

LOSS AND MAINTENANCE OF CULTURAL BENCHMARKS

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1. Introduction

This chapter examines the loss and maintenance of cultural benchmarks among ethnic majorities and minorities in economically advanced countries in Europe, Central/South America, Asia, and the United States (U.S.). Our discussion defines what is meant by culture ethnicity, and “majority” and “minority” cultures, and examines the process of acculturation and assimilation across various world cultures. The chapter also outlines the traditional worldviews and social networks in European, Latino, and Asian societies, as well as in the American majority and minority groups that originated in the aforementioned cultures, in Africa, and in Arab cultures. Finally, the chapter will consider the benefits and disadvantages of the movement towards a global multicultural society. Our discussion at times refers more to the U.S., since it is a country with numerous ethnic groups and has a long history of immigration and changing social attitudes and political policies towards new immigrants. As many countries implicitly carry on similar policies now, discussion of the U.S. in terms of minority and majority groups, acculturation and assimilation and the maintenance of cultural benchmarks, may reflect what also can be seen in other economically advanced countries at large.

As we detail the increase of migration and resulting growth of minority ethnic groups in modern, industrialized societies, we also will examine how an increase in environmental stressors and disintegration of social cohesiveness may be linked with an upsurge in psychopathology.

Research in the U.S. has consistently shown that individuals from the lowest socioeconomic brackets have the highest rates of psychiatric disorders (Dohrenwend, Dohrenwend, Gould et al. 1980). Since, in many economically advanced countries, the lowest socioeconomic levels are comprised of an inordinate number of racial and ethnic minorities, it follows that these disadvantaged groups report more psychological distress than majority group members. Dohrenwend et al. (1998) suggested that ethnic minorities are exposed to more environmental stressors (e.g., poverty, violence, crime, discrimination, limited political and social power), leading them to experience higher rates of psychopathology. Additionally, minorities who have recently immigrated face unique stressors, including adapting to the language and norms of the new culture, and confronting ethnocentrism and hostility in majority group members (Shuval 1993). As a result, migration has been linked with increased physical illness and psychological disorders (Abramson 1966; Hull 1979).

A review of the literature has shown that positive resources gained from social networks can help offset the deleterious health-related effects of life stressors (Cohen & Wills 1985). Unfortunately, as individuals become increasingly mobile and abandon many of their cultural traditions, they may become isolated from their families and communities, making them more vulnerable to the negative products of stress. Even among majority culture members, increasing social disconnectedness and a loss of distinct cultural benchmarks may contribute to increased susceptibility to stress. Furthermore, as economically advanced countries continue to see a decrease in social cohesiveness, they also may see higher rates of psychiatric disorders in ethnic majority and minority members alike.

Culture

Although there are varied and different meanings ascribed to the term "culture," this chapter primarily will follow the definition espoused by the anthropologist E.B. Tylor (1871). Tylor (1871 : 42) stated that culture is composed of "knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs," in addition to "other capabilities and habits" that individuals adopt when they are members of a "society." Similarly, Sue and Sue (1990 : 35)

assert that culture, in simple terms, “consists of all those things that people have learned to do, believe, value and enjoy” and “is the totality of ideals, beliefs, skills, tools, customs and institutions into which each member of society is born.” More recently, Guarnaccia and Rodriguez (1996 : 10) defined culture “as a web that structures human thought, emotion and interaction”. Culture provides a variety of resources for dealing with major life changes and challenges and it is impacted by numerous factors, including age, gender, social class and acculturation. These researchers strongly argue that culture is a dynamic, ever- changing process.

Ethnicity

Since the term “race” generally refers to a distinct group of individuals who maintain similar genetic characteristics (e.g., skin color, facial features) or are descendant from the same geographic area, we employ the term “ethnic group” to describe a broader classification of individuals defined by a similar race, nationality, religion, language, or cultural background. Furthermore, it is assumed that each ethnic group has unique cultural traditions (e.g., customs and rituals) that are passed from generation to generation, and which may conflict with the cultural benchmarks of other ethnic groups.

Although there are disagreements among sociopolitical theorists as to the meaning of “multiculturalism,” more recent conceptualizations of the term describe it as “the need to preserve distinctly different ethnic, racial, or cultural communities without melting them into a common culture” (Jay 2002). In other words, a multicultural society does not require its minority members to assimilate into the majority culture; rather, all ethnic groups retain their own unique customs and traditions. However, opponents of this type of multiculturalism note that a society must have a “common culture” in order to operate successfully (Jay 2002). From this perspective emerged the concept of “pluralism” which stresses acceptance of cultural variety within a unified sociopolitical structure.

The term pluralism has been sanctioned as a political and theoretical concept during the past several years. For example, the U.S.

Constitution, Bill of Rights, and other documents have suggested and encouraged the acceptance of all individuals as one. Statements such as “we are all created equally” further promote pluralism. The acknowledgment of individuals maintaining their cultural benchmarks and heritage, and its impact on the “host” or “receiving” society, has contributed to discussion of pluralism more recently as immigration rates increase across industrialized nations. Pluralism can be viewed as an ideal concept that evolved in part as a response to the melting pot theory, which, as discussed below, never really materialized.

2. Majority culture versus minority ethnic groups

Internationally, the definitions of “majority” and “minority” cultures vary considerably. In general, ethnicity in Europe is defined by one’s country of origin. However, even within one country, there may be different ethnic groups based on religious beliefs. For example, in Poland, the majority culture belongs to the Catholic Church, while members of the Jewish faith constitute a minority culture. Also, with breakdown of the communistic block, immigrants from Russia and Romania have formed new minority cultures in Poland. In France and Belgium, most of the ethnic minorities are recent immigrants from Northern and Central African countries, like Algeria, Morocco, and Zaire. In Austria, the predominant ethnic minorities are recent immigrants, including Serbo-Croatians, Turks, Poles, and Bosnians. China, Japan, and other Asian countries are relatively monocultural, compared to the U.S. and Europe (Kashima & Callan 1994). Therefore, our discussion of cultural benchmarks within Asian countries will focus largely on the traditional majority view.

The U.S. is a country comprised of numerous ethnic groups. The impact of immigration (both legal and illegal) is reflected in the diversity of cultures, the many languages and ethnic groups that are characteristic of the U.S. Both between and within these different groups, there is tremendous diversity in terms of timing and reasons for migration to the U.S., level of acculturation and maintenance of cultural benchmarks (i.e., maintenance of the cultural traditions,

values, assumptions, and practices of the particular ethnic group). When describing the U.S. population, the terms “majority” and “minority” groups are often employed.

In the U.S., the “majority” culture includes individuals of eastern and western European ancestry, who themselves represent a wide variety of countries of origin and religious affiliations. In terms of racial identification, these individuals are considered “non-Hispanic white” or “Caucasian”. For example, individuals with English, German, Italian and Polish ancestry are included in this group. In addition to great diversity in terms of country of origin, European Americans also demonstrate diversity in level of acculturation, among other variables. Those considered the “majority” culture tend to be those European Americans who have been established in the U.S. for a significant amount of time (e.g., several generations), rather than recent immigrants, and whose traditional worldviews according to their native country have been impacted by the ongoing process of acculturation. The members of the majority culture as a whole are considered to be the “dominant” members of American socio-economic-political society, and to represent “mainstream American culture.”

