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IMMIGRANTS AND ETHNICS: Conflict and Identity in Chicago Polonia

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Immigration is both an historical and contemporary phenomenon in the United States. As a result, various ancestral generations coexist. For example, third generation Polish American ethnics share social space with recent Polish immigrants in Chicago. While common ancestry leads immigrants and ethnics to think they ought to work together, dissimilarities between the groups lead to conflict. Two sources of conflict are identified. First, disparate cultural identities emerge because immigrant culture is embedded in the homeland, while ethnic culture is constructed over generations in the context of the host country. Second, immigrants and ethnics have different needs: the newcomers need to learn the culture of the host society, the established ethnics need to maintain an attachment to the culture of the home country. The findings suggest that ancestry does not always function as a basis for solidarity between immigrant and ethnic populations.

After the annual Polish American parade in Chicago in 1988, a group of new Polish immigrants marched to the Polish consulate to demonstrate. Along the way, one immigrant told me about the problems she was having with "old Poles," that is, the established Polish American community. Among other things, she felt that Polish Americans were unwilling to help the new immigrants and provided as an example her attempt to enroll her children in a private grade school:

[When I arrived at the Catholic school] I see that the principal's name is Polish. I think, I am lucky, she will understand. I ask her if she is speaking Polish and she says she is. This is very good for me. I think there is no problem. So then I explain how my husband is looking for a job and when he finds a job then we will pay tuition. Then I ask: "It is possible to enroll my children?" She got very angry and started yelling at me: "You can get a job anywhere, don't you want to work? You are here 6 months and you don't have a job!! When my mother and father came here they worked immediately. My father swept the streets and my mother cleaned tables." I said to her, "Your parents were peasants. We are not." She got very angry at me and I left and never saw her again. I enrolled my children in a magnet school.

The new immigrant identifies with the principal because they share a language and a label ("she is Polish"), but they are unable to form an allegiance based on these shared traits. In their interaction, the ethnic principal and the immigrant parent try to explain why the cultural

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identity does not work. The ethnic blames it on the work ethic of the immigrant who arrived from a communist country; the immigrant blames it on the rural roots of the ethnic's ancestors. This article will explain why this conflict occurs in Chicago Polonia by describing the different contexts and processes that shape immigrant and ethnic identities.

In the United States, ethnic identities are created and recreated in two ways: through time, as second and subsequent generations reinterpret their collective identity in specific historical contexts (Sollors 1989; Glazer 1990; Conzen, Gerber, Morawska, Pozzetta, and Vecoli 1990; Kivisto 1990; Nagel 1994), and across space, as immigrants carry culture from one place to another (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918-1920; Bodnar 1985; Portes and Bach 1985; Morawska 1985). New immigrants may settle near established ethnics from their homeland, but their incorporation into this community is by no means certain because their identities are constructed in different cultural contexts and through different processes. First, if several decades separate the early and later arrivals, homeland and destination conditions are not likely to be similar. The immigrants and ethnics then only superficially share an ancestral homeland. Second, the re-creation of ethnicity over generations produces a different identity than the construction of an immigrant identity through movement across borders.

DISTINGUISHING IMMIGRANTS AND ETHNICS

Ethnic identities in the United States and Canada typically evolved in immigrant communities and, for this reason, scholars often use the terms *ethnic* and *immigrant* interchangeably. For example, Herbert Gans (1979) refers to immigrants as "first generation ethnics." Susan Olzak's (1986) competition theory of "ethnic" collective action is based on propositions derived from the study of immigrant populations and rates of immigration; Raymond Breton's (1964) research on institutional completeness does not distinguish immigrant communities from ethnic communities. More recently, the theoretical tools "ethnic economies" (Model 1992) and "ethnic enclaves" (Sanders and Nee 1987) are used to explain immigrant patterns of incorporation.

Despite this misuse of the terms as synonyms, many sociologists today do recognize immigrants and ethnics as separate social categories (Pedraza-Bailey 1990). Differences between immigrants and ethnics are implicitly recognized in sociological models that describe how immigrants become ethnic Americans (Novak 1971; Greene 1975; Sarna 1978; Gans 1979; Waters 1990). These models, however, were not intended to distinguish systematically between immigrants and ethnics. The trend in many other studies, rather than comparing immigrants and ethnics, has been to focus on one group or the other, depending on the composition of the population in the United States. The early "Chicago School" studies of immigrants (e.g., Thomas and Znaniecki 1918-1920; Park and Miller 1921) appeared at a time when 30 percent of the city's population was foreign-born ("People" 1976). When immigration from Europe was interrupted by the First World War and then slowed to a trickle with the passage of the National Origins Act in 1924, interest in immigrants gave way to interest in new generations of native-born ethnics. Then, by mid-century, scholarly interest focused on explaining these and subsequent generations of ethnics and their relations or place in America (Gans 1962; Gordon 1964; Glazer and Moynihan 1970; Novak 1971). With the post-1965 influx of the "new immigrants" from Asia and Latin America, there has been a resurgence of immigration studies (e.g., the work of Alejandro Portes and colleagues; Pedraza-Bailey 1985; Massey, Alarcon, Durand, and Gonzales 1987; Hein 1991a; Hein 1991b). In a parallel research stream, sociologists have continued to examine the persistence and meaning of ethnicity in the United

States (Gans 1979; Hirschman 1983; Lieberman and Waters 1988; Alba 1990; Waters 1990). Within these two separate research veins, sociologists have explored the social categories of immigrant and ethnic.

Ethnic identity is currently being examined from a social constructionist perspective (Sollors 1986; Sollors 1989; Conzen et al. 1990; Waters 1994; Nagel 1994). This perspective conceptualizes culture as "the socially produced structures of meaning" (Conzen 1991, p. 12), and ethnicity as emerging through interactions. Ethnicity is shaped both by agency and structure. To be a member of an ethnic group the individual must, at minimum, choose to be a member (Patterson 1975; Yancey, Eriksen, and Juliano 1976). Of course, ethnic identity is more voluntary for the white ethnic in the United States than the nonwhite ethnic (Waters 1990). Involuntary processes shaping ethnic identity include immigration laws (Pedraza 1994), state resources (Nagel 1986; Nagel 1994), discriminatory practices (Padilla 1985), and labor markets (Bonacich 1972). Ethnic identity emerges from the initial interaction between the immigrant homeland culture and American society and later interactions between the ethnic subculture and the dominant society. These interactions are influenced by the receptivity of the host country, the "foreignness" of the new arrivals, the size and rate of immigration flows, the economic and political context of the home and host countries, and international relations. For example, the identity of Jewish Americans was shaped by the incipient stage of U.S. industrialization in the late 1800s, the anti-immigration mood of the 1920s, the Christian majority and decades of widespread anti-Semitism, the creation of a Jewish nation-state, and the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 (Glazer 1990).

