

Cultural Identity and Immigration: Reconstructing the Group During Cultural Transition

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Introduction

Jose Rivera's autobiographical play, *The House of Ramon Iglesia* (1987), vividly portrays conflicts among the members of a Puerto Rican family living in Long Island, New York, as they attempt to address the impacts of their cultural transitions now and in the past. Ramon Iglesia's sons each show different views of and reactions to both their Puerto Rican identity and the surrounding society, and it is these differences and the tensions they engender that provide the dramatic substance of this play.

Javier, the oldest son, rejects the family's intentions to return to Puerto Rico, which they had left many years earlier when he was a young child. Javier has recently graduated from college in New York, thanks to his parents' many sacrifices, yet now appears to be ashamed of many Puerto Rican cultural traditions which his parents maintain. He disdains Puerto Rican music, food and other cultural symbols, and refuses to show his father the respect that tradition would demand. Javier also believes that the best way for him and his compatriots to advance in society is to speak proper English, work the political system, and get rid of the past. It would seem that Javier has adopted a fully assimilationist orientation during his immigration experience. Nevertheless, it is clear from the beginning that although he wants to be accepted in the majority society, he diverges from it in a number of respects, starting with his propensity to tell long, fascinating tales, much like his father, and to fight politically on behalf of Puerto Ricans. Javier's behavior, when seen through a cultural lens, bears a lot of resemblance to Puerto Rican cultural features, even though he does not recognize them, and even rejects them. As the play progresses, Javier, confronted by the hostility and prejudices of the surrounding society as well as the realization that much of what he rejects is already internalized in him, begins to shift

his views of his family and himself and starts to develop a more accepting view of his and others' "Puerto Ricanness."

Javier's youngest brother, Carlos, has spent almost his whole life on Long Island and speaks very little Spanish, yet he is the staunchest and most eager advocate in the family for returning to the island. He refuses to be called Charlie and uses every possible opportunity to practice his Spanish language skills. While Javier, who is most familiar with his cultural traditions, rejects them, Carlos wholeheartedly embraces them.

Thus, the constructions of what it is to be Puerto Rican are different for each, as are their feelings about these representations. One sees a very negative connotation to his group construction, while the other construes the group in quite positive terms. Over time, these views and the attached feelings shift for the brothers. Clearly, in this family the patterns of adaptation and acculturation do not follow the one-way direction often proposed in the scholarly literature. The play calls into question the universality of the concepts and structures traditionally used to explain the processes of identity construction and redefinition that occur during immigrants' cultural transitions. We believe that an important part of these transitions is the way in which individuals construct the meaning of their group membership and it is these constructions that are the focus of this chapter.

Migration across national and cultural boundaries can have a variety of profound impacts on groups and individuals. Psychologists and other social scientists interested in this phenomenon and its multifaceted correlates (e.g., Berry, 1997; Ward, 1996; Weinreich, 1989) offer numerous constructs to permit mapping the various types of changes that occur during migration experiences. Many of the experiences and impacts of migration are best understood as typical of a group; important variations within the migrating groups, however, must be considered from the perspective of the individuals involved. The experiences of the *Iglesias* are not unique in this regard. Anyone even cursorily acquainted with immigrant families has seen varied experiences of the process of negotiating cultural transitions among different family members, both between and within generations.

This chapter focuses on individuals' psychological connections to their ethnic and cultural groups and considers how these affiliations may be impacted by the processes that occur during cultural transitions. Specifically, we describe a way to conceptualize cultural identity as one major component of ethnic identity, that we believe can permit mapping and understanding the experience and effects of migration in a way that honors both group and individual constructions of new and previous (now minority) cultures.

Broadly speaking, we conceive of cultural identity as the reflection

of culture as it is constructed by each of us. The extent or strength of cultural identification is thus conceptualized and measured in terms of the emotions and self-perceptions associated with these individual constructions of group culture. Before formally defining the proposed construct, we wish to discuss briefly two central components of our theoretical and methodological orientations: its focus on culture (ethnic or national), and the examination and measurement of group culture at the level of individuals' constructions.

Culture

In many of the definitions and conceptualizations of ethnicity and ethnic identity, the central emphasis is on the sharing of a common culture (Hutnik, 1991). Barth (1969) points out the limitations of such an approach, and suggests that the focus of investigation should shift from the cultural components to the process of creation and maintenance of ethnic boundaries and the "continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders" (*ibid.*, pp. 14–15).