Individuals who are considered to be “minorities” are those who may comprise smaller percentages of the U.S. population. As racial minorities, different ethnic groups are considered subordinate in that members have significantly less control or power over valued resources and over their lives than the members of the dominant or majority group (Schaefer 1992). Currently, in the U.S. the three largest racial minority groups include African Americans, Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans. Individuals of African descent make up the largest segment of what we term African Americans, but also include individuals from the Caribbean Islands, for example, who are non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanic American or Latino American is an umbrella term that is used to include individuals of Latin origin (black or white), from Mexico, Puerto Rico (a commonwealth of the U.S.), Central and South America, the Dominican Republic and Cuba, for example. The term Asian American encompasses over 30 distinct cultural and linguistic groups (Tanjasiri, Wallace & Shibata 1995), and refers to people who originated from many geographic regions, such as China,

Japan, Korea, and the Philippines, as well as those who reside in Hawaii and other Pacific Islands.

3. Acculturation/assimilation and maintenance of cultural benchmarks employing the U.S. as a reference

Despite the idea of the “melting pot” theory, which predicted that individuals from all nations would melt into a new race with a common language and set of customs upon residing in the U.S. (Steinberg 1989), the unique aspects of different ethnic groups did not diffuse or disappear. The melting pot concept turned out to be more of a theoretical ideal that never materialized (Glazer & Moynihan 1964). If this concept had been accurate, we would have seen the development of a singular, generic “American” cultural identity with little residue of distinct cultural benchmarks from many societies. In reality, even though there has been acculturation (and assimilation) of the majority culture, many individuals from varying ethnic backgrounds maintained key elements of their country of origin, including language, worldview, and/or customs. Additionally, although individuals originating from many European nations form the base of what is mainstream, or majority culture, many of these individuals maintained key elements of their ethnic background (e.g., Jewish Americans who continue to practice their faith and family customs according to ancient tradition) - although for some groups, the maintained benchmark may involve modified characteristics (e.g., Jewish Americans practicing according to the “Reformed” movement). However, for *all* ethnic groups, there is a greater tendency for subsequent generations to acculturate and assimilate as new generations are born in the receiving country.

Suro (1999) suggests that the wave of immigrants that arrived in the early part of the 19th century more readily acculturated into the American society. Once this group migrated, they immersed into the host culture, gradually leaving their family traditions and values behind. By the time their grandchildren were grown, they would only speak a few words in their native tongue. Today, the new immigrants are not following the expected lines of acculturation that were established by

the earlier immigrants.

Across many economically advanced countries, research suggests that the early migrants and the second, third and later generations are more likely to acculturate than adult immigrants and first generation offspring. In order to be motivated to acculturate, if there is such a choice, individuals must perceive more positive benefits to such change than to interacting solely within their own ethnic communities. Individual level factors that may influence the volition to acculturate include sense of self, or self-esteem, and tolerance for the unknown, for example. Individuals who have a strong sense of self, who can tolerate any initial fear, find challenge in new experiences, and do not view interaction as dilution of their culture, may seek to acculturate more readily. Environmental variables that may have an influence include the opportunity for exposure to the dominant culture as well as exposure to positive models in the larger society with whom individuals may seek to interact or to emulate. In some cases, there may be "forced emersion" where an individual or family has no choice but to interact predominantly with members of the majority culture (e.g., a family that is brought to a new country and hosted by individuals who reside within the dominant culture; an immigrant child who attends a public school without appropriate cultural/language accommodations).

Independent of the cause, the pattern within the majority culture, as well as with other groups, has been a move toward greater acculturation and assimilation with subsequent generations. Still, in the U.S., for example, many European Americans who have not maintained specific cultural benchmarks across generations are seeking to revive their unique traditions and customs that may have been lost during the process of acculturation. This search to renew cultural roots may function to strengthen self-identity as respect for cultural distinction within these host societies and is supported by the concept of pluralism.

The paragraphs that follow suggest possibilities as to why there has been maintenance of cultural benchmarks for ethnic minorities both in U.S. and in other economically advanced countries. It should be

highlighted that many of these same possibilities can be used to discuss reasons for maintenance of benchmarks for specific cultural groups within the *majority* culture when they first migrated (e.g., Irish immigrants in the 18th century).

The motivation for ethnic minorities to maintain benchmarks of cultural distinction has been varied, and in some cases, may have been fueled by intolerance for diversity in the receiving country. For instance, in some situations, where immigrants came to the U.S. to provide a better life for themselves and their families, individuals attempted to acculturate in order to achieve the “American dream” (Steinberg, 1989). In hopes of becoming more “Americanized,” and in some cases due to ill feelings toward their countries of origin (for political, economic, or other reasons), some minority individuals eagerly relinquished their language, customs and traditions. However, sometimes the simple fact that they “looked different” (e.g., had different skin color and hair texture) than the majority culture was a barrier for them to achieve the full benefits of the American dream, and to be fully accepted at every level and in all regions of the U.S. In addition, some immigrants with languages and lifestyles that stood in stark contrast to those of the receiving country were initially fearful to interact with the larger society, and/or had limited desire or opportunity for exposure. Therefore, some individuals did not strive to acculturate and find comfort and acceptance through maintaining benchmarks relevant to their ethnic identity, although they may continue to interact with the dominant society to access economic resources. For these individuals, their methods of accessing social support are likely to be consistent with the traditional worldviews of their ethnic background and are adaptive and functional given their status in the host society.

In the past, although the trend for many ethnic groups has been towards acculturation, others reject the concept. In some cases, various groups migrated to other countries and create smaller versions of their country of origin, such as New York City’s Chinatown and Spanish Harlem, with limited acculturation to the majority culture. Similarly, “Cubanos” migrated to Miami’s “Little Havana” where they established an enclave that encouraged and supported the Cuban

traditions and lifestyle. These communities provide a safe haven for individuals to express themselves in their native language, and feel a sense of camaraderie, ethnic identity, and a sense of oneness with others who are like themselves. Again, for individuals living in these settings, the traditional worldview of their particular ethnic background dictates the use of social support and is adaptive for their lifestyles. The maintenance and further growth of these ethnic cultural communities reinforces the continuance of traditional worldviews and social interaction among its members, and are themselves reinforced by fears related to interacting with those different from themselves, experiences of isolation and fear of potential discrimination when interacting with the dominant culture, and intra- and inter-group rejection.

Many ethnic minorities have also turned to lives of "marginality," or the status of living between two cultures, or two worlds, without truly belonging to either (Hurh 1989). In some cases, this can lead to a sense of alienation and isolation where individuals can perceive rejection not only from the majority culture, but also from within their ethnic group. For example, Hispanic Americans may be chastised by other Hispanic Americans for "trying to be white" when not displaying interest in Hispanic culture, such as speaking the Spanish language, and for seeking what might be considered mainstream American goals, such as a large house in an affluent European American suburb. Such individuals may not be able to access social support from sources where it would be most adaptive because their worldview may be in conflict with the potential support provider. Conflict can arise between family members and across generations when some members maintain predominant lifestyles of acculturation while others maintain the more traditional ethnic lifestyles (Lee, 1996). In these situations, family members can view those that acculturate as "selling out" and rejecting the traditional worldview of their ethnic origin (Hurh 1989). For instance, when Puerto Ricans residing in the mainland forgo traditional "familism" for other positive aspects of American society, Rodriguez and Kosloski (1998) call this the "double jeopardy of acculturation." As the U.S. transitions to a more pluralistic society, such tensions within and between groups may ease as there becomes greater acceptance for diversity.

