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Continuity and change in the cultural values of Bay Area Polish Americans

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**CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE CULTURAL VALUES
OF BAY AREA POLISH AMERICANS**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Linguistics and Language Development

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Katarzyna Rudnicka

December 2002

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ABSTRACT

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE CULTURAL VALUES OF BAY AREA POLISH AMERICANS

by Katarzyna Rudnicka

This thesis reports a preliminary investigation of the cultural beliefs and practices of the Polish-Americans living in the Bay Area. It examines the cultural values from their native cultures that they still hold on to without any change, those they adapt from the target cultural community with modification, and those they adopt from the target culture without modifications. It also examines what conceptual approaches – assimilation, pluralism, or hybridity – better explain the cultural adjustments they make in their adopted homeland.

The findings of this study reveal that none of the three conceptual approaches - assimilation, pluralism, or hybridity – fully and satisfactorily explain the cultural adjustments made by the Polish American immigrants who participated in the study. Instead, it is suggested that newly emerging concepts such as postculturalism or cultural multicompetence may provide a better explanatory power.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The term “culture” is not an unknown entity; it is indeed part of everyday usage. We often hear the term used in personal conversations as well as in professional discourses. In general, we hear the term used at two different levels. Culture with a capital C is used to relate to larger social constructs such as theater, dance, music, literature, and art whereas culture with a small c is used to relate to patterns of behavior, values, and beliefs that guide the everyday life of an individual or a group of individuals within a cultural community. It is culture with a small c that, as Rosaldo (1989) points out, “lends significance to human experience by selecting from and organizing it. It refers broadly to the forms through which people make sense of their lives, rather than more narrowly to the opera or art museums” (p. 26). The current study is concerned with culture with a small c.

While there are several definitions of the term culture, the two that are appropriate for the current study are the ones given by Clifford Geertz, an anthropologist, and Claire Kramsch, a linguist. Geertz (1973) claims that culture denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (p. 89). Kramsch treats culture as a “membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history,

and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting” (1998, p.10).

While culture, as defined above, constitutes an integral part of everybody’s life, its values get accentuated in the life of immigrants. Until they move to an adopted land, they seldom think about the impact of culture on their day to day life. In a newly adopted land, however, they are forced to come to terms with the beliefs and practices of not only their native culture but also the culture of their adopted land. The encounter with a set of new and different cultural values makes them aware of their own cultural behaviors.

According to Ronowicz, immigrants

do not fully realize how much their daily life has been influenced by unwritten rules automatically accepted and applied within their social class, their neighborhood, their country until, for one reason or another they move into another culture, e.g. from one region to another, from town to countryside and particularly, from one country to another. (Ronowicz, 1995, p.31)

This is when the newcomers discover the meaning of the cultural competence, which in Buckley’s opinion “has sometimes been mistaken for knowledge of “surface level” culture such as festivals, foods and costumes” (Buckley, 2000, p. 53)

One group of immigrants may leave their home country on their own free will.

Another may be forced to do so. Nevertheless, both the groups, according to Ronowicz, experience a culture shock. Quoting Brick (1991, p.9), Ronowicz explains that,

culture shock is the result of the removal of the familiar. Suddenly the individual is faced with the necessity of working, commuting, studying, eating, shopping, relaxing, even sleeping, in an unfamiliar environment, organized according to unknown rules. (Ronowicz, 1995, p.32)

In order to survive in their new land, the immigrants go through cultural adjustments. New changes may become sources of problems that immigrants will have to face. In a few circumstances, as Ronowicz observes,

Some people may respond by developing negative stereotypes of the host culture, by withdrawing as much as possible from contact with host-country nationals, by refusing to learn the language and by mixing exclusively with people of their own cultural background. In extreme cases, rejection may be so complete that the individual returns immediately to their own culture, regardless of the cost in social, economic or personal terms. (Ronowicz, 1995, p.32)

However, those who choose to settle down in their new environment will be compelled to either adopt the foreign cultural beliefs and practices, or adapt them to suit some of the central beliefs and practices they bring with them from their native land. It would indeed be interesting to study what aspects of the foreign culture immigrants are willing to adopt or adapt and what aspects of their own native culture they are willing to let go or stick to.

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In this thesis, a preliminary study was conducted among a section of the Polish-American community living in the Bay Area. Polish Americans, often called Polonia, who chose America as their new homeland, have been going through the process of adapting and adopting in order to lead a successful life in their new land. They came from a country where cultural, social, religious practices and value systems are different from those of their adopted country. This study focuses on Polish individuals and families who live in the Bay Area. It attempts to explore which of the native cultural

beliefs and practices these immigrants still hold dearly, what sort of changes they had to undergo in order to adjust to a new cultural system and what foreign cultural beliefs they find necessary to adapt to suit their native cultural practices.

As a newly arrived immigrant from Poland, the researcher has a personal investment in this study. As she begins the process of her own cultural adjustment, she wishes to know what kind of challenges the community of people she is natively associated with has faced and still faces to adapt to the demands of a new cultural environment. The objectives of the study, therefore, are framed keeping that personal desire in mind. Thus, this study for her is both an academic task and a personal voyage.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarly output on issues related to culture and cultural adjustments of immigrants is enormous. Therefore, the literature review presented below is inevitably selective and short.

A thread that continues throughout this review, directly or indirectly, is the connection between culture and language. Many scholars agree that culture and language are closely interrelated. In her book, *Language and Culture*, Kramsch (1998) rightly points out that language not only expresses and embodies one's cultural identity, but it also symbolizes it and that by using a language, speakers automatically express their cultural values and beliefs. This close connection between culture and language has helped linguists and language teachers realize the significance of culture in language learning and teaching. Stern (1992), in his book, *Issues and Options in Language Teaching*, claims that "language and cultures are intertwined, that it is not possible to teach language without culture, and that culture is the necessary context for language use" (p.205). Echoing the sentiment, Atkinson (1999) states that "except for language, learning, and teaching, there is perhaps no more important concept in the field of TESOL than culture" (p. 625). Hinkel (1999) too agrees with Kramsch's point of view, "that the teaching of culture implicitly or explicitly permeates the teaching of social interaction, and the spoken and the written language" (p.6). She adds: "second and foreign language learners necessarily become learners of the second culture because a language cannot be

learned without an understanding of the cultural context in which it is used” (p.6). It is through the language and culture learning that immigrants become acquainted with foreign cultural perspectives.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2000), the scholarly treatment of cultural adjustments that immigrants make to succeed in their new cultural environment can be grouped under three broad categories. Even though these approaches go by various labels, he refers to them as (1) cultural assimilation, (2) cultural pluralism, and (3) cultural hybridity. Following his lead, I shall briefly review the relevant literature on cultural adjustment by highlighting the nature and scope of each of the three approaches.

2.1 CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

Cultural assimilation emphasizes the need for immigrants to internalize the cultural beliefs and practices of the adopted community. In the field of TESOL and applied linguistics, an early and notable proponent of such a view is John Schumann (1978). His model is based on the premise that the second language learner “will acquire the second language only to the degree that he acculturates” (Schumann, 1978, p.29).

Using the conceptually overlapping term ‘acculturation’ instead of assimilation, Schumann introduces two possible types. In the first one,

the learner is socially integrated with the TL group and, as a result develops sufficient contacts with TL speakers to enable him to acquire the TL. In addition, he is psychologically open to the TL such that input to which he is exposed becomes intake. (Schumann, 1978, p. 29).