It is clear to us that a complete understanding of ethnic identity, and of its redefinition and transformation during an individual's or group's cultural transition, has to take into account both the boundaries of group membership and the group's cultural aspects as perceived by its members (Ferdman, 1992). Like the well-known figure-and-ground drawing of the facial profile and the vase, ethnic boundaries and culture define each other. Ethnic boundaries lead to the creation and transformation of culture and thus imbue the differentiation among groups with content and meaning; at the same time, culture contributes to the demarcation of group boundaries which psychologically (and frequently also in the real world) separate those who share these cultural features from those who are perceived as not participating in them.

As in the case of the figure-and-ground drawing, although we know that both components are always there, it is our perceptual focus which makes us "see" only one of them at a time; some psychological approaches to social and ethnic identity bring boundaries and intergroup demarcations to the foreground, while others deal mainly with features of group cultures (Ferdman, 1992). In her analysis of the various theories and models of ethnic and racial identity development, Helms (1997), for example, suggests that identity models should be considered "racial" models if they relate primarily to intergroup relations of domination and oppression, whereas the term "ethnic" should be applied to models focusing on the acquisition and maintenance of cultural characteristics. In the area of social psychology, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), deals primarily with the

boundary around the group and the individual's image of that boundary. **Social identity** typically refers to the symbolic aspects of social categories — the demarcation between in-group and out-group, between “we” and “they” — and the associated affect. In contrast, our conceptualization of cultural identity focuses on what is “inside” the boundaries — the person's perceptions of the behavioral and attitudinal bases or consequences of the categories.

What is culture? After reviewing numerous approaches and definitions in the psychological study of culture, Triandis (1996) concludes that there is a wide agreement that culture — at the group level — consists of **shared** elements which provide the standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating, and acting among those who share a language, a history, and a geographic location. The shared elements, according to Triandis, are transmitted from generation to generation with modifications. Although this conceptualization is still in need of refinement and elaboration, it fits well our purposes of highlighting some central emphases in our approach to the study of the ways in which individuals perceive and construct their cultures.

First, culture is not seen as static or fixed, but as being in a continuous state of transformation. Elements of culture — its signs and symbols — may be transformed or filled with new meanings and take on new functions and expressions during intra- and intergroup contact (Liebkind, 1992). These processes of reconstruction, creation, and recreation of culture are eloquently described by Nagel (1994):

Culture is **not** a shopping cart that comes to us already loaded with a set of historical, cultural goods. Rather we construct culture by picking and choosing items from the shelves of the past and the present... In other words, cultures change: They are borrowed, blended, rediscovered, and reinterpreted. (Ibid., p. 162)

According to Nagel, ethnic cultures (as well as ethnic boundaries and identities) are negotiated, defined, and produced through social interaction inside and outside ethnic communities.

Our second emphasis is on the individual constructions or representations of culture. Although culture is meaningful only with reference to the group, it is enacted by individuals (Ferdman, 1995). Ponterotto and Pedersen (1993) similarly suggest that culture should be defined as within the person rather than within the group. Keesing (1974), dealing with cultures in a broad sense, and Ridgeway (1983), in her analysis of small group culture, located culture in the mind of each individual as that person's theory of the code that other members are following. Each member's theory may be

unconscious, but it is used to interpret events and also affects decisions about how to behave (ibid.). More specifically, the culture of the group as a whole is constructed and realized in the interactions of its members with each other:

When members meet, each with their own theory of the group culture, they enact together their shared symbols, meanings, ideas of themselves and their situation. Even though the members' conceptions of their culture are not identical, these shared meanings emerge from their mutual adjustments to one another and the substantial overlap among their views. (Ibid., p. 247)

In any specific interaction, one finds only part of the group culture, and each individual carries basically a personal theory of the group culture, not necessarily a complete or static one.

Our focus on the individual's construction of his or her cultural group(s) follows also from the need to take into account not only between-group differences in cultural features, but also important within-group variations in cultural characteristics and perceptions. Most theoretical discourse and research have described culture at the group level, without providing much guidance regarding the degree to which such accounts may apply to specific individuals (Ferdman & Cortes, 1992). Others urge us to avoid assuming the ecological fallacy (Smith & Bond, 1993) that something that is true at the group level is also true for every individual member of that group. In his critical review of the place of ethnicity and culture in educational psychology, Portes (1996) claims that most research regards ethnicity and culture as fossilized and dichotomous categories that one either has or does not have. They are presumed to be experienced in the same way by different individuals and to have the same effects on different individuals, with little attention paid to what these effects are or how they are internalized. Portes prompts us to pay more attention to the “subjective meaning” of ethnicity.