4. Acculturation and Mental Health

Interest in acculturation or cultural assimilation and its impact on migrants and their mental and physical health has become a great concern as individuals continue to migrate in large numbers to various economically advanced countries. Guarnaccia (1997) stated that “there is no debate in the literature that migration from one country to another...is stressful.” A large body of research supports this fact. For instance, Driscoll, Biggs, Brindis and Yankah (2001) suggest that the impact of migration is not a simple one, but rather an interaction of several factors, including age at time of migration, level of connection with the home culture and attitudes of the home and the new cultures and society, as well as the perception of the host society towards the arriving migrants. Other factors may include acculturation levels and low socioeconomic status, which appear to be connected to a higher risk of psychological disorders (Malgady & Zayas 2001). Malgady and Zayas (2001) suggest that younger children are better able to acculturate, learn the language, and assimilate into the host society than adults, particularly because children attend school, socialize more readily with members of the host community, and have the accessibility to tap into the resources available to them in the school systems. They are less likely to resist acculturation, leading to better mental and emotional health, while older immigrants find it more difficult to acculturate. They may be more resistant to learning the language and adjusting to new and confusing cultures mores, after years of ably functioning in their country of origin. Lindstrom & Massey (1994) suggest that those immigrants and their families who are able to maintain contact with family members from their country of origin may experience less stressors that impact their mental health. Families can provide supports that buffer the negative impact of stress, reducing the likelihood of severe psychological problems.

Guarnaccia (1997) found that the migration process impacts both mental and psychological health. He reports that several factors interact and affect the immigration and acculturation process. These include the reasons for and process of migration, the availability of

social supports, and the attitudes of the majority culture in the receiving country. He suggests that different ethnic groups react differently to the migration process. For instance, there has been significant immigration to the U.S. from countries in South America such as Colombia and Ecuador. These refugees migrate to escape war in their country of origin and are found to suffer in large numbers from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depressive disorder (MDD). The context of violence in their country of origin, the explicit reasons for leaving, the migration itself, and the fear of retaliation on their families back home impact the current mental health of these immigrants. In addition, migration disrupts the social support systems that were available to immigrants in their country of origin. Their fears, mistrust of government agencies, and lack of resources may act as barriers in seeking mental health services when these services are most needed.

Due to the increase in diversity among migrant individuals, there have been greater demands for culturally sensitive services in receiving countries. The receiving community therefore is responsible for establishing culturally competent social service agencies with employees who have knowledge and understanding of various immigrant populations. The need for culturally-aware service providers is even more important because psychiatric disorders are so frequently misdiagnosed in immigrants.

McKenzie (1997) suggests that culture affects perceptions of what is thought to be normal, abnormal or less normal. He coined the term "culture-bound syndromes," and suggests that it is important to understand the role of culture in psychiatric diagnoses. For instance, Hispanics often are misdiagnosed in certain countries when reporting hallucinations and uncontrolled shouting, symptoms characteristic of "ataques de nervios". These symptoms include hearing voices and having seizure-like episodes, which may resemble those of schizophrenia (Guarnaccia & Rodriguez 1996). In their country of origin, hearing voices and communicating with the dead is common and related to spiritual expression, while in another country, these same behaviors may be labeled as pathological. McKenzie (1997) further states that these same symptoms are sought after by the Xhosa people

living in South Africa and symbolize reverence.

Another culture-bound syndrome common among Asians is “koro”, which is a panic reaction to beliefs that ones’ penis may withdraw into the abdomen causing fatal results (McKenzie, 1997). Individuals may be labeled as delusional and pathological when presenting symptoms characteristic of this culturally accepted syndrome. Misdiagnosis also can be culture-bound. For example, Adebimpe (1994) has found that Africans Americans are more likely than European Americans to be diagnosed with schizophrenia, as opposed to other diagnoses such as mood disorders with psychotic features. This is due to the more prominent presentation of paranoia, delusions, and auditory hallucinations (Garretson 1993). Racial differences, culture and traditional benchmarks influence expressions of behaviors that can impact diagnosis, as well as treatment towards individuals.

When applied to multicultural societies, cross cultural investigations have determined that psychiatric experiences of ethnic minorities cannot be studied without exploring the wider sociopolitical context, attitudes towards these groups, or racism (Bose 1997). For example, racism can influence the onset of stress through unequal access to resources, feelings of powerlessness and the labeling of an inferior identity and status (Bose 1997). In a recent study by Chavez and Torres (1994), second and later-generation Mexicans were found to be at higher risk for psychological disorders than new immigrants. These groups were more apt to be confronted with ethnic discrimination, lack of job mobility, economic decline, and frustrated social and material aspiration leading to a rise in psychological distress and disorders. These migrants were found to suffer in large numbers from alcohol abuse, depression, PTSD and anxiety attacks. Contributing to migrants’ stresses is the downward mobility or spirals that can occur because of legal status, lack of programs in the receiving country to facilitate transfer of credentials, and the attitude or perception of the host country.

Szapocznik and Kurtines (1993) suggest that migration not only impacts the families, but also the individual members of the family and the receiving country. They suggest viewing individuals within the

embeddedness of the family, the family as embedded within the culture, and culture as embedded in the host society. They further suggest that acculturation is a multifaceted process affecting various members of the same family in different ways. For example, perhaps the ongoing and continuous exposure to stressors for immigrant children in the school setting contributes to family conflict and increases the susceptibilities to risk taking behaviors (Lee 1996). Vega (1993) research supports these findings. Vega found that as adolescents acculturate to the host society, they engage in risky behaviors (e.g., drug and alcohol consumption, gang-related activities, unprotected sex resulting in teen pregnancy), all of which can contribute to mental illness. Others have suggested that as adolescents struggle with balancing their traditional cultural benchmarks with the new mores of the host society, they may feel that they do not belong to or fit in with the host society. While at the same time may not accept the traditional cultural benchmarks of the family of origin and struggle to create their own path. These struggles increase their vulnerability to mental and psychological distress and risk-taking behaviors as well as may negatively impact the host society (Frank & Lester 2001).

The recent mass immigration to a number of developed countries has dramatically affected the cultural landscape of those societies, impacting not only the immigrants, but also the receiving community. Furthermore, the acculturation process has impacted the social connectedness and levels of stress experienced by majority culture members of receiving societies. Hunout (2001) describes how immigration has contributed to "social anomie," or a loss of a stable cultural identity, as well as to a disintegration of social cohesiveness, in receiving countries. Therefore, as the changing ethnic composition within these countries threatens a stable cultural identity and weakens social networks, majority culture members may be at increased risk of emotional distress. Thus, the process of immigration and acculturation may translate to higher rates of psychopathology among both majority and minority culture members.

As the numbers of new migrants continues to rise, the attitudes toward immigrant groups may become increasingly negative and hostile.

Some have postulated that the disruption to culture produced by immigration leads majority culture members to feel that their personal identity is threatened, and to react with hate and resentment toward minority groups (Schippers 2001). Therefore, “xenophobia” and “racism” are an attempt by the majority culture to ease their anxiety and to re-establish a stable cultural identity (Wagner 2001). Additionally, more subtle forms of racism among receiving societies may arise from the perception that minority members are not adequately conforming to the standards and values of the majority culture (Wagner 2001). In the U.S. for example, early migrants were seen as hard working and eager to become part of the American dream, acculturating to the values and traditions and accepting the language (Suro 1999), whereas new migrants, specifically Latinos, have been suggested to be more resistant to acculturation and assimilation. In addition, their migration process differs from the early-established migration patterns since today more than half of the Latinos migrating may be illegal (e.g., 125,000 illegal migrants enter California alone every year (Immigration and Naturalization Services 1999)). These issues can contribute to distorted beliefs and the growing negative attitudes and bias of Americans towards new Latino immigrants (Espanshade & Calhoun 1993; Muller & Espanshade 1985).

In the U.S., the attitudes and perception of incoming migrants has impacted all levels, including communities, schools and political arenas. For instance, in November 1994, Proposition 187, one of the most controversial initiatives in California, was passed. This proposition stated that no illegal immigrant, defined as people residing in the U.S. without legal documentation, could receive public assistance, welfare, education or any social service. Proponents of proposition 187 attributed passage of this proposal to the economic saving of California. Opponents argued that the central issue was not economics, but blatant racial discrimination against the Latino community as a whole. Lee, Ottati and Hussain (2001) determined that attitudes toward immigrants were predicted by various factors such as ethnic identity, prejudice or racism, concern for the economy of the U.S., and commitment to laws maintaining social order. Although the Proposition has not been put in effect because of legal battles,

discrimination and hate crimes continue to be directed toward Latino immigrants.