The concept of ethnicity as a constructed identity illuminates the differences between new immigrants and established ethnics. Low rates of immigration between the 1920s and 1960s allowed many ethnic groups to mature without close ties to the homeland culture, and there were times when those ties were dangerous to maintain (e.g., WWII, the McCarthy era). This time gap between the early immigrants (who have now become ethnics) and the new immigrants has resulted in disparate cultural identities of the two groups. The ethnic culture invented by third generation ethnics bears little resemblance to the concurrent homeland culture of new immigrants. Moreover, while the passage of time, as expressed in generations, is a main factor in the production of the ethnic identity, it is the crossing of borders that constructs the immigrant identity. Silvia Pedraza-Bailey notes that what makes the immigrant a distinct social category is that "the immigrants' preparation for adult roles in society takes place in their country of origin, although they will live these roles . . . in the new society to which they have migrated" (1990, p. 48).

The comparison of immigrants and ethnics is particularly relevant today as immigrants establish cooperative involvements with established ethnics. Since 1965 we have once again become an immigrant-receiving nation, ending the four decades of an (almost) closed door policy toward immigrants (Massey 1994). Immigrants arriving today share social space, institutions, and even stereotypes with established ethnics. Israeli immigrants lobby the same U.S. Congress as Jewish Americans. Polish immigrants support the same budding democracy in Poland as Polish Americans. Mexican immigrants compete with Chicanos for minority scholarships. Black Caribbean immigrants are subject to the same racism as African Americans.

Sociologists have begun to compare immigrant groups and native-born racial minorities (Hein 1991a; Pfeffer 1994), and immigrants and ethnics who share an ancestral homeland (Portes, McLeod and Parker 1978; Luciuk 1986; Shokeid 1988; Hurtado, Gurin, and Peng 1994). This article contributes to this collection of studies by describing the differences be-

tween new Polish immigrants and established Polish Americans in order to explain conflict in Chicago's Polonia (Polonia is the term for the Polish community abroad) in the 1980s.

This article describes two sources of immigrant-ethnic conflict. The first is the cultural differences between the generations. The Polish American ethnics and new Polish immigrants have fundamentally different interpretations of their identities as Poles. The second is a result of the differences between the social categories of immigrant and ethnic which stem from the fact that the immigrant is a newcomer and the ethnic is an established member of society. As a result, the immigrant and ethnic have different and incompatible needs and goals. While the immigrant tries to learn the culture of the host country, the ethnic works to maintain an attachment to the ancestral culture.

A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNITY CONFLICT

Data for this study were collected from several sources. From January 1987 to March 1990, I attended public festivals, organizational meetings, private parties, political rallies, and religious events as a participant observer. In addition, I conducted fifty-four formal interviews with Polonian leaders, including Polish Americans, post-World War II refugees, and recent immigrants. I also collected information from newspapers and organizational publications, and I conducted a survey of businesses in the immigrant community in Chicago (for a fuller description of my methods, see note 4 and Erdmans 1992, Appendix A).

In this study, ethnics are defined as native-born Americans of Polish heritage and immigrants are foreign-born Poles. In these terms, American Polonia is mostly an ethnic population. In the 1980 U.S. census, 95 percent of the over eight million people who reported some Polish ancestry were native-born. In the 1980s, the foreign-born members of Polonia were composed of two migrant cohorts: the post-WWII cohort (roughly 190,000) and the post-1965 cohort. Since 1965, over 100,000 "quota" immigrants, 45,000 refugees, and 770,000 "temporary visitors for pleasure"¹ were admitted into the U.S. from Poland (Table 1).

Table 1 • The New Polish Cohort by Time of Arrival and Status

	<i>Immigrant^a</i>	<i>Wakacjusze^b</i>	<i>Refugee</i>
1965-1979	59,399	293,324	7,924
1980-1991	42,940	479,568	37,359
TOTALS	102,339	772,892	45,283

Source:

Annual Reports of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1965-1978. Statistical Yearbook for Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1979-1991. Column 1: Immigrants admitted by selected class of admission and region and selected country of birth. Column 2: Nonimmigrants admitted by class of admission and region and select country of citizenship. Column 3: Refugee arrivals in the United States by selected nationalities.

Notes:

a. This refers to immigrants admitted under numerical limitations.

b. The term means "vacationer" and refers to nonimmigrants who entered as "temporary visitors for pleasure."

Chicago was a primary city of destination for the early Polish immigrants and, by WWI, had the largest concentration of Poles living outside Poland. On the 1980 census, some 892,000 people residing in Illinois claimed Polish ancestry, and 64,224 of these were foreign-born Poles (Kromkowski 1990, p. 25). Chicago continues to attract new immigrants. In 1987, 24 percent of all new Polish immigrants listed Chicago as their intended city of residency

(Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Services 1987, p. 65). Because Chicago attracted both the earlier and most recent immigrants, the city is an ideal setting for the study of the relations between immigrants and ethnics.

In Chicago's Polonia, Pole (immigrant) and Polish American (ethnic) are meaningful categories. Polish immigrants identify themselves and are identified by Polish Americans as being distinct from the ethnics. The difference is conveyed by the phrases "new Pole" and "old Pole" or *nowy Polonia* (new Polonia) and *stary Polonia* (old Polonia). Members of each group understand that there is a difference between the groups, even though they do not always agree on what that difference is. At the same time, immigrant and ethnic Poles acknowledge a common history. Both would point to sixteenth-century Kopernikus, seventeenth-century Sobieski, eighteenth-century Kosciuszko, nineteenth-century Mickiewicz, and twentieth-century Pilsudski with pride. Many believe that this historical bond and shared identity should translate into present-day alliances and cooperation. The differences between immigrants and ethnics, however, discourage cooperative efforts.