Cultural Identity

Herman (1989), in studying the nature of Jewish ethnic identity, suggested that its analysis must address both (a) the nature of the individual's relationship to the Jewish group as a membership group, and (b) the individual's perception of the attributes of the Jewish group, his feelings about them, and the extent to which its norms are adopted by him as a source of reference. The first component involves aspects of the person's ethnic affiliation — in the present terms, both ethnic and social identity — while the second has to do with the ways in which that affiliation is represented. It is the

second aspect of group identity proposed by Herman which is close to our conceptualization of cultural identity.

Cultural identity is conceptualized here as one's individual image of the behaviors, beliefs, values and norms — in short, the cultural features that characterize one's group(s), together with one's feelings about those features and one's understanding of how they are (or are not) reflected in oneself (Ferdman, 1990, 1995). In formulating and continually redefining his or her cultural identity, the individual looks for answers to the following key questions:

1. What constitutes the culture of my group?
2. How (what) do I feel about these components of the culture?
3. Where are they in me? (to what degree and in what manner are the group's cultural features reflected in me and my values/beliefs/style?)

Thus, one's cultural identity is one's picture of the relationship between one's group culture and oneself. Like **social identity** (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), it includes both descriptive and evaluative components, but it has a different focus. Subgroups and individual members of a particular group can vary in the extent to which they perceive specific attributes as central to their cultural identity and in the value they give these attributes. In addition, they may perceive differently the extent to which they see themselves as having these attributes.

The first aspect of cultural identity, then, is the construction of the in-group and its characteristics — features which can vary across persons and subgroups. Two individuals may define their membership in a group in basically the same way, yet each describes the group's cultural features quite differently. For example, two Jews, one in Israel and the other in the United States, may each feel just as strongly Jewish as the other, while their constructions of Jewishness and what it means for them, and even their picture of the Jews as a group, can be very different. Thus, views of what the critical cultural features of one's reference groups are, may in part be dependent on the configuration of those groups in society, as well as on individual experiences. Markowitz (1988), for example, vividly depicts the radically different meanings that Jewishness carries in Russia and in the United States, and analyzes the difficulties that Jewish Russian immigrants face in America trying to make sense of, and adjust to the changing contents of their ethnic identity. Even within the same host country, certain features of the minority group may be salient for immigrants living in ethnic enclaves that would not be important for immigrants who are more isolated. Also, immigrants often describe their culture in terms that are quite unlike (and

often more traditional) than those used by current residents of their country of origin. In a similar vein, Bekerman (this volume) shows that Russian immigrants who arrived in Israel at an early age gradually develop a strong sense of "Russianness," but its contents and associations are considerably different from what being Russian meant and still means in their country of origin.

This central feature of our conceptualization of cultural identity, namely, the social and individual construction of the group and of membership in it, is consistent with recent developments in the study of ethnic and national identity from the perspective of the Social Representations approach (Horenczyk & Bekerman, in press). Social Representations have been described as shared cognitive systems that originate in everyday social interaction and furnish individuals with a common sense understanding of their experiences in the world (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). These representations are social in the sense that they are collectively created and collectively maintained, facilitate and regulate social interaction, and play a major role in the formation and development of social groups (Ibañez, 1988). Group cultures in general, and ethnicity and nationality in particular, fit well these conceptualizations of social representations. As pointed out by Billig (1993), the notions of ethnicity and nationalism are social categories, whose "objectivity" cannot be taken for granted; they are themselves "cultural concepts, or shared representations" (ibid., p. 41). Billig (1995) argued that the psychological study of nationalism and national identity "should search for the common-sense assumptions and ways of talking about nationhood" (ibid., p. 61).

Conceptual and methodological advances in the study of social representations allow for the examination of both group and individual variations in the construction of ethnic and national identities. Following Doise, Clemence & Lorenzi-Cioldi's (1993) modified definition of social representations as "reference points in relation to which individuals position themselves according to specific social experiences they share with other individuals" (ibid., p. 155), various studies have explored subgroup and individual differences in the representation of social and cultural worlds (Horenczyk & Bekerman, 1997; Horenczyk, this volume). The notion of cultural identity presented in this chapter, together with the corresponding operationalization to be described in a later section, share the basic conceptual and methodological assumptions on which these investigations are grounded.