On the other hand, there is evidence of increasing political backing from other facades that support the growing number of immigrants to the U.S. For example, in December 2000, the Legal Immigration Family Equity Act (LIFE), also referred to as 245i, was passed (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS], 2000). This act allows individuals to apply and obtain permanent residence based on a family relationship or job offer and supports the legal entry to the country. In March 2002, this act was extended providing additional opportunities for migration.

5. Worldviews and Social Link

Definitions

Again, individual and subgroup differences exist within each ethnic group regarding national history, cultural heritage, timing of, reasons for and the experience of immigrating, and level of acculturation. Generalizations of worldview and social networks therefore cannot be accurate for every member of a specific group. However, as other clinicians and researchers have done (e.g., Ho 1987), we attempt to describe characteristics that represent *most* individuals within a particular ethnic group in our discussions of worldviews and the use of social resources. We also note that the worldviews of the different ethnic groups tend to change with the process of acculturation, and eventually may become quite distinct from the traditional worldviews of their ancestral homelands.

Worldviews:

Worldviews are defined as the basic set of beliefs and assumptions that reflect the values of a specific culture and influence how one perceives and interacts with the world on a daily basis (Nobles 1985; Sue & Sue 1990). Worldviews influence traditional behavioral patterns used by families in interacting with one another and in identifying the acceptable use of social resources. Worldviews are essential for

understanding social functioning within particular groups. What is considered an acceptable and adaptive use of social resources, or social networks, differs according to ethnic group identification.

Social Networks:

Social networks have been conceptualized in a variety of ways in the literature, but in general can involve formal networks, such as schools, social agencies and institutions, or informal networks of relatives and friends. Cobb (1982) indicates that the most essential type of social link involves emotional or esteem-building interaction, which also serves to set the foundation for receiving support in the form of tangible goods, services, social interaction, and information or guidance. For each ethnic group, the family unit is an important social structure and provides support when undergoing stressful life events, but each group generally demonstrates different patterns in terms of the source of support that is accessed as well as how directly it is accessed (Kane 1998). As discussed previously, inadequate social support may contribute to increased vulnerability to psychological disorders, particularly among individuals who face greater environmental stress, such as minority ethnic groups and recent immigrants. Also, it is suggested that the dissolution of social cohesiveness and distinct cultural benchmarks may be tied to increased psychological distress among both majority and minority groups in economically advanced societies (e.g., Hunout 2001).

In examining worldview and social networks, we first will discuss the majority and minority cultures from several representative countries in Europe, Central/South America, and Asia, and then discuss majority and minority culture in the United States (U.S.). Based on the literature and our informal surveys, we have chosen several countries to represent each cultural group, although we recognize that this limits the ability to generalize. In Europe, we focus on France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, and Poland. For Latino groups, we focus on Mexico, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Peru. Given that the Asian countries of the world represent a diverse and culturally complex group, this chapter will limit its discussion of Asian culture to East Asian countries, particularly China and Japan. Despite the increasing

numbers of U.S. immigrants from other Asian countries in South and Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Isles, these cultures will not be examined. Again, our statements about all cultures are meant to be generalizations, and may not reflect the complex cultural differences both within and between the countries discussed.

The information contained in the remainder of this chapter was gleaned from a review of the literature. In addition, in an effort to better understand majority and minority cultures around the world, we created an informal cultural survey. Some of the information and opinions presented in this chapter were derived from these survey responses. The survey included questions about the attitudes of majority culture members toward ethnic minorities, as well as items about typical family composition and social networks. The survey also assessed help-seeking behaviors and perceptions of formal mental health treatment. The survey was presented to individuals in the U. S.--including Puerto Rico; Dominican Republic; Cuba; Mexico; Peru; and countries within Europe and Asia. No individuals currently residing in African countries were surveyed. Results of this survey will be referred to throughout this chapter. In many cases, information presented comes directly from survey responses unless otherwise referenced.

Europe

Worldview:

For the most part, traditional Europeans emphasize individual achievement and value linear, logical thought. The family is a respected European institution, which may include extended family members, such as grandparents. In the traditional European family, the man's role is head of household and financial provider, while the woman takes responsibility for childcare and general household duties (Folwarski & Marganoff 1996; Winawer & Wetzel 1996). Although Europeans are closely connected to their communities, they value privacy and may be more reserved around individuals outside of the family unit. Despite the similarities among the traditional cultures of Europe, the European worldview varies between (and within) countries, due to historical, political, socioeconomic, and religious differences. As

a result, the following discussion will detail characteristics of three distinct European cultures: French, German, and Polish.

Traditional French society espouses egalitarian ideals (Folwarski & Marganoff 1996; Walden 1996) while also placing importance on the rights of the individual (Grimond 1995). As a result, French culture supports a mix of collectivist and individualistic values. The French also maintain a strong sense of pride in their language and customs, particularly in the culinary domain (Meunier 2000). French society places a priority on education and intellectual pursuits, with an emphasis on learning for the sake of learning (Walden 1996). Unlike traditional multigenerational households, the contemporary, urban French household is comprised of the nuclear family, typically geographically removed from the extended family. In modern France, the traditional family is being replaced by increasing numbers of cohabiting couples and single parents.

Traditional German culture is influenced by a formal social structure and strict boundaries between personal and professional relationships (Winawer & Wetzel 1996). Today, in the German-speaking country of Austria, the nuclear family comprises the typical urban household, while rural households tend to include more extended family members, particularly grandparents. Also, the rates of cohabitation are very high, and about ¼ of children are born to unmarried women (C. M. Klier personal communication 2001).

Similar to Germany, the traditional culture in Poland is characterized by strictly defined class roles and a strong achievement orientation (Folwarski & Marganoff 1996). Although the traditional household includes parents, children, and grandparents (motivated by cost of living and cultural values), in present-day Poland, the nuclear family model is becoming more popular.

Social networks:

Again, European social support networks vary from country to country. In this discussion, we attempt to provide general statements (based on literature and survey responses) concerning the social resources and

help-seeking behaviors of individuals in French, German, and Polish cultures.

French individuals primarily seek support from family and friends. If someone has an emotional problem that cannot be resolved with informal support resources, then they are likely to seek the help of a mental health professional. Similarly, in the Francophone country of Belgium, the individual is expected to be self-reliant, but occasionally receives emotional support from family members or friends. In Belgium, there remains somewhat of a stigma surrounding use of formal psychological services.

German individuals tend to be very private about their personal lives, and emotional problems tend to stay within the family unit (Winawer & Wetzel, 1996). Emotional expression, even within the family, tends to be restrained (Winawer & Wetzel 1996). The socially acceptable expression of emotion in the German culture is called *Gemütlichkeit*, which is defined by “familiarity, emotional closeness, and fun” (Winawer & Wetzel 1996 : 503). In Austria, the majority culture in urban areas of Austria tends to seek social support from family, friends, and colleagues, while rural Austrian individuals tend to rely on family and the church for instrumental, financial, and emotional support. Austrian individuals will seek help for psychological problems from the family, health professionals, and clergy. There remains a stigma attached to receiving professional psychological services, although Austria has implemented a media campaign to reduce this stigma and to increase access to mental health treatment.

Traditionally, majority culture members in Poland consider themselves to be self-reliant and do not openly express their feelings (Folwarski & Marganoff 1996). Polish individuals tend to avoid seeking help from family members, for fear of appearing weak and being ashamed. However, when help is needed, family members often provide child-care, financial assistance, and emotional support. Polish individuals tend to be suspicious of all health-care providers and will often resist seeking help even for physical ailments (Folwarski & Marganoff 1996). There is an even greater stigma surrounding the use of mental health services, although this is changing with younger generations. In the

past, emotional problems, including addictions, were considered "secret," and kept within the family.