The second type of acculturation, “has all the characteristics of type one, but in this case the learner regards the TL speakers as a reference group whose life style and values he consciously or unconsciously desires to adopt” (p. 29). Schumann claims, that in order to be successful in becoming acculturated in the new land, the immigrants have to give up their native lifestyles and beliefs and get used to those of the target group. The earlier they do it, the better. The strength of the acculturation model, according to Norton (2000),

is that it highlights the sociocultural context of language learning without neglecting the role of individuals in the language learning process. It recognizes, furthermore, the importance that must be placed on regular contact between language learners and speakers of the target language for successful language learning to take place. (Norton, 2000, p.116)

The model has severe drawbacks, too. In order to become proficient speakers of the target language, immigrants would have to compromise their native cultural beliefs and practices, leave them behind, and concentrate only on the foreign/target cultural aspects of life. As Norton (2000) correctly observes, Schumann’s model “does not consider the possibility that inequitable power relations may prevent members of the language learner group from maximizing their contact with target language speakers, notwithstanding the positive attitudes of the language learner group” (p. 117). What is even more disconcerting is the impact total cultural assimilation may have on individual learners, because “the model does not consider the possibility that SLA may, in contradistinction to the model’s predictions, be impeded if language learners give up their lifestyle and values in favor of those of the target language group” (Norton, 2000, p. 118). She supports this statement with her own research work conducted among

immigrants in Canada. She found that families that gave up native cultural beliefs and lifestyle in favor of the target group experienced a failure of a social and psychological kind: “the social fabric of the family was destroyed, together with any hope of bilingual language development” (p. 118).

2.2 CULTURAL PLURALISM

Another conceptual approach that explains cultural adjustment is cultural pluralism, or more popularly, multiculturalism. It differs from cultural assimilation by recognizing and respecting the newcomers’ native cultural beliefs, thereby promoting their preservation. Explaining the essence of multiculturalism, Bhabha (1990) quotes Harrison (1985), who said that “Multiculturalism... is a theory (albeit vague) about the *foundations* of a culture rather than a practice which subsumes cultural ideas.” As Kumaravadivelu (2000) puts it, the multicultural model “recognizes that linguistic and cultural identities are building blocks that can be used to construct a larger national identity.” In a culturally pluralistic society, as Epps (1974) points out in his book, *Cultural Pluralism*, attempts are made to develop what he calls a ‘mass culture.’ To quote: “Since a culture is a common and standardized set of ways of thinking and believing, a mass culture is one in which most people think and believe alike” (p. 51). He exemplifies his remark by saying that the people in a mass culture “share a maximum of goods and services. They have the same amusements. They generally read the same

newspapers and view the same television programs. They eat approximately the same food and wear the same clothing” (p. 51).

The downside of cultural pluralism is that it generally expects the immigrants to practice their native and target cultures separately in isolation from the mainstream cultural behavior. This expectation might go against the meaningful development of a “mass culture.” In addition, as Kumaravadivelu (2000, p. 3) argues, multiculturalism often limits the meaning of culture to surface level behavior linking it to “ethnic food and dress or exotic arts and artifacts,” and thus focusing “more on ethnic rites and rituals than on ethnic power and participation.” Kumaravadivelu cites cultural critic Trinh Minh-ha who distinguishes between two kinds of pluralistic beliefs: “those which threaten the mainstream culture and those which do not” (Kumaravadivelu, 2000, p.3). According to Trinh Minh-ha, American multiculturalism supports only those differences that do not threaten the mainstream culture, neglecting the other. As a result, the idea of multiculturalism promoting meaningful diversity remains a mission yet to be accomplished.

2.3 CULTURAL HYBRIDITY

The idea of cultural hybridity originated in the field of literary and cultural studies. The main proponent of this concept is Homi Bhabha whose ideas were introduced into the field of TESOL by Claire Kramsch. According to Bhabha (1994),

hybridity is “a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other ‘denied’ knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority – its rules of recognition” (p. 114). Bhabha further explains that hybridity is “the third space which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it... (and) gives rise to something different, something new and recognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (p. 211). His argument is that the immigrants unconsciously create a space between the native and foreign cultures and settle there, displacing themselves from both cultural systems. Fully endorsing this view, Kramsch (1993) encourages ESL teachers to give their students an opportunity to create a ‘third culture’ in the classroom. She claims, it is the language learners’ responsibility “to define for themselves what this ‘third place’ that they have engaged in seeking will look like, whether they are conscious of it or not” (p. 257). She continues, “Nobody, least of all the teacher, can tell them where that very personal place is; for each learner it will be differently located, and will make different sense at different times” (p. 257).

While the concept of cultural hybridity appeals to the sensibilities of immigrant intellectuals, it however forces an individual to dislocate himself or herself from both the native and the second cultures and create a new one. In other words, the concept of hybridity disables the person from holding onto any of his/her cultures. Citing other cultural critics such as Robert Young, Kumaravadivelu (2000) states that

Critics of the hybridity concept... have correctly pointed out that the concept makes sense only in the context of the transnational dimensions of cultural

transformation – migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation...
(Kumaravadivelu, 2000, p. 5).

Similarly, another cultural critic, Jonathan Friedman (1997), argues that

Hybrids and hybridization theorists are products of a group that self-identifies and/or identifies the world in such terms, not as a result of ethnographic understanding, but as an act of self-definition – indeed, of self-essentialising – which becomes definition for others via the forces of socialization inherent in the structures of power that such groups occupy: intellectuals close to the media; the media intelligentsia itself; in a certain sense, all those who can afford a cosmopolitan identity. (Friedman, 1997, p. 81)

Arguing that the new identity created through hybridity is “a mere mask or role to be taken on at will”, Friedman calls it superficial with “no roots on its own” (p. 76).

2.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The three different approaches to cultural adjustment outlined above can have relevance to the current study in the sense that one way of understanding the challenges and changes among Polish-Americans in the Bay Area is to find out whether they believe they culturally assimilate, or culturally pluralize, or culturally hybridize. Thus, the research questions for this preliminary descriptive study emerge from the above review of literature. They are:

1. Are there native cultural beliefs and practices that Polish-Americans value so much that they would steadfastly cling to them? If so, what and why?
2. Are there native cultural beliefs and practices that Polish-Americans would be willing to give up? If so, what and why?

3. Are there American cultural beliefs and practices that Polish-Americans would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification? If so, what and why?
4. Are there American cultural beliefs and practices that Polish-Americans would be willing to adapt and modify to suit their native cultural value system? If so, what and why?
5. Are there American cultural beliefs and practices that Polish-Americans find most difficult to adjust to? If so, what and why?
6. Are there American cultural beliefs and practices that Polish-Americans find easiest to adjust to? If so, what and why?

A cautionary note about the use of terms “Polish culture,” and “American culture” is in order. By using such umbrella terms, it is not implied that cultural identity is a monolithic entity. There are indeed sub-national and subcultural identities based on factors such as race, religion, class, and gender. However, for the purpose of this preliminary study, the term “Polish culture” is used to refer to the way the Polish subjects of the study perceive their own culture, and the term “American culture” is used to refer to the way the subjects perceive the culture of the adopted land.