The second aspect of cultural identity refers to the individual's feelings about the cultural features ascribed to the group. Two individuals may agree in their depiction of a reference group that they share, but their images may

carry quite divergent valences. For example, two Americans may perceive that US culture is characterized by conservative values about sexuality; one may feel positively about this, while the other would prefer that the group's values were different. More often, divergent feelings about the group may be a result of different constructions of its culture. This was the case in Jose Rivera's (1987) play, *The House of Ramon Iglesia*, that we referred to at the beginning of the chapter. The contents of the group representation in Javier's cultural identity are markedly different from those of his brother Carlos, and consequently these are also evaluated in quite different ways. Javier believes being Puerto Rican is about live pigs slaughtered in the backyard, abusive uncles, and his father's alcoholism, and therefore is very negative about the group. Carlos, in contrast, associates Puerto Ricans with ethnic pride, the Spanish language, strong family affiliations, and the beautiful beaches of Puerto Rico, and so is quite enamored of his group.

This evaluative facet of cultural identity bears resemblance to the valence of ethnic identity, defined by Herman (1989) as "likes and aversions" for the various facets of the group. While valence is usually measured in terms of individuals' general feelings toward their ethnic membership, we focus more on their attitudes toward the specific cultural features that they attribute to their group. In general, we would expect a high correlation between evaluations of these cultural features of the group and evaluations of the group membership. However, some discrepancies are also likely to be found, their nature and extent being very interesting to analyze. A Mexican immigrant to the United States may hold a positive attitude toward his ethnic group membership, perhaps based on the group's history and past achievements, while at the same time he may not highly value the present cultural features he sees in the group. In considering evaluations of specific cultural features, it is also possible to discover whether individuals hold conflicting or ambivalent feelings about their group's culture.

The third aspect of cultural identity is the individual's view of where, how and to what degree the group culture is reflected in the self. In one of our previous examples, the individual who has positive feelings about US culture sees himself as having conservative values, and believes that this reflects his enculturation as an American. The person with negative feelings about these values may not see them reflected in her own preferences. A third person may perceive similar features in US culture and have somewhat negative feelings about them but still see these characteristics reflected in himself. Part of what troubled Javier about his ascription of negative features to Puerto Ricans was his sneaking suspicion that he might somehow (involuntarily) be displaying them in his own style and behavior.

His brother, in contrast, while holding a different and positive view of Puerto Rican culture, recognized that he did not yet incorporate many of these elements and was actively engaged in trying to do so.

Cultural Identity and Immigration

It is very likely that the cultural identity of the immigrant individual will affect and be affected by his or her acculturation process. A positive view of the attributes that are seen as characterizing the majority society, for example, may strengthen a positive attitude toward the adoption of the dominant group's norms and values. These conceptions that the individual holds regarding the dominant as well as the minority cultures, will in turn be affected by the acculturation process; in most cases, more positive intergroup contact during acculturation will serve to promote a better view of the dominant group as perceived by the newcomer.

Current conceptualizations of acculturation can offer valuable, but somewhat limited insights into the complex and highly varied processes involved in migration. In most studies, acculturation is conceptualized and operationalized as a fixed dimension along which immigrants move during the process of cultural transition: individuals may be seen as more or less acculturated according to the extent of their adoption of cultural features which are defined, in advance, as characterizing the group to which they are acculturating. The commonly used scales (for a review see, Ward, 1996) include measures such as language proficiency and use, ethnic interaction and friendship choice as acculturation criteria. While some measures have introduced the notion that individuals may also vary in the degree to which they retain their culture of origin (i.e., it is not assumed that adopting the dominant group's cultural features necessarily implies giving up those of one's group of origin), these scales also use pre-defined descriptions of the cultures as the basis of measurement.

We would like to suggest that our approach to the study and measurement of cultural identity can contribute to the understanding of acculturation processes during immigration. Two main benefits can be gained by examining the immigrant's construction of the new and old cultures, the latter now transformed into the minority culture within the host society, as well as the evaluations of the features attributed to these cultures and the extent to which these features are seen as characterizing the self. These advantages are described in the next two sections.