Central/South America

Latinos, regardless of their country of origin, share many similarities. They share similar traditional worldviews and values. They share a common language and a sense of pride associated with their native tongue. Many of their physical features and characteristics may be similar. Latinos in various countries may share similar dreams and aspirations of migrating, but their reasons for migration may be very different. Although there are similarities among Latinos, they are not by far a homogenous group. Their personal experiences in their countries of origin have a life-long impact that keeps them distinct. Differences in acculturation, socioeconomic status, history, migration patterns, educational level, political beliefs, English proficiency levels and occupations account for the cultural plurality among the various subgroups in the Hispanic population (Rosado Jr. & Elias 1993).

For instance, the Cuban experience is very different from that of the Mexican experience. Cubans that lived in Cuba during Fidel Castro's take over had a very different experience and hold very distinct political views regarding democracy and communisms. These views may be more similar to individuals living in El Salvador or Nicaragua where on going war and conflict continue within their countries of origin. These groups may be more resistant to trusting government agencies and institutions based on their past experiences in their country of origin.

Worldview:

Latinos living in their countries of origin share similar worldviews and value collectivism, cooperation and interdependence. The collectivism value influences Hispanics to seek help within their sociocultural support system which may include extended family kin, godparents, religion, *persona de confianza*, individuals identified by the family as trustworthy and helpful (Rosado, Jr. & Elias 1993). Latinos emphasize *la familia*, the family as the most salient of its values. It

encourages collectivism among its members and practices a hierarchical family structure. These worldviews are common elements found within Latino countries, such as Puerto Rico, Peru and Cuba. For instance, in Puerto Rico it is not uncommon to find several generations living in the same household. In the Puerto Rican family, elders and extended kin are also sought for guidance, help, advice, and assistance in problem solving (Rosado, Jr. & Elias 1993). While in Peru, it is probably the norm rather than the exception to find intergenerational living conditions such that the family may consist of grandparents, their children and spouse, along with their children. Its members will have distinct and separate roles, usually headed by the male figure, with the wife having the main responsibility of childcare duties. These traditional values are practiced vigorously within the country of origin for Latinos, because they are practiced in their purest form and with less flexibility.

Social Network:

The most salient of the traditional Latino values is that of "la familia" or "familism". La familia is the primary source of support for Latinos living in their country of origin. The family, including both biological and non-blood relatives, are highly dependent on one another for emotional and financial support and social interaction. This support is seen in many areas of their lives and is supported by their traditional worldviews such as interdependence and collectivism. It is expected that family members will provide support in times of need. The most obvious display of this practice is demonstrated by the intergenerational living conditions of Latinos as described above.

Asia

Worldview:

The philosophies of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism have influenced the cultural foundations of China, Japan, Korea, and other Asian countries (Bradshaw 1994; Chapell & Takahashi 1998). These traditions form the basis of the Asian emphasis on the group, and especially the family, as a greater priority than the individual (Berg & Jaya 1993). The honor and reputation of the family are highly valued,

so that individual desires and needs may be suppressed for the sake of family loyalty. The traditional Asian household includes extended family members, often from three or four generations (Lee 1996). The husband is the head of the household and is expected to provide financially for the family, while the wife is expected to care for the children and to perform household duties. However, provision of care for the children is shared by a number of adults in the extended family network (Lee 1996). The roles and relationships of family members are highly structured, and members are expected to have a harmonious respect for the family hierarchy (Ho 1987; Sodowsky et al. 1995).

Following the interdependent Asian worldview, a keen awareness of others demonstrates a mature, flexible, and disciplined self (Markus & Kitayama 1998). This does not mean that individuality is ignored; rather, it is appreciated, while recognizing that all people are part of a complex social network (Markus & Kitayama 1998). In Japanese culture in particular, self-criticism is considered to be adaptive and a crucial part of achievement motivation (Markus & Kitayama 1998). Other elements of a traditional Asian worldview include respect for older persons and the elderly, humility, obedience, moderation in behavior and limited expressiveness, and nonconfrontation or silence as a virtue (Ho 1987; Sodowsky et al. 1995).

As a result of economic and political changes, the traditional Asian family has been altered in recent years. Many Confucian ideals and religions were banned after the communist revolution of China in 1949. Now, nuclear families are emerging as the most common family structure in many industrialized Asian countries, and the traditional values of filial piety and respect for the elderly are waning (Lee 1996). This shift in traditional values and social networks has implications for mental health.

Social Networks:

Given that Asian individuals are very family-oriented, they seek support from family members to resolve most problems. Problem solving around issues is done through negotiation and mediation as there is no word for privacy in many Asian languages including Chinese,

Japanese or Korean (Berg & Jaya 1993). Although family members may provide instrumental and financial support, they do not openly express affection, either verbally or physically (Lee 1996). Therefore, most Asian individuals do not share their emotional struggles with family members. Chinese culture, for example, discourages talking about feelings, even with family members (Woodward 1984). According to Chinese and Japanese beliefs, psychological problems may be explained by a weak character, physical illness, environmental stressors, genetics, misdeeds from past lives (karma), spiritual unrest, and/or an imbalance of life energies (Homma-True 1997; Lee 1996). Due to this negative stigma surrounding psychological problems and the Asian emphasis on the unity of the mind and body, Asian individuals are likely to present with somatic complaints when they experience emotional distress (Woodward 1984). In China, mental health patients are likely to be treated from a biomedical perspective, with psychotropic medication, Electroconvulsive Shock Therapy (ECT), insulin shock, and even acupuncture (Woodward 1984).

United States

According to a recent report of the U.S. Bureau of the Census (September 1998), the total U.S. population currently includes approximately 72.3% European Americans, 12.1% African Americans, 11.1% Latino/Hispanic Americans, and 3.6% Asian Americans. In the last decade, the U.S. population increased by 32.7 million persons, of which 11.3 million were foreign-born (United States Bureau of the Census 2000, 2002). This trend is likely to continue, as the U.S. projects an increase of 820,000 legal and illegal immigrants annually and a continuation of recent fertility and mortality rates (Population Reference Bureau [PRB] 1999). It is estimated that, in 2050, the U.S. population will be comprised of 53% European American (or non-Hispanic white), 14% African American, 25% Latino/Hispanic American, 8% Asian American and Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian (PRB 1999). Below, we discuss the worldviews and social networks of individuals residing in the U.S. according to their culture of origin (e.g., European American, African American).

European American Culture

Worldview:

When discussing the worldview of the majority culture in the U.S., what is termed the “Eurocentric worldview” differs greatly from the worldviews of present-day citizens from the specific European countries from which the European Americans may have their origins. In fact, examination of the worldview of mainstream American culture as a whole may bear little resemblance to the traditional European worldviews European Americans may have demonstrated when they or their families first came to the U.S. prior to the processes of acculturation and assimilation to an “American” culture (Rodriguez & Kosloski 1998; Steinberg 1989).

According to the Eurocentric worldview, individualism is valued over the collective needs of the larger community. Independence and competitiveness are encouraged and seen as strengths relative to interdependence and cooperative efforts aimed to bring the greatest good for the greatest number. Communication is characterized by assertiveness and direct verbal confrontation, and there is an emphasis on future time orientation (Sue & Sue 1990). Most members of the majority culture in the U.S. favor an internal locus of control, and believe that they are responsible for their own advancement in life (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton 1985). Within the family system, a self-sufficient nuclear family unit is seen as an American ideal.