By eliciting the responses of Polish-Americans to these questions, it should be possible to find out what kind of cultural adjustments they make in the process of becoming productive citizens of their adopted land. As a by-product, the study might

also shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of three conceptual approaches – assimilation, pluralism, or hybridity – in terms of their explanatory power.

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

Scholars generally differentiate between nomethetic and hermeneutic traditions of research design in social sciences and humanities. According to Markee (1994, p. 90), nomethetic tradition is concerned with explaining and predicting how a certain phenomenon works while the hermeneutic tradition is concerned with understanding and interpreting how that phenomenon is organized. He also points out that the nomethetic tradition assumes the existence of a single, discoverable reality. In contrast, hermeneutic tradition assumes multiple realities that can be interpreted variously. In terms of research methodology, then, an experimental, quantitative design is associated with the nomethetic tradition, and a naturalistic, qualitative design is associated with the hermeneutic tradition.

Given the nature of this study and its primary objective to determine how Polish-Americans interpret their own cultural adjustment in their adopted country, the researcher decided to follow a qualitative methodology involving opinion surveys and interview schedules.

3.1 SUBJECTS OF THE STUDY

As mentioned earlier, the subjects for the study were drawn from the Polish-American community living in the Bay Area. In order to seek prospective subjects, the

researcher approached the president of the Northern California Division of the Polish American Congress. He agreed to place the researcher's request to participate in the research on their web site called poloniasf, and sent a message twice to his subscribers requesting them to participate in the study. In addition, the researcher contacted the President of the Polish Club in San Francisco, who agreed to forward her survey to the Club's members. She also e-mailed her Polish friends living in the Bay Area seeking their willingness to participate in her study and also requesting them to pass on her appeal to their Polish friends and relatives. A total of eighty-two individuals responded to her request by e-mails, snail mails, or phone calls. The researcher sent copies of her survey questionnaire (see below) to all of them requesting them to complete it. Fifty-one out of the eighty-two who showed initial interest did take the survey and returned it, making a return rate of 62%. Of the fifty-one surveys returned, the researcher discarded two because one was answered by someone who lives in Poland and used to work in the Bay Area for one year last year; another one was incomplete.

The researcher then approached seven of the survey respondents whom she had met on different occasions and asked them whether they and their family members would be willing to be interviewed by her. She made it clear to them that the interview would be kept confidential and that it would be based on the responses they had given in their completed questionnaires. Five respondents along with their family members came forward to be interviewed. While the researcher had met these five respondents before, she had no contact with the other individuals who responded to her survey other than

mailing the surveys to them. Consequently, data analysis will be based on fifty-four sets of answers, drawn from five family interviews and forty-nine individual responses.

Table1. Subjects of the study

	Questionnaires			Interviews	
	The number approached for survey	The number responded	The number discarded	The number approached for interview	The number agreed
	82	51	2	7	5
Total number analyzed	49			5	

3.2 SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey instrument consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of 13 information-seeking questions that would enable the researcher to learn more about the participants. The questions were as follows:

1. How long have you been in the US?
2. What is your highest educational qualification?
3. What is the reason for your coming to the US?
4. Are you planning on staying in the USA permanently?
5. What primary language do you speak at work in the USA
6. What primary language do you speak at home in the USA?
7. How often do you read in Polish? (indicate hours per week)

8. How often do you watch Polish TV, videos? (indicate hours per week)
9. What do you do in order to keep in touch with Polish culture?
10. When you are in the US, how do you like people to refer to your ethnic/cultural background? (Polish? Polish-American? European? European-American? If any other, please specify).
11. When you are in the US, do you dislike it when people refer to you as Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other (specify)?
12. How often do you go to Poland?
13. How long do you usually stay when you visit Poland?

The second part of the survey questionnaire consisted of six questions based on the objectives of the study listed previously. They were rephrased suitably to be of direct relevance to the study participants, and are presented here:

1. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?
2. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?
3. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?
4. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?

5. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?
6. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?

In addition, at the end of the survey, the participants were asked to share, if they wished, any other information regarding their cross-cultural experience in America.

The conversations the researcher had with five respondents and their family members were held in the subjects' houses, with their permission. During the first meeting, each family was asked to sign the Agreement to Participate in Research. The researcher also signed it and gave a copy of the document to each family. This protocol, approved by the Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board of San Jose State University, explained the nature of the research, and asked for willingness to participate in the study, and for permission to audiotape the conversation. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher gave each of the families the following directions: the families were asked to introduce themselves by expressing the reason for and time of coming to the United States, and by presenting their Polish background. In order to elicit additional information about their cultural beliefs and practices, they were invited to think of any conflicts or problems they faced while living in the US that, in their opinion, had something to do with cultural differences. The subjects were encouraged to use either Polish or English language when answering the questions. Most of them chose to speak in Polish, except for one family. Their answers were audiotaped, translated into English

when needed, and analyzed. All of the families were contacted again, either in person or by phone or e-mail, in order to seek further clarification based on their initial interview and survey responses.

Samples of transcribed conversation, responses to survey questions are given in the appendix.

3.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

An obvious limitation of the study is the limited number of subjects included in the investigation. Besides, during data collection and analysis, it was discovered that the six research questions put boundaries on the aspects the subjects were able to discuss. While analyzing the data, the researcher noticed that there may be a correlation between the length of subjects' stay in the United States and their willingness to give up their native culture – a factor that was not considered in this study. The average length of time of the subjects who expressed that there is nothing in their Polish culture that they would be willing to give up is twenty-three years of living in the US. Eight more subjects, out of fifty-four, have been living in the USA for more than twenty-three years. However, they did find at least one cultural belief or practice that they would be willing to give up.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following steps were taken to analyze the data. First, the respondents' answers to each of the six questions were classified into content clusters based on the nature of cultural beliefs and practices. Such a clustering of beliefs and practices was made possible by the researcher's her interpretive ability based on her familiarity with the Polish culture. Then, the clusters were rank ordered in terms of the total number of responses for each of the clusters. The data analysis of each cluster is followed by a brief discussion in which the researcher interprets the respondents' answers and offers a possible cultural explanation based on her own personal and professional knowledge of Polish culture, and based on the information gained through the surveys and interviews. Responses for each of the six survey questions are considered below.

A note of caution is in order: the reader will notice that for each of the questions, the clusters get repeated. The discussion will make it clear that the respondents are addressing various elements of the same cluster depending on the research question asked. For instance, the cluster "Social customs" repeated for more than one research question means that the respondents will continue to keep certain social customs, adapt certain others or fully adopt some others from the target community.

4.1 QUESTION ONE

The first question on the survey instrument was: “What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?” The respondents’ answers were classified under the following clusters:

- 1. Religious Beliefs and Practices**
- 2. Family Values**
- 3. Social Customs**
- 4. Food Habits**
- 5. Language Attitude**
- 6. Entertainment**
- 7. Days of National Importance**
- 8. The Significance of Education**
- 9. Dress Code**

4.1.1. CLUSTER ONE: RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The Polish-Americans who participated in this study consider their religious beliefs and practices as part of their cultural heritage and attach a great importance to them. A sizable majority of 78% of the respondents expressed their views about religious beliefs and practices and stated that they would never give up Catholicism as a religion

and that they would never give up attending Catholic Church every Sunday. As part of their cultural heritage, some participants said they would like to cling to celebrating the religious activities and holidays, such as Christmas, Easter, and All Saints' Day.