Acculturation to Majority Culture

The first major application of our ideas has to do with the immigrant's construction of the dominant group. The term acculturation has been frequently used to refer primarily to the process of change experienced by members of the minority group toward the adoption of the dominant group's culture (Mena, Padilla & Maldonado, 1987). Within this conceptual and methodological framework, a number of features of the dominant culture are used as "yardstick" or criteria for the individual's adoption of the majority culture, and acculturation scales were developed to measure the immigrant's degree of immersion in the majority culture and society. These measures, however, fail to take the immigrant's own construction of the dominant group into account. Even though, it is to their image of the dominant culture to which the immigrants are acculturating, and not necessarily to some "objective" features of that culture which are represented in the acculturation scales. These constructions of the dominant group serve not only as goals for acculturation, but also as personal criteria for acculturation. Some individuals who score low in standard acculturation scales, may nevertheless feel highly acculturated to the majority if they see themselves as fitting their own image of the dominant group. Thus, they will feel and exhibit strong majority identity, according to our conceptualization proposed earlier, and score high on identity measures which take into account the individual's perceptions of the dominant group characteristics. These individual constructions may sometimes differ significantly from the views of the group held by the majority members, and even from those adopted by large segments of the acculturating minority. It is therefore not unusual to come across immigrants who tend to "overemphasize" some aspects of the dominant culture (such as clothing, accent, or slang); it would seem that such newcomers see these as prominent features of the majority culture and consider their adoption as central to successful acculturation.

Our approach may thus contribute to the ongoing debate regarding the effects of acculturation on psychological well-being. Meta-analyses (Moyerman & Forman, 1992; Negy & Woods, 1992) have shown that the evidence emerging from many studies dealing with the relationship between acculturation and adjustment is largely inconclusive. These studies have usually measured acculturation (and also adjustment) according to **objective** criteria. We would like to suggest that the **subjective acculturation** of the individuals (i.e., the extent to which they see themselves acculturated according to their own views of the receiving society's characteristics and

expectations) can add considerably to the prediction and explanation of the immigrants' personal and social adaptation to the new environment.

Furthermore, the exploration of the ways in which the receiving society is represented might reveal that, in many cases, it is not the dominant group to which the immigrant is acculturating; some newcomers are likely to identify the culture of the new society with that of their close community, which is often populated by relatively large numbers of immigrants or other co-ethnics. In his analysis of Latino immigrants in the United States, Buriel (1975) introduced the term "acculturation to the Barrio." He indicated that traditional models assume acculturation to the dominant Anglo community, when in fact, the immigrant may be acculturating to the Latino community, comprised of both native-borns and earlier arrivals, and its own particular practices and lifestyles.

Acculturation to Minority Culture

Our *emic* (Berry, 1989) approach to cultural identity, which tries to look at the group from within the insider's view, can also be relevant to the understanding of the immigrant's relationship to his or her minority culture. Recent models of acculturation (e.g., Berry, 1997; LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993) have considered not only the immigrants' attitudes toward, and behaviors in terms of the dominant culture, but have also taken into account their views and allegiances toward their own group, as well as the sometimes complex relationships between the two cultures. As indicated above, acculturation has usually been conceptualized and measured in terms of relatively fixed "yardsticks" along which immigrants are expected to move during the process of cultural transition. However, if we consider the perspectives of individuals' constructions of their social and cultural worlds, we see that these "yardsticks" vary. The impact of acculturation may thus be seen not only in individuals' movement across a uniform landscape as defined by these parameters, but also in changes in how they construct their own landscape. In this view, an individual may be in the same place according to traditional measures, but alternative measures of his or her view of the groups may show that the view of the groups has changed, suggesting an impact of immigration.

While behavioral and attitudinal changes in the direction of adopting the norms, values and behaviors generally associated with the dominant culture are typically interpreted as evidence for the weakening of prior cultural allegiances, it may be the case that the culture of origin is reinterpreted

or reconstructed in such a way that the new norms and behaviors become part of this construction, while the intensity and extent of allegiance remain relatively unchanged. The reaction of an immigrant student from Vietnam in the United States to our questionnaire (described below) provides a glimpse of this process. When requested to list the cultural features of her ethnic group, she asked whether she should do so in terms of Vietnamese culture "back in Vietnam" or Vietnamese culture "here," among her reference group of young Vietnamese Americans. The implication was that the values, norms, and behaviors of the two could be described rather differently. While the Vietnamese "here" probably could be seen as closer to dominant American culture than the Vietnamese "over there," our respondent made it clear that she did not necessarily perceive her Vietnamese American peers as particularly Anglo, since she had a clearly articulated view of what their cultural features were, and these were different from those she perceived among the dominant group.