IMMIGRANT AND ETHNIC CULTURES IN CHICAGO'S POLONIA

Differences between immigrants and ethnics are expressed in each group's languages, religious rituals, and political beliefs. The dramatic changes in Poland over the last one hundred years—Poland was a partitioned nation until 1918, an independent nation between the world wars, and a communist satellite country between 1945 and 1989—have led to different types of immigrants. Peasant transoceanic migrant laborers, war refugees, and anticommunist exiles constituted the three main immigrant cohorts in the early twentieth century, post-WWII, and post-1965 respectively.

The early cohort emigrated from a Poland that did not exist on the map; it was partitioned into regions controlled by Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Therefore, national consciousness was very low among the early immigrants. The decision to emigrate was usually economic and connected to the diminishing availability of land and an increasing surplus of labor. As a result, this cohort was composed mostly of uneducated peasants. The post-WWII cohort, by contrast, left an independent Poland (1919-1939) and had a strongly developed national consciousness. Many of these émigrés had fought in WWII, and their decision to emigrate (or not to return to Poland after the war) was a political decision. These Poles arrived as refugees in America, not as economic immigrants. Conflict in Polonia in the 1950s was a result of the differences in national identity and socioeconomic class between the early cohort and the post-WWII cohort (Blejwas 1981).²

The most recent cohort emigrated from a communist Poland for both economic and political reasons. Some, discouraged by the failing economy of communist Poland, came to America seeking financial gain. Others, especially the refugees who had been involved in the *Solidarność* movement, were escaping political repression. These refugees, who came mostly in the 1980s, had a strong commitment to their national identity, and in America they remained actively involved in the political and social changes in Poland in the 1980s (Erdmans 1994). Also included in this newest cohort were the *wakacjusze*, Poles in America on temporary tourist visas working illegally.

In general, the political, economic, and geographic faces of Poland changed throughout the twentieth century, and therefore the composition of the cohorts differed. Table 2 summarizes these differences. Today's descendants of the early immigrants are generally working-class ethnics who have an emotional attachment to the folk culture of Poland as presented to them

Table 2 • Differences Among Polish Immigrant Cohorts

	<i>Early Cohort (1870-1913)</i>	<i>War Cohort (1939-1959)</i>	<i>New Cohort (1965-1989)</i>
Poland's political state	Partitioned	Independent	Communist
Main motives for emigrating	Economic	Political	Economic/Political
Cohort educational level ^a	Low	High	High
Cohort size	Large (1,500,000)	Small (190,000)	Small (350,000)

Source:

Erdmans (1992).

Notes:

Low levels of education refer to less than high school education—many of the early immigrants were illiterate, and few had attended school beyond the eighth grade; high levels of education refer to high school diploma and beyond; between a third and a half of the two latest cohorts had post-secondary degrees (Erdmans, 1994, p. 80).

by their parents and grandparents. The post-WWII cohort and the most recent immigrant cohort are better educated and more urbanized than the earlier cohort and, hence, identify with the intellectual components of an evolving Polish nation and culture (Blejwas 1981; Erdmans 1992; Lopata 1994). The different meanings of Polishness are, at times, a consequence of class differences. Some express it as a preference for Chopin versus the polka. New immigrants describe it as “not having anything in common” with the “early peasants” who were “mostly uneducated laborers” who “signed their name with an X.”

Historical events, such as WWII, industrialization, and the imposition of a communist system, have changed not only Poland's political and economic systems, but its culture as well. Thus Polish Americans and Polish immigrants have different historical memories and different cultural expressions. Immigrants have stated that: “There are differences in language, in the way of thinking, in remembering about Poland, our experiences in Poland, experiences with Germans, with Russians. We have only a few common topics because we have had such different experiences.” Moreover, they add: “We have different values. We came from a different country. Before, it was farmland, now it's industry. We cannot even talk to them. Everyone here is having polka parties. In Poland no one polkas.”

Immigrants think Polish ethnics are marooned in the past. One immigrant complained about a Polish American organization that was sponsoring a new edition of a nineteenth-century novel: “It's really stupid. It would be compared to something like a novel about the wild west. It was great when I was 14, but they consider this a great novel. OK, at some point in Polish history it was an important book, but not right now. We have world-recognized writers, why don't they sponsor those writers? Why? Because they don't know about them.” Another said: “For me it's a pity that Polish Americans don't know Polish culture. Do you know W___?, well, he brings groups from Poland over here. It's stupid because some people think that those actors or performers represent Polish culture. Baloney. They [Polish Americans] don't even know that Polish theater was considered the best in the world in the 1970s.”

For both immigrants and ethnics, political heroes and cultural icons are embedded in the time period of emigration. Current Polish American ethnic culture is the creation of the turn-of-the-century wave shaped within a U.S. context. Thus Polish ethnics write pamphlets about, name streets after, and celebrate the holidays of Casimir Pulaski and Thaddeus Kosciuszko—

generals in the American Revolution (the spellings of both names have been anglicized). New immigrants value Polish culture as it has evolved in Poland. Political heroes for new immigrants include the *Solidarność* leaders Father Jerzy Popieluszko and Lech Walesa. Cultural heroes include the science fiction writer Stanislaus Lem, political satirist Jan Pietrzak, and poet Stanislaus Baranczak.

Language, too, divides immigrants and ethnics. Immigrants point to the "archaic Polish" spoken by the ethnics. One said, "the language wasn't too common, they were from that old old Polonia." Another noted, "He spoke that old Polish you can only read about in literature classes in Poland." The Polish spoken by ethnics differs from that spoken by immigrants for two reasons. First, the ethnics often speak a rural dialect that is no longer spoken in contemporary Poland. Anti-immigration sentiment and the 100-percent American movement in the early twentieth century did not encourage the children of immigrants to retain their native language. Language classes sponsored by Polish fraternal organizations at that time were English language classes. If children learned Polish, they learned the dialect of their parents. Language differences also exist because ethnics speak a hybrid Polish-English. For example, Polish Americans use English syntax and Polish vocabulary (i.e., the sentences are likely to follow the English noun-verb-object pattern). Or they conjugate American verbs along Polish patterns (e.g., *parkowac* means "to park"). The language of ethnics is not "dead," but its regenerative source is America, not Poland. In the shadow of the "crusade for Americanization" (Higham 1963) the ethnics created a unique culture.