This finding is hardly surprising. According to an article published in an online magazine, 95% of the people in Poland declare themselves to be devout Catholics (www.polonica.net/everything_about_Poland_3.html). The Catholic church has always played a powerful role in the history of Poland. As the author of this article declares, even when Poland “ceased to exist as a state, the Church helped to keep the Polish language and culture alive.” Moreover, the Catholic Church gained greater significance when in 1978, Karol Wojtyla, Cardinal of Krakow, became Pope John Paul II, the first Polish pontiff in history.

The respondents view the activity of going to the church on Sundays as the basic requirement of Catholicism. In Poland, during hour-long masses, churches are almost always full. The Christmas season is very significant to every Pole. Especially, *Wigilia*, the Christmas Eve dinner, is considered the most formal and festive occasion of the year. As per one of the families interviewed for the study, the feast consists of twelve courses, representing the twelve apostles. Usually an extra place is set at the table for an unexpected guest. Additionally, a thin white wafer (*oplatek*) is shared among family members and friends, and wishes are exchanged. At midnight, many go to church to attend a mass. A few survey participants mentioned the joyous atmosphere that exists in

Poland during the Christmas time where family and friends gather, and spend time together on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the day after it. They seem to be determined to continue that tradition in their adopted land as well.

Like Christmas, Easter is also a holiday of a great significance in Poland. On Saturday, the day before Easter, families bring to church baskets full of food: sausage, ham, hard boiled eggs, bread, butter, horseradish, salt and pepper, etc, to have them blessed for Easter breakfast. According to Vicky Elliot's article in *The San Francisco Chronicle* (Sunday, April 7, 2002), the blessing of food on the Saturday before Easter is "the celebration of the Resurrection," and "the end of the restrictions of Lent" (p. E8). On Palm Sunday, families attend the mass, bringing with them bunches of pussy willow, and march in the Palm Sunday processions.

All Saints' Day, mentioned by 9% of the subjects, is another religious holiday in Poland. It is always observed on November 1st, and this is a day when Polish families visit cemeteries, light candles, and place flowers on family graves. Everybody comes to meet with friends, family members, to pray and to participate in church services. The researcher believes that it is significant to mention that the atmosphere of All Saints' Day in Poland is very unique. Although this day reminds everybody about the sadness of death, it unites the families and friends in its beauty and importance. The cemeteries full of decorated graves, as mentioned by one of the subjects, are "something that you won't find anywhere else in the world."

4.1.2 CLUSTER TWO: FAMILY VALUES

The importance of family values among Polish-Americans is brought out by the fact that it was mentioned thirty-six times by 22 subjects. This cluster covers issues such as supporting the family, raising children, and respecting relatives and elders.

Additionally, 8% of the participants included marriage as a family value.

Poland is a place where family values are cherished highly. Among the respondents, 35% reported that they would never be willing to give up the idea of family support that they had learned about in their native land. As one of the subjects put it, one can always depend on family members and close friends “for unconditional help and support.” Due to the shortage of housing in Poland, it is very common to find three generations living together under one roof. As a result, family members spend more time together. “I used to cook with my mom all the time,” one interviewee recalls the immigrant sentiment.

She was teaching me how to prepare stuff and we had time to talk about many other things. Many times this was the only time I spent with her. It helped me relax and forget about my problems. I learned so many things about life just by talking to her. She was telling me about how she used to cook with her mom. It was also a great time to bring back all the memories from the past, like when my sister and I were growing up.

In Poland, grandparents often help to take care of their grandchildren, and as one of the survey participants stated: “the fact that children are looked after by their grandparents, not nannies, helps to keep the strong bonds between the family members.”

Furthermore, family support does not only mean taking care of the kids and having a great relationship with all relatives. The subjects also value caring for the parents when they get older by hosting them in their houses and providing any help that is needed.

A small number of 4% of the subjects expressed their opinions about raising children. The subjects felt that in Poland, children are taught to be more respectful towards their parents and older people than is the case in the U.S. According to the interview with a Polish family, "even though the way of bringing up children is much stricter in Poland than in the US, it teaches them how to behave in certain situations, or what is allowed to say and what is not." Children are taught to stand up when sitting in a crowded room in order to make a place for an elderly person. They are told to address others with respect using honorifics such as Mr. or Mrs., and not to ever argue with people with older age. Talking of raising their children in the United States, one immigrant stated:

In raising my children I insisted on conveying the tradition of unconditional respect for adults. My children were taught to get up, when talking to adults, and not to oppose any of their political views in front of them, even if those adults were wrong. They are supposed to, instead, discuss those peoples' opinions which they found incorrect later with their parents. An exception to this rule can be made if they are requested to express an opinion by the adult.

According to him, this is very different from how children are brought up in the United States.

According to some subjects, "if the kids deserve being spanked, they should be." It is believed by many Poles that slight slapping often helps to gain control over a

misbehaving child. Znaniecki Lopata (1976), quotes Finestone when describing the behavior of Polish immigrants moving to the US in the early twentieth century: "The Polish mode of interpreting experience is deeply imbued with the conception of sin." Later, she added: "The result of such a mistrust of human nature was a system designed to rigidly control the behavior of children." (p.100). In addition, she cites another author, Bennett, who, when depicting Polish children, stated: "Unquestioning obedience was expected of a child; at the same time the child was expected to become self-reliant, strong-willed and independent of spirit." (p.100). It is clear from the responses that the way of raising children is still much stricter in Poland than in the US, and that it is one of the practices that Polish immigrants still value.

Those survey respondents (8% of subjects) who raised issues related to marriage praised the fact that there are not as many divorces among couples in Poland as there are here in the United States. Unfortunately, none of them provided further explanation. The statistics found on <http://www.hhs.se/personal/suzuki/o-English/pol17.html>, state that in the United States of America, there were 49 divorces per 100 marriages in 1998, whereas in Poland, there were only 21. According to the information found on the website <http://cwr.utoronto.ca/cultural/english2/Poland/polandENG.html>,

Divorces in Poland are not as common as in North America. Although there are unhappy marriages, parents often stay together for their children. The desperate housing shortage also complicates things. Separated and divorced couples often have to stay together in the same apartment, simply because there is nowhere else to go.

4.1.3 CLUSTER THREE: SOCIAL CUSTOMS

The Social Customs cluster covers a wide variety of beliefs and practices. These values were brought up twenty-seven times by 18 subjects. In their surveys, the subjects talked about “real” friendship, hospitality, and certain behaviors when communicating with other people, such as for example, addressing others as Mr. or Mrs., etc.

17% of subjects miss real friendship and social interaction from Poland.

According to them, the relationships between friends are much deeper and last longer in Poland. As one of the subjects stated: “real friendship” meaning being able to rely on someone whenever there is such a need, “gives you the feeling of safety.” Another immigrant explained:

I really value a long term friendship. I believe that if both sides nourish it, it can last a lifetime. I find it hard to find friends like that in the US. Americans are preoccupied with their work or school more than with people and social life and that is why I look for friends among Poles.