As suggested earlier, our *emic* approach to the study and measurement of cultural identity — one that emphasizes the individual's definition and representation of his or her group(s) — can provide us with a more accurate view of acculturation to the **majority**, which for some immigrants may be acculturation to the "Barrio." A similar process can be discerned with regard to the acculturation to the **minority** in some immigrant communities. Immigrants to ethnic enclaves face particular challenges not necessarily addressed (but implicit in a sense) in current models of acculturation. Such immigrants must not only adapt to the host majority culture, but also to the host minority culture. For example, an immigrant from Cali, Colombia, to Queens, New York, must learn what it is to be a Latino in the United States (a concept with no substantive meaning for him in Colombia), as well as the adaptive patterns for survival in Elmhurst, the Colombian and South American enclave. In this enclave, there are many *émigrés* from various South American countries, resulting in a cultural milieu that is at once quite different from, yet has some similarities to that in Cali.

As indicated previously, in most current models of acculturation (e.g., Berry, 1990; LaFromboise et al., 1993), this process is described as an interplay between the immigrant's orientation toward the previous (or minority) culture and toward the culture of the receiving society. By dichotomizing each of these two orientations (positive or negative attitudes to each culture), four acculturation strategies are conceptualized: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration (or biculturalism) (Berry, 1997).

The two immigration contexts described above, that in which individuals acculturate to the "Barrio" and the one in which the individual has to acculturate to a new minority identity unique to the new society, raise important questions about the theoretical and methodological sufficiency of the bidimensional conceptualizations of acculturation. What exactly are the dominant and the minority cultures in these cases? Which are the dividing lines between them? How are the group memberships defined and constructed by the immigrants? These are the types of questions to which our conceptualization of cultural identity can hopefully contribute answers. We now turn briefly to the description of a research instrument developed for the exploration of cultural identity. This measure focuses on the immigrant's individual representation of the cultures of which he or she is a part.

Exploring Cultural Identity

The conceptualization of cultural identity proposed so far can be translated in a straightforward manner into a research instrument aimed at examining individuals' constructions of their cultural groups, their feelings toward the features they attribute to their social groups, and the way and extent to which they see themselves as characterized by these attributes. We believe that this instrument, together with other existing measures of ethnic identity and acculturation, can help assess changes in cultural identity during cultural transition.

The Group Characteristics Questionnaire (GCQ) which we developed deals with most aspects of the construct of cultural identity described earlier. In the first section, respondents are asked to list their three principal group memberships (though not in any pre-defined order). Two of the group memberships usually correspond to the dominant and the minority identities; the third membership allows for the description of an additional social identity central to each individual. Next, the respondents are requested to specify, for each of these three groups, ten features which they think describe **a typical member of the group**. In the third section we ask respondents to go back to the features listed for each of these three cultural groups and to rate the extent to which each description or characteristic applies to them, on a seven-point scale ranging from one ("doesn't describe me at all") to seven ("describes me to a great extent"). Immigrant students in the United States

and in Israel, from various origins, completed the questionnaire. Russian, Hebrew, Spanish, and English versions were available. The respondents listed the characteristics attributed to each cultural group in the language of their choice.

In the first administration of the questionnaire, we added a final section in which respondents were asked to indicate their extent of agreement with five statements relating to each of the three groups listed initially. The items measured the sense of belonging, pride, happiness, valence and essentiality associated with each of the group memberships on a five-point scale (with high values corresponding to high levels of identification).

The data obtained from the GCQ lends itself to both ideographic and nomothetic analyses. An ideographic treatment of the information allows us to examine in-depth the ways in which a particular respondent defines his or her cultural memberships, the way each of these is represented, the patterns of interrelations between them as reflected in similarities and differences between the constructions of the various cultural groups, and the extent to which group features are seen as characterizing self. Nomothetic approaches will seek to compute individual indexes (such as the proportion of "positive," "negative," and "neutral" features attributed to each group, or the total extent of self-identification with each of them), and use them at aggregate levels for examining group differences or to correlate them with other variables.

With a few examples, we now briefly illustrate, from an ideographic perspective, the use and value of the questionnaire and of the theoretical construct — cultural identity — which it partially measures.