As a function of this worldview, there is growing acceptance for adult individuals to move frequently for educational, occupational, or self-oriented purposes, to live in locations very distant from their parents and siblings, and to have less contact with extended relatives than during previous generations. These elements of the Eurocentric worldview are in contrast with the Afrocentric worldview and the traditional worldviews of Hispanic and Asian Americans as described later.

Social Networks:

European Americans generally depend on support within the immediate family, but also directly reach out for ancillary support from a wide variety of sources, including informal sources such as friends,

extended family, as well as formal sources, sometimes of a professional nature. Therefore, there is a vast array of individuals and systems from which European Americans glean supportive social resources. Although there are many similarities in social support resources and help seeking among European Americans of different cultural backgrounds, there remain differences in interpersonal relations and responses to emotional distress. A desire to handle one's own problems, even without the help of family, is characteristic of the Anglo and Irish Americans (McGoldrick & Rohrbaugh 1987). Alternately, Jewish Americans tend to encourage sharing emotional distress with family members (McGoldrick & Rohrbaugh 1987).

Latino/Hispanic American Culture

Although we use a generic term to represent Latinos in the U.S., they are not a homogenous group. Their life experience in their country of origin impacts their willingness or lack of willingness to acculturate to the American society once they migrate to the U.S. (Comas-Diaz & Jacobsen 1987). Their reasons for migration may be different, the means that they have to migrate vary, and their legal status is impacted--all of these issues can influence their new lifestyle in the U.S.

Worldview:

When Latinos migrate to the U.S. they bring with them their traditional worldviews. For instance, like the traditional Hispanic worldview, Hispanic Americans values an extended family unit that is made up of "non-blood relatives" (Boyd-Franklin 1989; Marin & Marin 1991). However, as Latinos begin to acculturate and integrate into the American culture, the intensity and level of practice resulting from these worldviews begins to change. We again emphasize that the traditional worldviews outlined for Asian and Hispanic Americans are ones that are practiced in their country of origin, but as these groups migrate and live in the U.S., these worldviews are impacted continuously by the dynamic processes of acculturation and assimilation that occur as each groups and, more importantly, as each member of this group extends itself in the U.S. across generations.

Social Networks:

Similar to families still residing in Latin countries, the importance of “familism” is characteristic of the Hispanic American families when social support is needed. With their strong family ties, feelings of loyalty, and more defined social roles and duties, support among family members is highly dependable and reciprocal. Hispanic Americans utilize family supports informally by turning to family members first, including intergenerational family members and non-blood relationships (e.g., “compadres” (godfathers), “comadres” (godmothers), or “personas de confianza” (literally, persons of confidence)), rather than seeking support outside of the family unit (Lopez 1999). From the myriad of family relations, social support is expected to be available and to be given freely, without directly asking for the assistance. This may help explain why more traditional Hispanic Americans are less likely to seek support outside of the family system. When outside support is sought, it is usually from religious or spiritual institutions, or from grassroots social organizations (e.g. “La Yaucano”).

Therefore, Hispanics/Latinos primarily seek support from the family members. When considering the social support network of Latinos, several factors must be considered. First the traditional expectation placed on family members to be support providers, the ability to access these support providers is impacted by migration. For those that migrate to the U.S. legally and live in close proximity, their supports can be maintained because family members can continue to travel to and from their country of origin. However, for those immigrants that cross the border illegally or take on other identities, this presents a different scenario. These individuals migrate knowing that they may never see or have contact with their families of origin again. For this group there may be total disruption of their primary source of social support and family network that can increase the level of stressors confronted by this group. During the time when these groups are confronting new challenges in a new world they lack the family supports that they have counted on in the past. For instance, the stress of acculturation, the loss of their traditional values and confronting the attitudes of the host society is extremely challenging. The new

environment and the internal and external demands of the host society adds to the increased stress, while at the same time these groups lack their primary support needed to confront these changes (Quintana 1995).

As a response to the need for support, Latino migrants may be drawn to others of similar background. Due to the fact that Latinos are accustomed to closer, more familial, support they may tend to seek out, establish, or be drawn to "barrios" or enclaves where they can identify with others who speak their language and understand the culture (Keefe 1980).

Asian American Culture

Worldview:

In the U.S., the Asian American family varies from the traditional Asian model that is insulated from Western culture, to interracial families who have integrated both cultures. Those Asian Americans who are less acculturated to the mainstream worldview also tend to remain in closer proximity to their families and within communities sharing the same worldview. In between these two extremes, Asian American families may experience varying degrees of acculturation and assimilation to American culture, and maintain different levels of attachment to their native cultures. Conflict often will arise between older and younger generations, with respect to value orientations (Lee 1996).

Among Asian families in the U.S., the patriarchal family has been replaced in many cases by a more egalitarian family model, with the mother and father sharing decision-making and financial responsibilities (Lee 1996). In addition, today, marriages based on romantic love are favored over arranged marriages. Daughters often are encouraged to attain similar career goals to sons. Although some Japanese Americans maintain practice of Buddhism, others have joined the dominant (usually Protestant) churches of their communities (Homma-True 1997).

Social Networks:

Asians living in the U.S. tend toward a more subtle and indirect approach to seeking social support, demonstrating self-control and restraint as opposed to direct expressions of individual opinion or need (Kane 1998). When they have financial or emotional difficulties, Asian Americans first try to resolve problems on their own, and then seek help from family members (Cheng 1978; Tsai & Lopez 1997). Asian Americans also may seek support from friends and neighbors, religious groups, and clubs or organizations (Tsai & Lopez 1997). Social service agencies tend to be viewed as poor sources of support for Asian Americans, due to language and cultural barriers (Tsai & Lopez 1997). However, as they become more acculturated, Asian Americans generally are more willing to seek professional help for psychological problems (Lee 1996).

The literature has reported the consistent underutilization of professional mental health services by Asian Americans (Sue & McKinney 1975; Sue & Sue 1974). As in their countries of origin, Asians in the U.S. are reluctant to admit that they are emotionally distressed and are likely to express psychological problems in somatic terms (Bradshaw 1994). If they do seek professional help, Asian Americans tend to visit medical doctors or seek alternative healing methods, like herbal medicine, acupuncture, and massage (Sue & McKinney 1975; Sue & Sue 1974). Some Asian Americans may seek treatment or counseling from religious leaders, such as Buddhist monks or priests. Loo, Tong, and True (1989) suggested that a lack of knowledge about resources and available treatments, as well as a fatalistic belief that psychological problems cannot be prevented, contribute to the low usage of formal mental health treatment by Asian Americans.

African American Culture

Individuals with African ancestry have resided in the U.S. for many generations. Although some elements of traditional African culture remain, and will be discussed below, the African American culture has evolved into something very distinct from that of specific African countries. Moreover, there is limited literature that discusses the culture of modern African countries and how this may correspond to African American individuals. Therefore, we focus our discussion on the distinct

African American culture, comparing and contrasting it to the majority American culture.

Worldview:

The African American worldview is distinct from the majority cultures' worldview. African Americans hold worldviews that are more similar to those held by Latinos. This group is diverse and is made up of many various groups including non-Latino Blacks from the Caribbean islands that do not consider themselves African American, rather they consider themselves Black or Caribbean. The "majority" population may categorize or group these individuals together because of skin color or facial features. However, they may not hold the same worldviews. Their worldview may vary depending on the country of origin and may be impacted by the many generations living in the United States that vary from population to population.

Nobles (1986) specified the elements of the Afrocentric worldview which include: attention to interconnectedness, spirituality and religious orientation, emphasis on oral tradition and expressive communication, orientation toward group identity and collective consciousness, and perception of time as fluid. The Afrocentric worldview encourages strong "kinship bonds," which include close relationships with extended family networks and "non-blood relatives" (Boyd-Franklin 1989). Again, although there are differences within this group (particularly in younger generations), African Americans tend to remain in close proximity to their families and as a whole, to not move great distances with high frequency. For those that do move away from their families, ultimately many will return to their home communities.