At the same time a few subjects criticized American sayings: “See you later,” “I’ll call you later,” etc. calling them useless and meaningless. One of the immigrants shared a couple of stories, when he waited for his “friends” to call him (as they promised they would), and they never did. Recalling from the researcher’s own experience, it took her some time, too, when she first came to the US, to learn that “See you soon” was just another way of saying “bye,” and it did not necessarily mean that she would see that person in the near future.

Polish hospitality is another value cherished by a number of Polish immigrants. There is a Polish saying: "*Zastaw sie, a postaw sie*," meaning: "Pawn yourself, but at the same time present yourself in the best way." Another proverb translates: "A guest in the house is God in the house." Regardless of where or how Poles live, they welcome people with warmth and affection. One family interviewed by me shared their viewpoint about the dinner they attended a few weeks prior our meeting, where the hosts asked their guests to bring along a dish. "If I organize dinner," the woman said criticizing the hosts, "it is my responsibility to provide a comfortable place for my guests and food."

In addition, subjects treasure the Polish way of addressing others and being addressed as Mr. and Mrs. In Poland, Mr. or Mrs. is placed in front of the person's first or last name, or both, and is used to show respect to another person. Two Polish families admitted that they teach their children to call every adult with either their first or last name and always place either Mrs. or Mr. in front of those names. "Otherwise," says one interviewee, "the border between the kid and adult starts disappearing and it becomes easier to say things that shouldn't be said."

The participants also expressed their values for taking shoes off when visiting somebody else's house. Not only does it show respect for the hosts' effort in keeping the house clean, but also the person who remembers to do so is considered in Poland to be well behaved.

4.1.4. CLUSTER FOUR: FOOD HABITS

30% out of all subjects who took part in the survey mentioned food habits as one of their responses to the first question. They stated that they would like to cling to the Polish way of cooking. Some discussed eating manners, and others debated on the respect for food.

In most houses in Poland, it is the mother/wife who prepares meals for the family. Cooking is often time consuming because almost every dish is made from scratch. The immigrants declared that they still prefer this kind of cooking to the pre-made one, since it is much healthier and tastier. Moreover, as one of them commented: “In Poland, cooking takes much more time but it might be a very enjoyable time.” She continued with her memories, when she used to cook with her mom, which were mentioned earlier, in the Family Values cluster.

6% of Polish immigrants value the eating manners that they have brought with them from Poland. The most significant one for them is eating dinner using a fork and a knife. According to one of the subjects, American etiquette allows to cut food with a knife, put the knife away, and eat the pieces of food with a fork. In Poland, a well behaved person holds a fork in left hand, and a knife in right hand throughout the whole dinner, using the knife to cut food, and scoop it on the fork. Children are taught how to use a fork and knife when they are as young as seven, or eight years of age.

4% of the subjects raised the issue of respect for food. According to one of the survey participants, throwing away food in Poland is believed to be sinful. She provided more explanation by saying:

I think there is no respect for food here. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that people don't need to worry about saving every cent as much as we do, and for them spending money comes much easier, so throwing away some food seems not to be a problem. In Poland, on the other hand, where things don't come so easily, people appreciate things more.

In this cluster, several subjects talked about their nostalgia for certain Polish foods.

Among those that were mentioned was: Polish bread, soups, breaded pork chops, and tea.

Bread in Poland is considered to be a traditional food. It is usually eaten for breakfast in the morning, with butter and homemade jam accompanied by coffee or tea, and for supper at night in the form of a sandwich. Soups most often start the main meal in Poland, dinner, that is served in the early afternoon. Soups are followed by the main dish, which usually consists of potatoes, some type of meat (often a boneless pork chop), and a salad. Additionally, tea, mentioned by a few subjects, plays a significant role in Polish cuisine. It accompanies almost every meal, and it is served in a special tea glass rather than from a mug or a tea cup.

4.1.5. CLUSTER FIVE: LANGUAGE ATTITUDE

The survey responses show that 28% of all participants expressed strong feelings towards their first language, Polish. The fact that clinging to their native language was mentioned only by 28% of immigrants taking part in the survey does not necessarily

mean that the rest of the subjects were willing to give it up. In the second question of the survey, where the subjects had an opportunity to list Polish cultural beliefs and practices they would like to forget, Polish language did not appear even once. The reason might be two-fold: one, the questionnaire does not make any explicit reference to the language use, and two, the subjects themselves seem to take for granted that speaking in Polish is a natural thing to do. For instance, one family mentioned to me, “We can forget how to cook Polish dishes, but our language is something that we’ll never forget how to speak.” Many survey participants use Polish at their homes or work, and it is obvious for them, that they will never give up their native language.

4.1.6 CLUSTER SIX: ENTERTAINMENT

In the Entertainment cluster, the Polish cultural practices that were mentioned by 17% of all subjects are: listening to music, reading literature, attending festivals, and watching TV. One of the subjects added playing soccer to the list, explaining: “I am not, and I never was a sport fanatic. But, if there is any sport ever followed by my family it is to be soccer and only soccer.” Incidentally, according to www.polonica.net/everything_about_Poland_3.htm, “soccer remains Poland’s number 1 sport.”

According to 17% of the subjects, using Polish mass media helps them stay in touch with Polish culture. One subject mentioned collecting CDs with Polish music;

another talked about subscribing to Polish newspapers and books. Many of the subjects use the Internet to connect to Polish web sites. Two families that the researcher has interviewed mentioned videotapes with Polish stories for children that they collect in order to have their kids exposed to Polish language and culture.

4.1.7. CLUSTER SEVEN: DAYS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Six immigrants (11%) stated that they would like to continue celebrating days of national importance. Some of the days mentioned include Polish national holidays, and also celebrating Women's Day (March 8th), Name Day, and Mother's Day (May 26th).

The main national public holidays in Poland include: New Year, January 1st; Labor Day on May 1st; Constitution Day on May 3rd, and Independence Day, November 11th. The subjects, who mentioned the desire to continue celebrating them, did not give any further explanation about their response. Women's Day in Poland is celebrated on March 8th. On that day, men usually buy flowers and gifts for women. This holiday was simply listed by the subjects; no further explanation was provided. Celebrating Mother's Day was listed by 2% of subjects. The manner of honoring that day reflects the one that is observed in the US; however, the day of experiencing it is not the last Sunday of May, as it is in America, but May 26th, regardless of what day of the week it falls in.

Additionally, 4% of survey participants mentioned Name Day. In Poland many people celebrate their 'name days' rather than their birthdays. Everyone in Poland is named after a saint; every day is dedicated to at least two to three different saints. Poles celebrate their name days on the day of the saint whose name they share. The immigrants who mentioned Name Day as one of their responses for the first question of the survey added that this holiday is a very important part of Polish tradition that they can't depart from.

4.1.8. CLUSTER EIGHT: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION

The Significance of Education cluster covers all answers, given by 7% the subjects that praise educational system in Poland. These subjects agreed that the level of education in Polish schools is much higher than in the US, and that they appreciate the knowledge gained in their native land. "Even though tough and painful" as one family described the Polish educational system, "it teaches you well."

4.1.9. CLUSTER NINE: DRESS CODE

Two of the Polish families interviewed expressed their strong values for the way Polish people dress. The immigrants discussed their willingness to continue dressing in a certain way for certain occasions, and having their wardrobes divided into the casual and formal clothes. Said one of the survey participants:

We were brought up the way that we always have to think what other people think about us, and that this is very important. So, when I leave the house, I want people to talk about me well. I usually change my clothes. A Polish woman has her closet divided into clothes that she wears at home and clothes that she wears when she goes out. (In Poland) you won't see a woman with the curlers on her head when driving a car or even in a supermarket, as you can see it here.