The Roman Catholic Church, while serving as a nexus for social interaction between immigrants and ethnics in Chicago, is also a site of conflict. Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion of Poland. Historically, the Church has been a source of unity for the Poles; many believe that Polishness, as a national identity, survived in the Church during the years of partition (1795-1918) and communist rule (Parot 1981). For early twentieth-century Polish immigrants in Chicago, the Church was both a unifying institution in local neighborhoods and the source of internecine struggle among the various political factions (Parot 1981). In the 1980s, the Church was an arena of conflict because ethnics and immigrants disagreed on roles and behavior within the Church. For example, the *Solidarność* refugees felt that the Church should be more politicized. Many priests in Poland supported *Solidarność* in words and deeds. In the United States, however, refugees had disagreements with Church officials in Chicago who refused to allow political banners to be hung in churches. In addition, immigrants said they thought of priests as educated, but were surprised to find Polish American priests speaking a colloquial "low" level of Polish. Immigrants were critical of Polish American priests' weekly sermons, which they saw as fundraising efforts, rather than as an interpretation of scripture. Polish American priests criticized new immigrants for not formally registering with the parish and for not contributing sufficiently to the weekly collection. Finally, the immigrants and ethnics had different religious rituals. For example, in Poland, Catholics can go to confession before or during mass in order to give them an opportunity to cleanse their soul before receiving communion. In the United States, confessions are often heard only once a week, usually on Saturdays, and most American Roman Catholics take communion even if they have not been to confession. The Roman Catholic Church provides a context that brings immigrants and ethnics together; however, differences in expectations and behavior lead to minor annoyances and squabbling.

Some ethnics describe the conflict between themselves and the new immigrants in political terms. Polish Americans assert that immigrants "have a communist mentality, they don't

understand how things work over here," they are "brainwashed," and that "communist rule changed the psychology of those people." These kinds of statements are used to criticize the work ethic of the new immigrants. Ethnicns believe that the welfare state in Poland destroyed Poles' willingness to work and their ability to find jobs on their own initiative. They believe that the immigrants "came here expecting a handout because that's what they got from the communist government. . . . Their mental attitude is one that accepts the welfare system." Polish Americans describe the effects of communism in several ways:

These people came from a communist country where everyone was guaranteed a job and a house. And when they come here they have to struggle, and this is where the problems start. They have been indoctrinated in Poland for over 30 years—the state gives you a job, the state gives you medical insurance, the state gives you an education.

They came from a communist system, it is different. I'll give you an example. A young fellow came to me and said, "What kind of country is this, there is no office that gives you an apartment?" You know I started laughing and then I picked up the weekend edition of the paper and I said, "Look here, one, two, three, four pages of apartments for rent. What kind of apartment do you want?"

New immigrants do not agree with the ethnicns' assessment. In fact, use of public assistance by Polish refugees is low (Cichon, Godziak, and Grover 1986, p. 5). Still, many ethnicns attribute the differences between them and immigrants to the effects of communism.

In summary, the divisions within Chicago's Polonia are in part a result of these different interpretations of Polishness and are expressed in language, musical and literary preferences, sacred rituals and heroes, and social values and attitudes. For immigrants, Polishness is shaped by contemporary communist Poland, while for ethnicns it emerges from the context of being a white ethnic group with roots in nineteenth-century rural Poland living in pluralist America. As a result of these differences, Polish Americans and Polish immigrants frame their relations in an "us/them" debate rather than a "we" dialogue.

THE SOCIAL CATEGORIES OF IMMIGRANT AND ETHNIC

A second explanation for the conflict between Polish Americans and Polish immigrants is found in the social categories of immigrant and ethnic. Three important differences are evident: (1) the voluntary nature of the identity, (2) the resources and opportunities available, and (3) the needs of the population.

The first difference is that the cultural identity is a voluntary allegiance for the ethnic but not for the immigrant. Mary Waters defines ethnic identity as a "tool" that expands the white ethnicns' resources of self-definition (1990, p. 155); it is a playful, meaningless, costless identity used to add color to social personalities. The tool, however, is optional; Polish Americans, for example, can claim ethnic identity when it is convenient. As Poland gained international prominence in the 1980s (as a result of the pontification of Karol Wojtyła as Jan Pawel II, the rise of *Solidarność*, and the fame of Lech Walesa), it became more socially interesting to be Polish. As the president of the Polish American Congress noted in 1987, "I have a lot of people coming and telling me they are Polish; they are wearing their ethnicity proudly now. But I asked them, 'Why did you hide it before?'" The ability to mask the identity indicates its optional character. In contrast, most new immigrants are easily identified because English is not their native language—they speak either no English, broken English, or

accented English. Thus even if they want to deny their heritage, their language betrays their foreignness. The accent itself becomes what Erving Goffman (1963) calls the stigmatizing trait.

The second difference refers to networks, resources, and opportunities available to the two populations. Eastern European immigrants and their descendants experienced structural exclusion in the early part of this century; however, by the 1980s there were relatively few disparities among white ethnic groups in educational and economic opportunities (Lieberson and Waters 1988; Alba 1990). Today, one's ethnicity does not limit one's choice of marital partner, friends, or residence; it is not a basis for discrimination, nor is it a cause for shame or self-hatred (Waters 1990). Charles Hirschman argues: "The character of ethnicity has shifted over the last fifty years. It was once an axis of socio-economic stratification and institutional segregation; it is now a symbol of cultural and political differentiation" (1983, p. 416). This shift from a status to a cultural identity has occurred, in the absence of distinguishing physical markers, as a result of the succession of generations. By the same token, new immigrants, because they are first generation, have not made this shift.

