The HSI has also been shown to have good internal consistency, reliability, and validity among groups of immigrant and U.S.-born Latinos (Cervantes, Padilla, & Salgado de Snyder, 1990). Overall, the above mentioned personality tests may not be wholly based on an ethnopsychological methodology, but these measures are making strides toward more specific and sensitive evaluation of Latinos—both linguistically and in terms of the construction of the tests themselves.

There has also been advancement in adapting neurocognitive measures for Mexican American (bilingual) populations (see Ardila, 1995; Ardila, Rosselli, & Puente, 1994). However, these recent attempts are in the process of validation and to date have relied on relatively small sample sizes. In terms of international measures such as the CIDI, which have been normed and standardized internationally (somewhat), the primary issue is one of acquiring the appropriate statistics for bicultural and bilingual populations, as well as how the constructs of pathology (based on *DSM-III*) may change with cultural flexibility.

Creation of New Tools

Although measure adaptation and renorming/restandardization are important topics to any discourse regarding the application of ethnopsychological methodology in the appropriate measurement of psychological constructs in Mexican Americans, truly emic approaches require the creation of tools internal to the group of interest. Such a process would engage a more subjective research approach than typically accustomed with the adaptation of etic-oriented tools. Ideally, the creation of a new measure for Mexican Americans would begin with an understanding of the values, beliefs, and definitions of normal versus abnormal behavior within the Mexican American community. As a researcher, one would need to initiate a process of defining the concept of interest (in this case some form of abnormality or pathology) internally. What does the concept mean within the Mexican American community? For example, if one wanted to define and measure anxiety in the Mexican American community, a good starting point may be to initiate a series of focus groups and interviews with different people from that community regarding their views of what anxiety is. Within such a discussion, natural variations may emerge. Some may equate anxiety with *nervios* and feelings of depression, whereas others express a more dominant culture view describing restlessness and exasperation as the dominant features of anxiety. Using ethnopsychological theory as a guide, the researcher would have to listen for emerging commonalities within the group—such as loss of control or desperation—that link the variations of definition within the group. From there, a more refined and distinctive understanding of what anxiety is or means may be accomplished through survey techniques. The data from the focus groups and interviews would be consolidated into survey/questionnaire items that can be administered to larger samples of Mexican Americans. The resulting data would, per the tenets of ethnopsychology, give

rise to a valid and stable set of shared values among this population regarding the concept of anxiety.

However, as the above description indicates, the process of building new tools is tedious, time-consuming, and often costly. The tedium of building a new tool comes in several forms, including gathering initial data and then organizing, analyzing, and refining the domain of the concept of interest. Then the whole process begins anew—more focus groups and interviews, more data, more analysis, and more revision of the concept one desires to measure. Not only is it tedious, but obviously such a process requires great amounts of time commitment, usually from several people. Given the time, commitment, energy, and people necessary for the appropriate and conscientious construction of a new psychological tool, it is no surprise that large grants or other substantiate monies (i.e., such as testing corporation funds) are often needed to secure the development of new measures to the point of appropriate reliability and validity.

In summary, Dana (1993) describes the process of creating new tools as often relying heavily on an analysis of idiographic data until a pattern emerges as well as demanding greater cultural knowledge on the part of the assessor. Indeed, the most emic assessment approaches lie in the practices of behavior observation, life history interviews and accounts, and projective techniques, all of which supply a wealth of information about an individual and a context for functioning. However, these approaches also allow for substantial subjectivity and misinterpretation with an untrained clinician. Despite the interest in creating tools specifically for bilingual and bicultural groups, there is a dearth of available objective or criterion-based measures that are specifically developed for the appropriate assessment of Mexican Americans. Of course, a primary roadblock to the development of such tools is that the discipline of clinical psychology has no fleshed out paradigm for how Mexican Americans view behavior, thought, or pathology.

Conclusion

The growth of Mexican American and other bilingual/bicultural populations in the United States has prompted a need for clinicians to be more aware of how culture and language affect psychological functioning. Psychological assessment in the form of psychometrics has become a predominant concern in the field of clinical psychology as well as a social and political concern. The preponderance of psychometric tools available do not adequately describe or measure the domain of psychological, cognitive, or mental health function of Mexican Americans. Because of their bilingual and bicultural

status and development, this group does not fall under the general parameters for which most popular psychometric tools were made. In essence, what has resulted is a need to build a theory of development for Mexican Americans, as proposed by the tenets and practices of ethnopsychology.

At this time in history, the discipline of psychology has the benefit of several pioneers in the field of ethnopsychology that have set a foundation for improving diagnostic and treatment practices with Mexican Americans. Diaz-Guerrero (1977, 1982, 1992, 1995) is a founding father in the field, having created an ideology from which to understand cross-cultural difference as well as intracultural variation. He also systemized the theory of ethnopsychology by creating a method, or at least a set of guidelines for methodology, in the form of the tenets of ethnopsychology as described earlier in this article. Subsequently, Ramirez (1983, 1998) continued that journey toward consolidating a theoretical and methodological framework for the ethnopsychology of bicultural/bilingual (or *mestizo*) populations, such as Mexican Americans. Ramirez's works have helped to focus attention on Mexican Americans as a unique cultural group and not just an extension or subcategory of the dominant U.S. Anglo culture. Taking these ideas in hand, researchers have moved forward in adapting and restandardizing/renorming psychological assessment measures for more appropriate use with Mexican Americans. And although these advancements have been formidable, psychology and especially clinical psychology has not yet taken on the issue of Mexican American psychology outside the realm of idiosyncratic symptomology, acculturation effects, and the effects of language on meaning and measurement. It is time to take a step further and *desarrollar* (not just develop but also nurture over time and observe) a system of psychological understanding that is internal to Mexican Americans—one that allows values and beliefs and behaviors of normal or abnormal range to be defined within the group. Essentially, it is time for an ethnopsychology that explores the dimensions and not just the qualities engaged in the psychological reality of Mexican Americans in the United States.

For an ethnopsychology of Mexican Americans to be actualized, it seems that three areas of research require further attention. First, more primary research should be done on Mexican Americans, with an emphasis on the beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors that mediate the distinction between normal and abnormal for this group. Through such research, there may emerge a general pattern of expectation that can be used as a baseline and can be evaluated for within-group variance. Second, the current practice of adapting existing tools should be modified to include a revalidation process, as well as renorming and restandardization for bilingual/bicultural groups. This

revalidation process should integrate the practice of ensuring construct equivalence across items cross-culturally. Items/measures should not only be translated but should ensure that what is being asked is what is being measured. Third, training of clinicians should include not only the idea of sensitivity to cultural issues affecting clients but also incorporate a responsibility in professionals to know how culture (especially in bicultural/bilingual groups) affects specific and general measurement of psychological constructs. Although these suggestions may not revolutionize psychology as a whole, they provide an initial agenda for the improvement of diagnosis, treatment, and interventions for Mexican American populations, whether it be a Chicano suffering from a psychological disorder or an immigrant mother just trying to figure out the normal expectations of emotional or cognitive development.

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