Another subject mentioned that changing clothes before she leaves the house helps her be self-disciplined. She adds later: "Here (in America), you feel very free; you can wear whatever you want." She explains, "Nobody expects you to dress up when going to a grocery store; however you should do it for yourself, and you'll feel good, and people who will see that will appreciate it."

4.2. QUESTION TWO

The answers to the second survey question, "What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?" were grouped into the following clusters:

1. Social Customs
2. Religious Beliefs and Practices
3. Food Habits
4. Days of National Importance
5. Nationalism/Patriotism
6. Dress Code
7. Work Ethics

8. Family Values**9. Choices/Options****4.2.1. CLUSTER ONE: SOCIAL CUSTOMS**

43% of the subjects mentioned some negative Polish social customs as something they would be willing to give up. The issues discussed in this cluster include: racism and lack of tolerance that in the subjects' opinion exist in Poland, as well as Poles' negative attitude.

Some Polish immigrants living in the Bay Area criticize, and are glad to give up, cultural stereotypes, and lack of tolerance that they believe exist in Poland. As one of them explains, "I think Poles are really narrow-minded when it comes to other cultures and customs. We are not exposed to cultural differences because 98% of Polish residents are 100% Poles." Some immigrants criticized their countrymen/women for their conservative way of thinking, which they believe may have resulted in many stereotyped customs and beliefs. One survey participant confessed, "I was raised the way that, and I think this is the result of a low tolerance of a Polish society, a woman who is about 40 years old and is pregnant is pointed out by others." Others gave examples of their friends living in Poland who do not hide their hatred towards gay people, or even towards relationships between a man and a woman between whom the age difference is greater than 10 years.

According to a number of immigrants, conservative thinking of people living in Poland results also in their constant negative attitude. Unfortunately, none of these subjects provided further explanation. However, as far as the researcher remembers from her own experience when moving to the United States, one of the first differences that she noticed in behavior between Poles and Americans was their general attitude. As for Americans the simple answers to the question "How are you?" are usually "Fine", or "Well"; Poles when asked this question in Poland start complaining and talking about their problems. Giving a positive answer if one has a cold, or has the smallest problem, would be considered in Poland as dishonest. In addition, when asking Americans who visited Poland for the first time about their first impressions about Poland's native citizens, the researcher usually receives similar responses. Most of them say that Poles seem very sad and depressed at first. What they lack in Poland is a simple "Hi," or a smile from people walking on the street. The fact is that, in Poland, people usually do not start conversation with strangers even if it is only limited to a smile, or a "Hi", or a "How are you?"

Another matter criticized by immigrants was Poles' low self-esteem, and as a result of it, constant depending on others, and waiting for the commands instead of trying to work things out by themselves. As one subject mentioned, the origin of such a behavior might be Polish educational system, in which criticism seems to dominate over praise, and students are taught to be a part of a group, not the leaders.

Furthermore, several subjects wrote about habitual behaviors that still exist in Poland that they gladly gave up. Among them are: guests' dropping by without any invitation, kissing women's hand while greeting, referring to everyone as Mrs. and Mr., and receiving and giving flowers on any occasion. In Poland, it is widely accepted to stop by at the friend's house at any time of the day without being invited or letting the friend know earlier about the visit. According to the subject who mentioned this matter, "sometimes it was cute, but in most cases disrupting and annoying." Another Polish habit that met with disapproval is man's kissing the woman's hand when greeting her. In Poland, when a man greets a woman, she is expected to hold out her right hand first, and he is supposed to take it with his right hand and kiss it. One subject called this behavior "overdone respect for women." On a related matter, another subject says:

I gladly gave up flowers. When I lived in Poland, I had to bring flowers everywhere and be ready to receive them as well, even airports and train stations. It was in my opinion the dumbest habit in the world – somebody had to carry, for example, four suitcases – now he had to carry flowers on top of it.

In Poland, flowers are a kind of a gift, and are received on any occasions, birthdays, name days, weddings, etc. It is significant to give an odd number of flowers; it is believed to be unlucky to receive a bouquet with an even number of flowers.

4.2.2. CLUSTER TWO: RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Discussing religious beliefs and practices, 38% out of the subjects expressed their concerns about the Catholic Church in Poland, and its power. According to the web site: <http://cwr.utoronto.ca/cultural/english2/Poland/polnadENG.htm>, "Although many Poles

are strong in their faith, they are selective in their adherence to their Church's teachings. On certain moral issues, many people prefer to follow their own judgment and conscience rather than the guidance of the Church." Some of the immigrants expressed their belief in God, but showed disagreement with the power of the Catholic Church. Some subjects argued:

Catholic church has too much say in the political sphere in Poland as well as too much influence in the Polish mind. I think that it has contributed to the social and cultural intolerance that has in many ways become a Polish worldview in terms of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity.

Another subject suggested,

Yes, many people feel the hand of god on them when they do good work, but I believe that it is in human nature to do good as easily as it is to do evil, but that we must take accountability for our choices ourselves, not blame or attribute it to a god.

One immigrant expressed his gratitude about religion being in America a matter of choice rather than a social obligation. Some subjects, after coming to the US, gladly gave up Catholic rituals, such as going to church every Sunday, prohibition about eating meat on Fridays and holidays such as All Saints' Day, and Easter.

In Poland, children at the age of 8 years obtain their first communion in Catholic Church. It usually takes place on Sunday in the month of May. The relatives of the child are invited to church and then to the house for celebration. As one subject confided,

I am also happy to not be invited to my friends' children's First Communion. In Poland it was unavoidable. Because of a heavy cultural emphasis on religion, typical for Poland, it is an uncomfortable event for people, who are not particularly religious, like myself, to attend.

As for the wedding parties, one of the survey participants expressed her disapproval about the traditional ceremony, where “200 people are invited, and half of them you don’t even know.” In Poland, weddings are one of the most important family celebrations, and usually last two days. On Saturday, the couple gets married first at the registrar office, and later at church. The ceremony in the church is followed by a party that lasts usually till dawn. All the guests are invited again for a reception on Sunday afternoon, where either dinner or desserts are served.

4.2.3. CLUSTER THREE: FOOD HABITS

Issues related to food habits were discussed by 31% of the subjects. They generally talked about the habit of drinking vodka in Poland. According to Lopata (1976), alcohol in Poland was used “as a means of recreation and emotional release. Drinking on special occasions, such as pay day, Saturday night, or a wedding was traditionally heavy.” (p. 99). Another note found on www.virtualtourist.com said, “If vodka were a religion, Poland would be its cathedral.” In Poland, vodka is the main alcoholic drink, next to beer, consumed in almost every social gathering. It is also believed by many to cure the common cold. As a subject put it: “In Polish culture it is impolite for a man to refuse a drink, and it never ends with just one.” Another said: “if you refused to drink, it meant you didn’t want to be a part of the group.”