As newcomers, immigrants have limited access to networks, resources, and opportunities. The extent to which the newcomer status limits resources varies greatly. First, immigrants arriving with material resources, translatable job skills (e.g., computers, engineering, mechanics), and strong educational backgrounds certainly have more opportunities than do immigrants without those resources (Portes and Bach 1985; Pedraza-Bailey 1985). Second, different immigrant groups have different networks and resources depending on the community built by their predecessors (Portes 1990; Portes and Bach 1985; Portes and Manning 1986) and on the age and gender composition of their households (Kibria 1994). Third, networks and resources available to immigrants in different labor sectors are dependent on the structural characteristics of the region to which they immigrate and the period of immigration (Morawska 1990; di Leonardo 1984; Pedraza 1994). Fourth, the legal status of immigrants affects resources; refugees who receive state monies are in a better position to overcome the newcomer limitations than are undocumented immigrants (Piore 1979; Pedraza-Bailey 1985). Finally, the permanency of the immigrant's stay can reinforce or minimize the structural limitations of immigrant status by providing motivation and state resources (Piore 1979; Mostwin 1971).

While material and community resources, state monies, education, and occupational and language skills affect the opportunities available to newcomers, newness is nevertheless intrinsic to the immigrant experience. This newness separates immigrants from ethnics. Immigrants suffer from the newcomer status because: (1) their information networks are more circumscribed, and (2) their human capital is devalued. Compared to established members of society, immigrants have fewer networks through which resources can flow. Language limitations and informal networks tie newcomers to immigrant communities. Although networks within the immigrant community often provide newcomers with information, assistance and jobs (Barton 1975; Morawska 1985; Portes and Manning 1986; Tilly 1990), these same networks limit immigrants' choices. For example, new Poles coming to Chicago in the 1980s could find jobs as domestics or construction workers, but the immigrant community could provide little information about how to enroll in an American university or how to obtain a professional license. Newcomers rely on information circulating within the smaller community and when this information is incomplete, so are immigrants' options.

Immigrants also suffer because not all human capital is transferable across borders. For example, a Polish doctor, who is an eloquent and erudite speaker of Polish and who had six years of medical schooling, three years of medical residency, and five years of practice as a medical doctor, found that emigration reduced the value of his Polish language skills, educational degrees, and occupational experience. In his case, the only human capital that survived migration was the medical school training. The playwright Janusz Glowacki described his losses: "Imagine what it would be like if you were to suddenly land in Poland and have to start all over. Back home I had six plays produced and four screenplays filmed. . . . But they were all in Polish. . . . It was as though everything I'd achieved and written had suddenly disappeared" (Smith 1988, p. 10). It is not that immigrants cannot find jobs, but the jobs they do find are of lower status than the jobs they had in their country of origin (Erdmans 1992; Cichon et al. 1986; Piore 1979).

The structural barriers that white immigrants encounter are not the result of their membership in a cultural group (e.g., being Polish—however it is defined), but because they are newcomers. Put another way, Polish immigrants are in a disadvantaged position not because they speak Polish but because they do not speak English. As immigrants acquire English language skills, expand their networks, and obtain American education and professional licenses, they overcome the barriers of their immigrant status.

A third difference emerges as a consequence of these first two differences. Because of the structural limitations of the newcomer status and the fact that the status is not voluntary, immigrants have different needs than ethnics. The immigrant, at least initially, concentrates on meeting basic needs (e.g., jobs and housing). In contrast, the ethnic focuses on the needs of the ethnic community (e.g., cultural maintenance and antidefamation). The processes shaping the two identities are incongruent. While ethnics, by definition, work to maintain a cultural identity, immigrants work to shed the newcomer identity.

IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES AND ETHNIC ORGANIZATIONS

In order for immigrants to identify with ethnics or join the ethnic community, they need to see that the ethnic community has something to offer them. Breton (1964) argues that the more institutionally complete the ethnic community, the more attractive it is to the immigrant. Yet, even an institutionally complete ethnic community will have little to offer immigrants if that community is composed of and dominated by native-born established residents, as is the case in Chicago Polonia.

Immigrants need to learn English, to understand how the social institutions in the new society work, and to maintain contacts with friends and family in the home country. Consequently, they need professionals (e.g., doctors and lawyers) who speak their own language, employment and social service centers, and transoceanic shipping companies to transfer funds and goods to the homeland. In contrast, ethnics need to maintain cultural attachment to their heritage. This is done through participation in ethnic choral and dance groups, language classes, and festivals, as well as interest groups that lobby for ethnic rights and state resources.

These needs create different types of communities. The immigrant community is spatially located—often within a few city blocks—and is easily recognizable, such as Little Italy or Chinatown. The function of the immigrant community is to reduce the strain of the newcomer status. It does this by delivering immigrant services and by providing consumer services in the immigrants' native language.

In contrast, the function of the ethnic community is to celebrate and defend cultural identity. These functions can be met by organizations that are dispersed throughout the city, state, or nation. Participation in ethnic organizations is on a less frequent basis than is participation in an immigrant city, state, or nation. Ethnic members meet for social events on a monthly or annual basis. In some cases no face-to-face interaction takes place; instead, members keep in contact with the organization through a newsletter. The ethnic services are provided by non-profit organizations rather than businesses. This type of community more closely resembles a network of organizations than a neighborhood.

According to a developmental immigrant-into-ethnic model, these two types of communities—spatially defined immigrant consumer centers and dispersed ethnic organizational networks—represent two ends of a continuum. In Polonia, both types of communities exist. The early immigrant cohort built a dense array of institutions to service its religious, educational, social, consumer, financial, political, recreational, and professional needs (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918-1920; Pienkos 1984; Brozek 1985). Saint Stanislaus Kostka church in Chicago listed seventy-four such organizations in its parish jubilee album in 1907 (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918-1920, p. 1564-1566), and at that time there were twenty-two other Polish parishes in the Chicago metropolitan area (Parot 1981, p. 76). At the turn of the twentieth century, the Polish fraternal insurance organizations (the centerpiece of organizational Polonia) built centers to provide shelter for immigrants, sponsored literacy and English classes, and urged their members to become citizens and vote (Kantowicz 1977).