Social Networks:

African Americans seek social support predominately from family members that include kinship bonds and non-blood relatives. The strong kinship bonds can be seen in this group's ability to verbally request support from family members and to maintain long-term extended family ties. Among African Americans, religious institutions are extremely important sources of support and the networks of African

Americans often include individuals affiliated with their churches. Compared to members of other ethnic groups, elderly African Americans tend to have larger and better-connected support networks that are longer lasting and that provide a variety of resources. African American women in particular tend to seek support from other women as opposed to support from the males in their networks. The informal supports within the African American community are resilient, flexible and resourceful. They are an adaptive response to difficult and stressful circumstances and have evolved into a crucial element of the African American support system (Boyd-Franklin 1989).

Arab American Culture

The term Arab American refers to a diverse group of persons who immigrated to the U.S. from a number of countries in southwestern Asia and North Africa (Abudabbeh 1996; Samhan 2001). This is a group of persons who identify with the Arab language, culture, and politics, but they may vary significantly in terms of their race or ethnicity (Abudabbeh 1996). Approximately 3 million Arab Americans currently reside in the United States (Arab American Institute, 2003), the majority of which trace their backgrounds to these national groups: Lebanese, Syrians, Palestinians, Egyptians, and Iraqis. Although Arab Muslims are steadily growing in number in the U.S., most Arab Americans are Christian, and arrived in the U.S. with the first wave of Arab immigration, between 1890 and 1940 (Abudabbeh 1996; Samhan 2001). The majority of Arab Christians in the U.S. are Roman or Eastern Catholic and Eastern Orthodox (Arab American Institute Foundation, 2002a). More recently, the largest growing segment of the Arab American population is Muslim; however, Arab Muslims still constitute a minority of all Arab Americans (Samhan 2001).

Worldview:

The Arab Americans and Arabs have been identified as a heterogeneous group - a "multicultural, multiracial and multiethnic mosaic population" (Abudabbeh & Nydell 1993). Because the term "Arab" is not based on ethnic origin, but rather on the person's language and culture, there is significant diversity among this group

and it is difficult to make generalizations about this population. Therefore, the worldviews of Arabs and Arab Americans vary considerably between individuals, and are impacted by multiple factors, including: language, sect, place of origin, time of migration, level of acculturation to Western culture, and religious affiliation.

For instance, those individuals who follow the Islamic traditions accept the Qur'an as the "literal word of God" and implement the "suggestions" outlined in the Qur'an as a way of life. The Qur'an can be referred to as the "soul" of Islam. It contains specific commands on issues related to marriage, family, and division of property, and includes daily habits for worship. These commands are interwoven into the daily life and they set a foundation for how individuals should treat one other.

The Arabic family extends beyond the traditional family of origin. All Muslims are considered brothers and sisters that belong to the *umma*, or the tribe. The family has been described as patriarchal and pyramidically hierarchical with regards to age, sex and extended family. For instance, family dynamics involve a great deal of sacrifice, where the happiness of others takes priority over the individual needs. The good of the family is seen as the goal over the individual desires.

All family members are given specific responsibilities. Men are given specific duties with relationship to their wives and children, wives are given instructions on how to treat their husbands, and children are advised to honor their mothers. Although there are many strains on the family system, including industrialization and Westernization, the family remains the main system of social support (Fernea 1985). Barakat (1985) investigated the communication styles of Arabs and found that communication between family members is "hierarchal, creating vertical as opposed to horizontal communication between those in authority and those subservient." According to Barakat (1985), this communication between parents and children is one in which "parents use anger and punishment and the children respond by crying, self-censorship, covering up or deception."

The Islamic regulations include the governing of marriage. For instance,

marriage is considered an important duty of every Muslim and is a “family affair”. In most instances, partners are chosen by one's family, contrary to the Western concept of romantic love where one chooses one's own partner. Despite some changes, arranged marriage remains the rule and romance the exception. In addition, in some countries, endogamy continues to be practiced within lineage (cousins) for the betterment and good of the family, again supporting the value of family goals over individual desires.

Traditional Islamic law allows men to practice polygamy, however in recent years many Arabic countries have forbidden this practice. Still, in others, certain legal stipulations have been implemented to provide women a voice (Beck & Keddie 1978). As in other parts of the world divorce has become an issue. For Arab Christians divorce is not allowed, while for Muslims it is permitted with certain stipulations (Esposito 1982).

Hourani (1970) speaks to the value of language and states that the Arab population is “more conscious of their language than any people in the world, seeing it not only as the greatest of their arts but also as their common good.” The Arabic language is seen as one of their greatest cultural treasures. There is an intense affection for and pride in their language (Nydell 1987).

Social Networks:

Persons of Arab descent living in the U.S. vary in terms of their acculturation and acceptance of “American” culture and customs. Therefore, they also vary in their level of comfort in seeking social and emotional support from professional sources. In fact, according to the Muslim concept of *umma*, Arab Muslims should not seek help outside the family to deal with emotional or psychological difficulties (Abudabbeh 1996). Arab Americans who hold very traditional values may view psychological treatment as opposing paternal authority and other tenets of Islamic faith (Abudabbeh 1996). As with Asian Americans, many problems experienced by Arab Americans may relate to intergenerational conflicts (e.g., disagreements about cultural norms and values between parents or grandparents and children)

(Abudabbeh 1996). Arab Americans who are more acculturated to the “Western” lifestyle (in language and education, for example) may be more likely to seek help from American psychologists or other mental health professionals (Abudabbeh 1996).

6. Pluralistic Society: Advantages and Disadvantages

As opposed to the ideals of the melting pot perspective with the goal of a homogenized culture with the values of the dominant culture at the core (Newman 1973), some economically advanced countries, such as the U.S. now embrace “pluralism” as the ideal. Pluralism is a term that has been used to refer to the genuine *acceptance* of ethnic diversity, as opposed to mere *tolerance* for differences within a society (Steinberg 1989). Pluralism supports the respect and maintenance of diverse ethnic identities within the dominant culture. This perspective implies mutual respect between the various groups in the society, a respect that allows individuals from minority groups to express and display those benchmarks of their specific ethnic background without suffering prejudice or hostility. Individuals may integrate into the dominant culture by learning and speaking the national language and participating in customs of the dominant society, while simultaneously engaging in their own ethnic group customs as well as those different from their own. In other words, the U.S. is increasingly becoming a multicultural society that no longer demands that individuals assimilate in order to be accepted (Kotcher 1995).

With growing acceptance and respect for diversity in the U.S., there has been a resurgence of interest in ethnic identity, combined with respect of diverse languages, worldviews and customs. Both ethnic minorities and individuals comprising the dominant culture have rekindled interest in their ethnic heritage, including some forgotten languages, customs, festivals and traditions (Kotcher 1995). Educators, community leaders and politicians have spoken out against the destruction of cultural benchmarks in the name of conformity. Whether the motivation for increased acceptance stems from economics (e.g., the growing interdependence among nations which has contributed to the growth of international trade and created the

“global village;” marketing specifically tailored to the growing ethnic minority groups in the U.S. (Kotcher 1995); educational mandates (e.g., federally required diversity training for students, faculty, and employees); or the acknowledgment of a dynamic picture of competition in which what serves the purposes of humans most effectively survives while what does not tends to decline, there is recognition that changes are necessary as the minority groups in U.S. society become the numeric majority.