David is a 29 year old student who emigrated from South Africa to Israel three years prior to his participation in our study. He listed Israeli, Jew, and South African as his three main group memberships. His representation of Jewishness is highly tied to history ("connected to Jewish history," "been through persecutions"), to community ("family/community oriented," "care for each other"), and to Israel. No references were made to aspects of ritual or belief. The main score of self-identification with "Jewish" characteristics was very high — 6.4. While the construction of Jewishness was based only on aspects with positive connotations which were all seen as characterizing the self, the representations of Israeli and South African were more complex and somewhat in conflict. Israelis were depicted as "caring" but "cynical," as "ideological" but as people who "live from day to day"; the mean score of self-identification with these features was considerably lower —

4.8, with many characteristics perceived as "somewhat" describing him. The lowest mean self-identification score — 4.0, was obtained for the South African group membership. Interestingly, the first two attributes listed were "white" and "racist," suggesting that the reference group to which David relates is a very specific subgroup within South African society. The group representation also included items such as "patriotic," "materially concerned," and "selective history," which were not seen as characterizing self. On the other hand, South Africans are also viewed by David as "family-oriented," and as people who "believe in change." In this questionnaire, the order of self-identification with the three cultural groups (Jewish, Israeli, and South African) parallels exactly the order obtained using the mean score on the five more "traditional" measures of ethnic identity.

Boris is an 18 year old student, recently arrived in Israel from Leningrad. He listed the following three group memberships: European, Jewish, Atheist. The highest self-identification score was with the European identity, which is characterized by features such as "intelligent," "willing to learn," "respect for parents," "loves life," and "arrogant." Most of these attributes were seen as describing self to a great extent. It would seem that the term "European" is used to label a certain Russian subculture, one to which the Russian Jews in the larger cities sought to belong. The construction of Jewishness by Boris is highly conflicted and may reflect the process of identity reconstruction in which he is involved following his cultural transition. For the most part, the image of the Jew is that of the Russian Jew, characterized by intelligence, high culture, high respect for parents, and attraction to knowledge. (Interestingly, when related to the "European" image, "intelligence" is seen as characterizing self to a great extent, but when it is "Jewish" intelligence it is rated as describing self only to a moderate extent.) However, the Jew is also perceived as "feeling superior to other people," and as "religious" — two attributes which Boris does not consider to describe him at all. Boris's score on Jewish identity obtained from the "traditional" measures is very high: he feels part of the Jewish group, has much pride in it, and feels that Jewishness is a positive and essential component of his self. His responses to the GCQ, however, show a very peculiar and quite ambivalent construction of Jewishness.

Ana is also a Russian immigrant in Israel. She listed "Russian as an ethnic group," "Jewish," and "Zionist" as her main group memberships. It is the second cultural group, Jewish, which received her highest score of

self-identification (5.3). According to our measure, then, Ana seems to feel and think of herself as having Jewish cultural features to a considerable extent. But Ana's conception of Jewishness is certainly not the view of Jewishness prevalent in her host society, Israel. Ana characterizes the Jew as one that "helps people," "achieves goals," "thinks first about others and only later about self," "moral," and one who "has good manners." Ana does not think about Jewishness either in religious or in national terms. It would seem that she is able to maintain a sense of identity with Jewish culture by constructing it in a relatively idiosyncratic way. On a traditional measure of acculturation, Ana might appear to be relatively unacculturated; in her own view, however, she is very much like other Jews.

These examples illustrate some of the richness of cultural identity and some of the ways that the GCQ allows its exploration. The three individuals each had a highly personalized view of the culture of their reference group, and varied in how they saw themselves as embodying or representing that culture. Moreover, the traditional measures of ethnic identity did not always relate directly to these perceptions.

Future Developments

The operationalization of cultural identity in our current questionnaire captures only part of the totality and complexity of the construct as conceptualized in this chapter. By asking our respondents to describe a typical member of their group(s), we focused on their individual constructions of the group autostereotype and, in the subsequent task, on the extent to which this stereotype is seen as describing themselves. Our premise was that the perceptions of the typical group member constitute a major component of persons' construction of their group, and that these representations significantly relate to other aspects of their group membership. In our instrument, the quantitative measure of cultural identity is based on the degree to which the features attributed to a typical group member are seen as fitting a respondent's self-perception. This formulation is similar to the notion of "empathetic identification" put forward by Weinreich (1989; this volume) within the framework of his Identity Structure Analysis. According to him, "the extent of one's [empathetic] identification with another is defined as the degree of similarity between the qualities one

attributes to the other, whether 'good' or 'bad,' and those of one's current self-image" (Weinreich, 1989, p. 73).