By mid-century, Polonia had become an ethnic community. The ethnic fraternal organizations taught Polish language classes instead of English classes and funded choral and dance groups. As president of Polish National Alliance (PNA) from 1968 to 1988, Aloysius Mazewski stressed an ethnic agenda that focused on antidefamation and antidiscrimination activities, cultural maintenance, and political representation (Pienkos 1984). In the 1970s, the PNA's main goal was to enhance "the prestige of Polonia and its concomitant, the status of Americans of Polish origin in the pluralist society" (Polish National Alliance 1980, p. 8). By the 1980s, Chicago had a well-developed Polish ethnic community, which included 16 national fraternal organizations. Seven of the largest fraternals had their headquarters as well as hundreds of local lodges in Chicago (e.g., the Polish National Alliance had 289 lodges in Illinois in the late 1970s). In addition there were twenty-eight cultural and educational organizations (e.g., the Copernicus Foundation, the Knights of Dabrowski, and the Legion of Young Polish Women), eighteen veterans' associations, and seventeen schools that taught Polish language classes on Saturday mornings. Finally, Chicago Polonia still has its own museum, sports clubs, art galleries, and scouting organization.³ These organizations are scattered throughout the Chicago metropolitan area; many are in the suburbs, as are Polish Americans themselves (Lopata 1994, p. 146).

This geographically dispersed ethnic community stands in contrast to the easily identifiable immigrant community, which is densely packed into a few blocks around Milwaukee and Belmont Avenues. This area, known as *Jackowo* (after the local parish church), is referred to as the "Polish downtown," the "Polish Washington D.C.," and the "Polish centrum." In this area in 1989, over 61 percent of the business owners, 74 percent of the employers, and 91 percent of the customers were Polish.⁴ The majority of Polish owners, workers, and customers in *Jackowo* were new Polish immigrants (Table 3). Even non-Polish owners hired Polish managers and workers because most of the customers did not speak English.⁵

Table 3 • Polish Owners, Workers and Customers in Jackowo, A Polish Neighborhood in Chicago, 1989

	Number of Valid Cases ^a	Number Polish	% Polish	Percent New Poles ^b
Businesses where the owners were Polish	N=150	N=91	61%	64%
Businesses where most of the workers were Polish	N=127	N=94	74%	69%
Businesses where most of the customers were Polish	N=164	N=149	91%	60%

Notes:

- a. There were 183 total cases. Cases became invalid when the buildings were vacant (N=9) or when data were missing. For business owners (row one), cases were excluded when it was a state-owned business (e.g., a social service center for the elderly) or when it was owned by a corporation (e.g., a bank). The low number of valid cases for the workers results mostly from missing data. Many workers were immigrants without work visas, and owners were reluctant to answer questions about them. In fact, I began to ask questions about the workers at the end of the interview because a few of the early interviews were abruptly ended after the questioning about workers began.
- b. Percentage of Polish business owners, workers and customers who arrived in the United States after 1965. Column 4 is a percentage of column 2.

Polish immigrants can shop, pray, get their hair cut, and buy a gravestone in *Jackowo*. The variety of Polish-speaking businesses in the neighborhood includes doctors, lawyers, dentists, optometrists, and pharmacists; delicatessens, meat markets, and bakeries; clothing, shoe, and furniture stores; bars and restaurants; bankers, mechanics, and morticians; as well as a Polish book store, video store, and record store (Figure 1). The specific immigrant businesses include seven travel agencies that ship packages to Poland, four employment agencies that are not strict about "green card" requirements, and four service agencies that help obtain visas, passports, and other documents that foreigners need.

While this neighborhood meets immigrant needs, it does not cater to ethnic needs. No ethnic cultural, political, or social groups had their headquarters in this community in the late 1980s (with the exception of the Dmowski Institute, a political discussion organization whose members are mostly post-WWII immigrants).

Immigrants shop in the Polish neighborhood because the shop owners and workers speak Polish, because the community provides special services that immigrants need, and because the immigrants do not feel stigmatized by the fact that they do not speak English. In contrast, Polish Americans use the community to reinforce a cultural heritage (e.g., to buy rye bread and *kielbasa* for the Easter meal). Immigrants are dependent on this service community; ethnics are optional consumers. While ethnics can use the immigrant community to feed their cultural identities, immigrants have been unable to use the ethnic organizations to fulfill their newcomer needs.

"WHY DON'T THEY FIND ME A JOB?"

As the ethnic identity becomes less significant in each generation (Lieberson and Waters 1988; Gans 1979; Alba 1990) it becomes more difficult for ethnic organizations to enroll new members. "Old Polonia" ethnic leaders saw the new immigrants as a potential source of organizational maintenance. On the other side, the immigrants hoped that the ethnic organizations would help them overcome the limitations of their newcomer status. Despite the perceived opportunity for reciprocity and the belief that, as one leader of the community said, "we are all Poles, we should work together," neither group helped the other.

Figure 1 • Types of Businesses in Jackowo

Immigrant Services (N=16)	
7	Travel Agency
4	Employment Agency
4	General Immigrant services (visas, passports, shipping)
1	Shipping Agency
Retail Stores (N=67)	
25	Clothing
9	Home Furnishing
7	Jewelry
6	Variety
4	Shoe
2	Hardware
2	Health Foods
2	Electronics
2	Art Galleries
Services excluding health (N=31)	
8	Barbers/Beauty Shops
4	Lawyers
4	Florists
3	Gas Stations/Auto Services
2	Banks
3	Cleaners/Laundromats
	1 Pet Store
	1 Bookstore (Polish)
	1 Records and Tapes
	1 Videos
	1 Gravestones
	1 Fabric
	1 Bridal
	1 Religious
	1 Social Service
	1 Real Estate
	1 Shoe Repair
	1 Funeral Home
	1 Photography Store
	1 Printing Services
	1 Income Tax Services
Food and Liquor (N=31)	
13	Restaurants
9	Delicatessens
5	Liquor Stores
3	Bakeries
1	Fruit Market
Health Care (N=20)	
6	Clinics
5	Dentists
3	Doctors
3	Pharmacies
2	Opticians
1	Hearing Aid Shop
Leisure (N=9)	
5	Bars
2	Clubs/Organizations
1	Bowling Alley
1	Night Club
Vacant Buildings (N=9)	

Immigrants did not join the ethnic organizations because these organizations did not offer immigrant services, and what they did provide—affirmation of a cultural identity—the immigrants did not need. Moreover, ethnic organizations were not receptive to immigrants (e.g., their meetings were conducted in English). Moreover, the organizations' agendas focused on ethnic needs. For example, in 1985 the PNA had over 194 million dollars in assets (PNA 1984). The assets were used to finance the insurance premiums of the fraternal and to support its ninety-five different dance, drama, and choral groups. The immigrants were unsuccessful in their efforts to have the money redirected toward immigrant services or toward helping Poland's democratic opposition movement (Erdmans 1992).