As these changes occur, there also are potential consequences of a pluralistic society that ultimately may result in altered worldviews and changes in benchmarks, including behaviors surrounding social networks. Although there remains evidence of racism and tension within and between ethnic groups, there is increasing diversity and integration in settings such as schools, workplaces and neighborhoods, and in all areas of life. According to Cleveland (1995), “cultures keep redefining themselves by mixing with other cultures, getting to know people who look, act and behave differently. In today’s more open electronic world, cultures also expose themselves to new faiths and fashions, new life-styles, workways, technologies, clothing and cuisines.”

As different ethnic groups feel secure that they have an established and encouraged right to demonstrate their unique distinction, and begin to be treated individually as equals in the host society, formerly inclusive societies may begin to integrate with other groups (Cleveland 1995). Ironically, the ethnic groups considered to be *minorities* in the U.S. will, as a combined group, become the numeric *majority* in the 21st century. Hispanic Americans (Latinos) alone, for example, will surpass African Americans as the country’s largest minority group by 2005, and will represent one quarter of the total U.S. population by 2050. With increased integration in schools, workplaces and neighborhoods, there will be increased opportunities for social interaction between existing ethnic groups and resulting increases in interethnic relationships and families (Burnette 1995). Consequently, as the U.S. population continues to diversify in the next century, and as the goals of pluralism develop, the U.S. may see increasing overlap among all ethnic groups, with the potential for an amalgamated society. With full acceptance of social integration, there would be greater openness to share one’s own background, greater motivation

to understand the backgrounds of others, and the opportunity to share common aspects of the group as a whole. Such a society would allow for an American culture that respects and celebrates its full foundation of diverse cultural benchmarks.

Despite the emerging ideal of the pluralistic society, majority and minority ethnic groups in economically advanced countries still have difficulty accepting and adapting to one another's culture. Some majority culture members remain resistant to change, fearing that they will lose their own distinct cultural benchmarks or that minorities will compromise the economic stability of the society (e.g., taking jobs that would otherwise go to majority culture members). For example, in the U.S. many citizens perceive that Latino immigrants are undocumented, poor, uneducated, dependent on social services, and drive down wages of comparable skilled native workers. These attitudes may manifest in discrimination for jobs or housing or in racist actions by police (including unfairly harassing individuals of minority status). In extreme cases, some majority culture members engage in "hate crimes" directed at minority culture members. Furthermore, these overt acts of racism (and more subtle forms) contribute to schisms between different ethnic groups, thereby increasing the isolation of minority ethnic groups. This resulting decrease in social cohesiveness may be linked to increased rates of psychopathology among minority group members.

Additionally, attempts by minority groups to integrate into the dominant culture are not always met with success. Within minority ethnic groups, there is disagreement as to how much the individual should assimilate into the majority culture, and how much the individual should remain loyal to traditional cultural benchmarks. For example, among Asian Americans, attempts to assimilate into American society and to reject traditional Asian values often contribute to family discord, particularly between older and younger generations (Bradshaw 1994; Lee 1998). Again, this confusion of cultural identity and weakened social links may contribute to a rise in emotional distress among minority culture members.

Immigration and acculturation may contribute to an increase in distress

among majority culture members, as well. Receiving communities may feel a threat to their established cultural identity as a result of rising immigration to their countries (Wagner 2001). This may lead to confusion and anxiety among majority culture members, as they search to find a stable set of standards and values on which to base their sense of self (Schippers 2001). Therefore, a disorganized or inconsistent culture may lead to psychological distress among ethnic majorities, and to a decrease in group solidarity in the receiving country. Without adequate social support resources, the majority culture members may be more vulnerable to stressful life circumstances.

Bochner (1999) has noted that there are significant barriers to a global multicultural society, including limited contact with members of other cultures, lack of institutional support for multiculturalism, a global move toward cultural uniformity (assimilation, not pluralism), and the stress of inter-cultural relations (resulting in prejudice, racism, hostility). Others have voiced concerns regarding the impact of legal and illegal immigration. As such, national economic concerns and the commitment of legal obedience continue to be important predictors of public opinion and attitudes toward migrants (Cavalcanti & Schleeff 2001).

Still others point to the additional resources and cost to the political, social and education system as migration increases. The influx of diversity in communities brings new challenges including the need to expand social service agencies that address concerns in the native language of migrants. Educational systems that are already overburden are charged with the task of expanding programs that meet the unique needs of new incoming migrants. The challenge of training and educating professionals to provide culturally sensitive and competent services can be costly and overwhelming (Orozco, Chin, Restrepo & Tamayo 2001). All of these factors can contribute to the negative attitudes and perception toward immigrants.

More recently, since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., Arab Americans, particularly those who are identified as Muslim by the manner of dress, have

encountered increased prejudice and discrimination by majority culture members, and have even been the target of hate crimes (Arab American Institute Foundation 2002b). These reactions represent an example of how when a nation or society feels threatened, the majority culture turns inward and there is increased prejudice and fear of the “other” group. A study of racial attitudes conducted after the terrorist attacks suggested that while many Americans deny excluding Arab Americans from the larger “American” group, these same Americans also make implicit associations that strongly exclude persons of Arab descent from the classification “American” (Clay 2002). Moreover, although the American ideal is to include members of all races, ethnicities, and cultures, under the rubric “American,” the reality may not have reached this ideal. Events, like Al Khaida's attacks on New York and Washington, which threaten the American sense of security, also may result in a step backward in acceptance of persons from other cultures. This is likely linked to attitudes toward immigration, and questions such as, “Are we letting too many new immigrants enter the country?” and “Do we really know who these people are?” These are difficult questions for Americans, since the U.S. is a country of immigrants, which has prided itself on being a nation that thrives on a diversity of cultures, religions, racial/ethnic backgrounds, and national origins. With the present day threat of large-scale war, there is the potential for strong stereotypes to emerge regarding fears of cultures that differ from one's own, but it is not yet clear how this potential will get played out in the U.S., as well as in other countries, in the years to come.

7. Conclusions and Future Directions

As migration continues, receiving countries are faced with many challenges, including reducing the risk of psychological distress to new immigrants and members of the majority culture. Guarnaccia and Lopez (1998) make several recommendations to the receiving country to improve the mental health of immigrants and refugees: First, the international context of migration must be examined. For instance, why are individuals/families migrating in such large numbers? With this

information, the receiving or host countries can be better prepared to address their needs. The receiving countries should provide supports to newly arriving families in the form of settlement houses and immigration society. Intervention models and programs are needed to work with intergenerational tensions within immigrant families and children, as they acculturate to the host society causing schism between family members. Efforts focused on the possibility of validating credentials, licensure and education that immigrants may have earned in their country of origin that the receiving country would accept. Efforts to counter discrimination against immigrants can have positive effects on both the society at large and the immigrant families. Multilingual and multicultural clinics, both mental health and medical, are needed that can provide cultural competent treatment to migrants (Guarnaccia & Lopez 1998). This entails extensive training of the staff in the areas of assessment, diagnosis and treatment programs that are cultural diverse (Orozco et al. 2001; Malgady & Zayas 2001; Rogler 1994).

In this chapter, we have argued that the changing cultural landscape of many economically advanced countries has both positive and negative consequences and presents many challenges for majority and minority culture members. In this time of mass immigration, the tendency for groups to distrust outsiders and the anxiety produced by an unstable cultural identity has led to increases in xenophobia and racism. Additionally, there are many stressors inherent in the immigration and acculturation process that can increase the risk of psychological distress among immigrants and receiving communities. There also appears to be an increase in social disconnectedness as a result of individuals becoming increasingly mobile and losing many of their distinct cultural benchmarks. However, despite its problems, it appears that the immigration trend in developed countries will continue. Therefore, it has become a necessity for receiving countries, as well as new immigrants, to adapt to changing cultural benchmarks and to increase their acceptance of other ethnic groups. Additionally, receiving countries should support this transition with sociopolitical strategies that ensure the rights of minority members while maintaining an appropriate degree of social solidarity and cohesiveness.

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