Only 7% of the subjects said they would gladly give up Polish food. According to them, Polish food is not healthy, and there are many healthier cuisines that they are willing to try. One subject mentioned that she was happy to give up boiling milk before drinking it. In Poland, and it is believed to have already changed, the milk bought in the store had to be boiled before consumption. Another 4% of the subjects criticized the coffee they used to drink in Poland. One of them described it as, “the worst warm drink ever developed by mankind.” Later, the same person recalled: “We used to pour boiling water over medium course ground coffee and then drink it using our own teeth as a filter.”

4.2.4. CLUSTER FOUR: DAYS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Some (19%) of the subjects would easily give up the Name Day celebrated in Poland. A small number of 4% are not concerned about Women’s Day, 2% feel contented about not celebrating May 1st any more, and another 2% refuse to observe Mother’s Day. Although there were a number of subjects who stated that a Name Day celebrated in Poland is one of the practices they would like to cling to when living in the US, there were some who said they would be willing to give it up. According to one of the subjects, “Since most of my friends are American, keeping such a tradition becomes not too meaningful.” Another person explained his decision, saying,

It is a personal holiday, which has an advantage and disadvantage over celebrating birthdays at the same time. It does not reveal the age of the celebrant without any mercy like a birthday does, but in the same time it has to be shared

with a lot of people, particularly if your name is popular, like Andrzej, Jerzy, or Maciej.

Some survey participants mentioned that they are not willing to continue practicing Women's Day. One of the reasons provided by the subjects was that this holiday forces people to do something for others. As one person explained, "they should do it every day, not just once a year." Similarly, May 1st is another holiday mentioned in the survey that will not be celebrated by some Polish immigrants living in the Bay Area. It is a national holiday in Poland celebrated with patriotic demonstrations and marches as well as fairs and picnics.

4.2.5. CLUSTER FIVE: NATIONALISM/PATRIOTISM

The Nationalism/Patriotism cluster includes answers that discussed lack of patriotism, and "blind nationalism", lack of unity in the Polish society, and "polishness". These issues were mentioned by 16% of the respondents. Six percent of the subjects mentioned that after coming to the US, they were glad to give up the nationalism of "the unhealthy kind". One of these subjects clarified,

I feel that undue regard for one's country as the sole source of pride, goodness, and virtue is wrong. I believe strongly in love of country and loyalty, but not to the exclusion of a clear sense too of what is wrong with the country. Like racism and religious prejudice, blind nationalism is destructive.

Another 6% of subjects criticized the absence of unity in Poland. These subjects only mentioned this matter without offering any interpretation. However, 4% of immigrants did clarify their answer about the next case, "polishness". A member of one

family interviewed by the researcher confided that with his moving to the US he faced a lot of obstacles caused by fellow Polish immigrants. Since then, he has not felt any need to stay in touch with Polonia. Another family, on the other hand, criticized those who are willing to give up their polishness. According to them,

There are a lot of Polish jokes, and a lot of negative pictures of a Polish person or Polish-American. But, that's not entirely the case, and what I've noticed in my personal experience is that Americans really appreciate if you value your ethnic background. And, I think a lot of people who are treated maybe a little bit negatively or maybe a little bit not as equals, those people will try to really hide their background, and sometimes it's a joke. Obviously they have a problem with their own realization.

4.2.6. CLUSTER SIX: DRESS CODE

A small number (7%) of the subjects reject the Polish practice of "dressing for others". One of the subjects said:

Poles love giving opinions and suggestions especially when they are not asked to do so. Because of that you always think: 'what will people say?' It affects your decision of how to behave, what to wear, whom to date, etc.

Another immigrant admitted: "We were brought up the way that we always have to think what other people think about us, and that this is very important." These immigrants appreciate the freedom of being themselves, and not being forced to follow the mainstream.

4.2.7 CLUSTER SEVEN: WORK ETHICS

Nearly 4% of the subjects commented on the attitude of Poles towards work. According to them, one of the differences between Poles and Americans is that Americans work because they like it; Poles go to work because they have to. They believe that such an attitude influences the way people work, and results in loose work ethics.

4.2.8. CLUSTER EIGHT: FAMILY VALUES

Only 2% of the subjects discussed their disapproval of kids living with their parents after they finish their education. As mentioned in one of the discussion points of the answers to the first survey question, in Poland, a lot of young people live with their parents until they get married, or as it often happens, two or three generations live together in one house for most of their lives. This, however, is most often not a matter of choice, but deficiency of housing and financial means.

4.2.9. CLUSTER NINE: CHOICES/OPTIONS

In the Options cluster, 2% of subjects mentioned the lack of opportunities in Poland. The main issue criticized was obtaining small jobs in order to earn extra money. In the interview with one of the families, one person criticized the lack of opportunities

that exists in Poland to obtain a job. According to her, in the US, an unemployed person usually has an option to find a temporary job, not necessarily in his/her profession, and is able to earn extra money in order to pay the bills. As she stated, “in Poland, such possibilities do not exist.” The informant is clearly referring to the fact that job opportunities in Poland are much less than in the U.S.

4.3. QUESTION THREE

Answering the third question of the survey, “What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?” the subjects had an opportunity to list all the customs of the American culture that they had found useful, and, after coming to the US, adopted them without making any changes. All the answers were collected together, and were categorized into the clusters:

- 1. Social Customs**
- 2. Days of National Importance**
- 3. Work Ethics**
- 4. Choices/Options**
- 5. Tolerance**
- 6. Freedom**
- 7. The Significance of Education**

8. Religious Beliefs and Practices
9. Dress Code
10. Food Habits

4.3.1. CLUSTER ONE: SOCIAL CUSTOMS

39 % of the subjects took part in discussing the matters of the first cluster, Social Customs. The main issues mentioned by the subjects were Americans' optimistic approach to life, politeness, self-confidence, and adaptability to changing circumstances.

One of the American values that Poles would like to adopt fully without any modification is what they called American optimism. Most of the subjects who responded to this question admitted that they appreciate the easygoing approach to life that Americans seem to have. Referring to the "How are you?" issue discussed earlier. Polish immigrants approve of the fact that when asked how they are, they do not need to describe all the problems that they have at the moment. In addition, they depicted Americans as "easy to make contact with." As mentioned earlier, in Poland, it is unusual to talk to strangers, either on the street, or on the bus. However in the US, small talk is a common way of greeting someone, not necessarily a friend. Moreover, as one of the subjects discussed it,

Although many things have changed in America since I came here twenty-five years ago, I am willing to risk a thesis that overall Americans are more polite than Poles. Their code of polite behavior is less complex than the Polish one, but is used more often.

This response reflects the comments by Ronowicz (1995, p. 33), immigrants “apply some cultural rules of communication of their native tongue, which are quite different from those observed by native speakers of English. As a result, their linguistic behavior is misunderstood, sometimes with dire consequences for them.” He continues, “Polish immigrants to Australia often run into trouble because they sound too direct, almost rude.” (p. 33). Ronowicz gives a number of examples which show that it is often not the Polish speaker’s wish to be rude, but the misinterpretation of his native linguistic skills. Polish immigrants living in America for a long time may also be surprised by the unintentional impoliteness of the new Polish immigrants.

Furthermore, the subjects praised American high self-esteem. One of the subjects wrote that self-confidence was one of the first lessons she learned from Americans. She learned how to stand up for herself when being treated unfairly. She explained that in Poland, in many situations she would stay quiet, since it was expected of her. Here, on the other hand, she feels encouraged and free to express her feelings.