Immigrants complained that ethnic organizations would not help them with their most pressing need of finding adequate employment. One immigrant said that ethnic organizations

are "for having tradition . . . not for helping immigrants." When asked to clarify what he meant by helping immigrants, he talked about the large number of Polish refugees who had had professional careers in Poland and were now forced to accept menial positions in Chicago and of the lack of concern Polish Americans had shown in this area. On a Polish-language radio talk show in Chicago in March 1988, two new refugees called to complain about the lack of support they were receiving from Polish American organizations. One observed, "If you find a job or an apartment it's usually through friends, or a friend of a friend," not through one of the ethnic organizations. One study found that 75 percent of employed Polish refugees found jobs through informal referrals, another 21 percent found jobs through newspapers or professional journals, and only one person found a job through an organization (Cichon et al. 1986, p. 59). At a community forum in February 1989, new immigrants directed hostile questions at the speaker, an employee of an ethnic fraternal. One man complained, "The [fraternal] doesn't help us; they look pretty but they don't do anything. They have meetings and *Wigilia* [Christmas celebrations] but they don't help us." Another man bluntly asked the speaker, "Why don't you give us jobs?"

The immigrants believe that ethnic organizations should help them because they share a common ancestral identity—that is, they are Polish. The director of one ethnic organization said that when immigrants called her, the questions were mostly about immigration, financial assistance, or health problems: "They arrive in Chicago [and] they start calling the Polish organizations. And they find out that I don't have an apartment to give them. I don't have a job to give them because I don't know of any today. The most I can do today is to make sure they get a basket of food. I can have the city put them up in one of those overnight shelters. And then the resentments start. What, you're a Polish organization, what are you here for? You're supposed to be helping me. . . . They come in and they expect the Polish organization to be ready and waiting to give them a job, housing, clothing, and school."

The problem is that an ethnic fraternal is not an immigrant organization. Ethnic organizations cannot help new immigrants find professional jobs because they are not set up for that function. As one director said, "None of us are in a position or have the power to hire these people." The directors of these organizations often expressed a desire to help immigrants but said they did not have the organizational resources with which to help.

The main function of an ethnic organization is to act as a regenerative source for ethnicity. The purpose of such events as Polish Heritage Month or the Ellis Island tribute, both sponsored by Polish American organizations, is to reintroduce successive generations of Polish Americans to their cultural heritage. Ethnic cultural survival helps insure ethnic organizational survival. Ethnic maintenance, however, is only important for ethnics. Immigrants maintain their cultural identity without an ethnic organization; the Polish identity is intrinsic to their immigrant status. Moreover, the new immigrants disagree with the Polish Americans about the interpretation of Polishness.

A second function of ethnic organizations is to encourage ethnic pride—either by counteracting negative stereotypes (e.g., through antidefamation committees) or by promoting positive images (e.g., through cultural celebration events). For example, the Polish Women's Alliance, a fraternal benefit association, sponsors Polish thematic essay contests and historical tours in Poland. At the Festival Polonaise in 1988, two booths sold T-shirts, bumper stickers, license plate rims, and other paraphernalia with pro-Polish slogans such as: "Proud to be Polish"; "Half Polish is Better than None"; "Genuine Polish Parts"; "Happiness is Being Polish"; and "Polish Power." Immigrants do not wear ethnic-pride pins. One reason is that new

immigrants do not experience the stigmatization of being a "Pollack" in the United States. In fact, immigrants often point out that *polak* is simply the Polish word for a Polish man. One said, "Yes, I am *polak*, what is all the fuss?" While immigrants experience the stigma of being a newcomer, they do not yet experience the (minimal) stigma of Polish ethnicity in the United States.

Immigrants do not have to join organizations to be reminded of the fact that they are Polish, and since their stigma is not connected to their cultural identity, the ethnic organizations appear frivolous to them. Moreover, because ethnic organizations do not help the immigrants, the immigrants see no reason to join them. One immigrant said, "The biggest sin of the old Poles [Polish Americans] here in America [is that] they are not willing to help new immigrants. And this is why most people who are emigrating are not joining these organizations." Another explained, "I asked the [fraternal] for a reference when I was starting up a business and the [director] refused to give me one." Today this man belongs to several business and professional organizations, but not to any Polish American organizations. Another said, "Because they are not willing to be with us in the first early days of our arrival, when help is most important, we are not joining these organizations."

The ethnic leaders also operate on a reciprocity principle; they feel it is unfair to ask an organization for help if you are not a member of the organization. The president of one fraternal related this story: "I had a man call up yesterday and say, 'I come from Poland. Can you help me?' He talked for an hour about his visa status and finally I said, 'Sir, I can't give you any more of my time. I can't help you.' He says, 'But I come from Poland.' Every day I get calls from people to help. Yet they won't belong to a fraternal." In 1988, a fraternal donated \$5,000 to the Polish Welfare Association (a social service organization that does help immigrants) and at the same time lodged a complaint against the new immigrants for not buying insurance policies from the fraternal. In that same year, the chairman of the Polish American Heritage Month Committee received this comment from a member of Polonia: "For the past 20 years or more the new immigrants that have come to America have shown themselves to be above our Polonia. They are not interested in joining our associations, fraternal, churches or even help groups."

During the 1980s, another source of immigrant-ethnic infighting was the issue of help for Poland—the immigrants argued that the organizations were not helping Poland enough, the ethnics argued that their resources should be directed toward domestic issues (Erdmans 1992). Immigrants comments included: "They have so many organizations but no organizations for Poland." "All this organizing but no action for Poland." "The main purpose for Polonia should be to help Poland, but they don't think that way. Only we [immigrants] care about Poland." The new immigrants created their own organizations to help Poland rather than join the established ethnic organizations. Organizations such as Brotherhood of Solidarity and Freedom for Poland, which worked solely to help the democratic opposition movement, were founded by the new Poles. This conflict over allocation of resources can once again be explained by differences between immigrants and ethnics. The country of birth influences political identities, so that immigrants are more concerned with home country issues than are ethnics. Moreover, immigrants and ethnics have had different life experiences—the Polish refugees had been members of the *Solidarność* union or active in the movement, while Polish Americans were, at most, financial supporters from across the ocean. These different experiences created different information networks, political loyalties, and styles of protest that were manifest as different movement strategies and ideologies for helping Poland's opposition

(Erdmans 1992). Despite the fact that both the immigrants and ethnics supported Poland's opposition movement, they were seldom able to cooperate to achieve their collective goals.