Yet it is quite possible that individuals may identify strongly with their group without necessarily identifying strongly with the group members and their typical features (Karasawa, 1991). In many such instances, people will base their identification with their group on some "ideal" image of the group, while at the same time admitting that these ideal features at present do not tend to characterize most members, or the typical member of the group. In a discussion of ethnic identity boundaries, it was suggested (Horenczyk & Bekerman, 1993) that individuals hold ideas about the criteria for membership in their group and also ideas about what constitutes a "good" member of the group. The latter attitude reflects the group norms and expectations — central features of the group culture as perceived by the individual — which need to be included in any comprehensive mapping of the individual's cultural identity.

An analysis of both the "actual" and the "ideal" features attributed to the group, together with information about the degree to which each of them is reflected in the individual's self-perception, can provide us with important information about complex patterns of cultural identification. Such an analysis may reveal interesting patterns of congruence and discrepancies between these two types of self-standards (Higgins, 1989; Higgins et al., 1986). It may turn out, for example, that some Jewish immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union tend to ascribe different attributes to the typical and to the ideal (or "good") Jew, the latter including more aspects of Jewish ritual than the former. They could then see more "actual" features of their Jewish cultural identity reflected in their self-image, while admitting that they do not share many of the "ideal" Jewish features. Conversely, other immigrants may feel highly dissimilar from the actual features attributed by them to the typical Jew in Israel, but they may still cling to the ideal image of the Jew with which they highly identify. This awareness of the complex nature of cultural identification should in no way deter us from examining individuals' construction of their cultural group from such a multifaceted perspective; it is only this type of approach that will enable us to reach an understanding of the rich and intricate patterns of adherence (and nonadherence) to cultural groups.

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Contents

<i>Chaim Adler</i> Preface	7
Part 1: Acculturation and Identity	
Introduction	11
<i>Gabriel Horenczyk</i> Conflicted Identities: Acculturation Attitudes and Immigrants' Construction of Their Social Worlds	13
<i>Peter Weinreich</i> Ethnic Identity and "Acculturation": Ethnic Stereotyping and Identification, Self-Esteem and Identity Diffusion in a Multicultural Context	31
<i>Dorit Roer-Strier</i> Socializing Immigrant Children: Home and School Coping with Cultural Differences	65
<i>Bernardo M. Ferdman and Gabriel Horenczyk</i> Cultural Identity and Immigration: Reconstructing the Group during Cultural Transition	81
Part 2: Narratives of Acculturation	
Introduction	103
<i>Zvi Bekerman</i> From Russia to Israel and Back: Stories of Selves and Bodies in Migration	105
<i>Oliva M. Espin</i> Crossing Borders and Boundaries: Gender and Sexuality in Life Narratives of Immigrant Women	123
<i>Malka Shabtay</i> Identity Reformulation among Ethiopian Immigrant Soldiers in Israel	141

Part 3: Patterns of Language Maintenance	
Introduction	157
<i>Muriel Seville-Troike</i>	
Causes and Consequences of Language Maintenance/Shift	159
<i>Dorit Kaufman</i>	
Attrition of Hebrew in the United States: Sociolinguistic Perspectives	173
Part 4: Bilingualism	
Introduction	199
<i>Elite Olshtain and Bella Kotik</i>	
The Development of Bilingualism in an Immigrant Community	201
<i>J. N. Jørgensen</i>	
Language Hierarchies, Bilingualism and Minority Education in the Nordic Countries	219
<i>Mehroo Northover</i>	
Bilingualism and Ethnicity	239
<i>Alison L. Imbens-Bailey</i>	
Language Background and Ethnic Identity: A Study of Bilingual and English-Only-Speaking Children of Armenian Descent	255
Part 5: Language in the Social Context	
Introduction	273
<i>Barry R. Chiswick</i>	
Soviet Jews in the United States: Language and Labor Market Adjustments Revisited	275
<i>Gila Menahem and Idith Gajst</i>	
Language and Occupation among Soviet Immigrants to Israel in the 1990s	301
<i>Claire Kramsch</i>	
Literacy, Equity, Access for the Immigrant Learner	325
List of Participants	339