CONCLUSION

The process by which an immigrant becomes an ethnic occurs over time. In the initial stages, however, the two populations are different in that their identities produce different demands. Cultural identities, social needs, and political interests emerge from and are shaped by a population's country of birth. These differences in culture, needs, and interests play a more determinative role in group relations than shared ancestry. While shared ancestry leads the groups to believe they "ought" to work together, it does not always function well as a basis for solidarity between immigrants and ethnics.

This research supports recent work on cultural identities (e.g., Hall, Hobson, Lowe, and Willis 1986), reinforcing the notion that culture is not a static representation of artifacts. Polishness in the United States is neither a Chopin sonata nor Stan's Polka band. Ethnicity is not a museum that preserves cultural traditions. Instead, Polishness is forged by a multitude of contexts that cross temporal, national, and ideological borders: rural nineteenth-century and industrial twentieth-century Poland; anticommunism and democratization; the 1960s ethnic revival in the United States and anti-Semitism in Poland. The dynamic nature of Polish ethnicity emerges within American society and through the integration of the multiple waves of new Polish immigrants, who bring with them "updated" versions of the homeland culture. Each version of the culture is shaped by the political and economic evolutions of the homeland.

The findings move us away from what Paul Gilroy identifies as a "dogmatic focus on national cultures" (1992, p. 188). The era of ethnic nations and national ethnicity has passed. Nations are not always built on ethnic unity (Brubaker 1989), and ethnic unity does not always emerge among groups who emigrated from the same geographic region. Movements across borders have always resulted in constructed cultures that have roots in numerous hemispheres and nations. A transnational approach to culture recognizes the diasporic nature of these identities.

As cultural studies and multicultural curriculums take hold in American universities, we need to recognize the heterogeneous, complex, multidimensional, and dynamic nature of cultural identities. The borders of "Asian," "Latino," "Black," and "White" identities are contested and evolving. We cannot simply box up identities. As Gilroy suggests, "absolutist conceptions of culture" are erroneously simplistic and lend themselves to ethnocentric and racist ideologies. Such absolutist and essentialist notions become susceptible to proprietorship (Chow 1993). "Polishness," like "Blackness" (Gilroy 1992) or "Chineseness" (Chow 1993), is not a property to which one group can lay claim. The claim to cultural ownership, and the discounting of the "other" for not being Polish enough, or Black enough, or Chinese enough, simply creates the opportunity to reproduce or newly produce exclusionary power structures. Rey Chow (1993) warns that groups escaping subordinate status positions should be careful not to simply reconfigure the power relations with themselves on top. When identities are used as weapons to wield power over other groups, "the new solidarities are often informed by a strategic attitude which repeats what they seek to overthrow" (1993, p. 17).

As we move toward an increasingly inclusionary political and academic agenda, it becomes even more important that we understand the forces behind the construction of ethnicity rather than quibble over which version of the ethnicity is represented. Our focus should center on

understanding the political and economic forces propelling identity construction, including colonialism, industrial transformation, political transitions, and state immigration policies, as well as ethnicity-based social movements and national revolts. Focusing on process will move us away from the simple catalog-style analysis of naming the content of ethnic cultures.

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NOTES

1. Many of these “visitors” (known as *wakacjusze*—i.e., vacationers) work in the United States and overstay their six-month visa limitations; an estimated one-third do not return to Poland (Kulczycki 1989, p. 16; Erdmans 1992, p.139).

2. The effects of political changes in the homeland on the identities of the immigrant cohorts were also evident in the Serbian community in Milwaukee (Padgett 1980). Serbs arriving in the early 1900s left from provinces ruled by the Austro-Hungarian empire and had not developed a strong national consciousness. The post-WWII Serbs were political refugees, many of whom had been affiliated with the Serbian nationalist Chetnik movement, who were fleeing from the recent communist take-over. This group was highly nationalistic. When post-WWII Serbian émigrés arrived in Milwaukee, they were thrust into an “Americanized” second-generation Serbian ethnic community that was “alienated by the newcomers’ call for renewed support of Serbian nationalism” (Padgett, 1980 p. 60-61). The conflict stemmed from the different weight given to the issue of nationalism within the Serbian community.

3. These organizations were identified in October 1988 through newspapers, telephone directories, organizational archives, and the *Polonia Vademecum: A Handbook of Information on Poles*, compiled and printed by Ewa Gierat in Bethlehem, CT.

4. In the summer of 1989, I collected data on every business on the first floor on both sides of Milwaukee Avenue between and including the 2800 and 3200 blocks. I used open-ended questions to get information about the ethnicity, year of arrival, residence, and language of the owners, managers, workers, and customers, as well as how long the present owner had been in business at this location. Toward the southern end of this strip, the Polish neighborhood becomes an Hispanic (mostly Puerto Rican) neighborhood. On the 2800 block, out of fifty-two businesses, only twelve (23 percent) were owned by Poles. In this block there were eleven businesses owned by Hispanics, five owned by Koreans, and four owned by Greeks. Except for the fifteen businesses owned by Middle Easterners, most of the non-Polish businesses were in this southern block. Even though many of the owners in this block were not Polish, I included this area because many of the customers were Polish. While the neighborhood becomes decidedly Hispanic south of 2800 Milwaukee, the 2800 block represents the transitional area. It is in this area that one finds signs reading “*Habla Espanol, Mowimy po Polsku.*”

5. Of the fifteen Middle Easterners (Jordanian and Lebanese) with businesses in this neighborhood, two owners spoke some Polish; at five other stores they hired Polish workers; and seven stores had Polish signs. The actions of the Middle Easterners contrast greatly with those of the Hispanics. Of the thirteen businesses owned by Hispanics, none of the owners spoke Polish, none of the workers were Polish, and only one sign had any Polish on it—it was trilingual. While over three-quarters of the customers at stores owned by Middle Easterners were Polish; only fifteen percent of the customers of Hispanic businesses were Polish.

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