Another American value praised by Polish immigrants is their ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Poles believe that it comes easier to Americans to be flexible when faced with new situations. In order to explain his point of view, one of the subjects added: “Americans always have a healthy understanding of a situation; we (Poles) are too conservative to do so.”

4.3.2. CLUSTER TWO: DAYS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Nearly 39% of the subjects announced that they would be willing to adopt American holidays such as Thanksgiving, Halloween, Fourth of July, and the event of Kentucky Derby. Thanksgiving, as one of the subjects explained, “comes from early American history but it is also good for this year and all future years; it’s a good idea to take time to be thankful for our freedoms.” Another subject reasoned: “We are pilgrims.”

In addition, immigrants listed Halloween and Fourth of July as American holidays that they have already adopted or are willing to do so. Halloween, according to one family, is a perfect kids’ holiday, whereas Fourth of July is a good occasion to gather with friends and family. Only one of the subjects recognized Kentucky Derby event. In his explanation, he stated,

I worked with the horses when I was in the military, and all through my working life I went to horse races in New York, to see the thoroughbred horses, not only to bet on them. Polish Arabians are acknowledged the best thoroughbred horses in the world, and I just like them.

4.3.3. CLUSTER THREE: WORK ETHICS

Twenty-four percent of immigrants who took part in the survey mentioned US work ethics as something they were willing to adopt. The subjects expressed their willingness to adopt American strong work ethics, such as professionalism, great

responsibility, good organization, punctuality, respect for work and money. They also acknowledged Americans' attitude towards work. They believe Americans are expert in whatever they do, and are known for being very responsible, well organized, and punctual. According to one of the subjects, when she was still living in Poland, "everyone had to get a job, everyone had to come to work at a certain time, then leave, and how much was achieved between those hours, nobody really cared. So, there was no reason to respect the job." The same person added that the situation in Poland has been changing dramatically, and people are learning how to value their work.

Moreover, the immigrants stated that they appreciate the fact that money issues are explicitly discussed in America; "no questions are left unanswered – in every transaction it is always clear what and for how much." On the other hand, they value the anonymity of how much money a person earns. Said one immigrant, "In Poland, everyone knows who's earning how much. Here, nobody will ask you such a question, and if somebody will, I don't have to give an answer."

4.3.4. CLUSTER FOUR: CHOICES/OPTIONS

The subjects listed all the possibilities that America has to offer, and which did not exist in Poland. 22% out of the subjects appreciated the employment and housing opportunities, the ability to change one's career, travel, eat out, and use the stock market.

According to a number of subjects, it is easier in America to obtain a job, or find a place to live. In the US, people have more options when looking for a job. In Poland it is rare to get a house or an apartment by young families. Some subjects commented on changing one's career, which is not feasible, nor popular, in Poland. Here, however, it all depends on the person's desire. In addition, the opportunity to travel, eat out (discussed earlier), and use the stock market were some of the items mentioned as activities that they were not able to practice in Poland, but which they gladly adopted after coming to the US. One immigrant explained:

I really like the fact that in America it is much easier to try new things. Everything is much more affordable and open for regular people. In Poland, if you wanted to do something, like any kind of sport, you had to be very good at it. It was so hard to decide to choose what sport you liked if you didn't get any chances to try a few before making a decision. (In the US), you can try something and if you don't like it you can just quit and try something else. In Poland you had to stick to whatever was offered in your area. You didn't have that many choices.

4.3.5. CLUSTER FIVE: TOLERANCE

Tolerance was discussed by 20% of immigrants. Issues mentioned in this cluster include respect for an individual, tolerance for immigrants and diversity. A number of subjects appreciate the respect they were shown since their arrival in the US. One subject stated, "Over my lifetime here, I have had many, many American friends, and from the beginning, I have been treated exceptionally and sometimes unexpectedly well by them, even though I still have an accent." Others are grateful for tolerance for different religions, ethnic backgrounds, and lifestyles. Explaining their responses, the immigrants

added that Poland compared to America is a very conservative country. It is not exposed to many cultural differences, which results, according to the subjects, in the narrow-mindedness of its inhabitants. In addition to this, two families discussed the Americans' acceptance of late maternity and single parenting.

4.3.6. CLUSTER SIX: FREEDOM

Freedom related issues such as equal rights, freedom of speech, and free elections were mentioned by 19% of the subjects. They would willingly and easily adopt all the freedoms America has to offer them. They all appreciate the fact that they are respected as individuals. They were grateful for being treated equally, being able to express their thoughts, and to vote freely.

4.3.7. CLUSTER SEVEN: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION

Polish immigrants were astonished with the opportunities that America offers to anyone who is willing to start or continue his/her education. 9% of subjects praised the educational system in the United States. They appreciated all the information that is available to anyone. One subject mentioned kindergartens where children learn through art and have an opportunity to develop their creativity while still young. In Poland, teaching-through-art programs have been recently introduced and are still very novel to both teachers and students.

4.3.8. CLUSTER EIGHT: RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Only 4 % of subjects mentioned the US religious beliefs and practices as something they were willing to adopt. They talked about separation of church and state, and admitted that they were willing to adopt the Easter egg hunt that is widely practiced in America. The Polish Constitution states,

All persons of whatever persuasion, are entitled to peace in their faith and to the protection of the government, and therefore we ordain freedom for all rites and religions in the Polish land, in accordance with the laws of the land.

However, according to <http://www.religiousfreedom.com/wrpt/Europe/poland.htm>, “the Polish nation does not have a recent tradition of religious freedom or an established body of civil rights law to protect the rights of small religious minorities. In reality, the Catholic Church exercises considerable power in the nation.” The immigrants admitted that they would like to experience the separation of church and state in Poland. One of them commented, “My hopes for a progressive and unencumbered Poland after the departure of the communist regime were dashed when it became obvious that people were returning to the old churches in droves.” Soon, she added, “I’m amazed to find Scientology, Mormonism, and Jehovah’s Witnesses flourishing in Poland today!”

Another 2% of subjects agreed that they would like to adopt the Easter egg hunt, which they did not have a chance to practice in Poland. They stated that Easter should not be practiced in just a religious way. They added that since this tradition of hiding the

eggs in the backyard and looking for them later is practiced by many American families, they would like to introduce it to their children.

4.3.9 CLUSTER NINE: DRESS CODE

Only 4% of respondents were willing to adopt certain ways of dressing which they perceived as American. One immigrant stated,

American dress code is wonderful. I remember so many times getting dressed for Sunday walks, for simple parties, for my first dates, for a family dinner at my aunt's. In America it is rarely done at all. I like the freedom of going to a supermarket dressed like a slob.

This again brings us to the issue of freedom, which is admired by many Polish immigrants coming to the US. As mentioned earlier by one subject, in Poland, "we always have to think what other people will think about us." This often results in people's decision to dress up when going to the grocery store, or even for a walk, in order to maintain good reputation.

4.3.10. CLUSTER TEN: FOOD HABITS

2% of the subjects would like to adopt the convenience of fast food that is easily available in the US. As one of them mentioned, fast food can be actually helpful and beneficial, and that "eating out more often is fun and a treat and much easier, especially the all-you-can-eat with kid friendly atmosphere." For them, dinnertime at the table, and home-cooked meals with the family are still central, although "it's good to have

alternatives.” In addition, the variety of restaurants and their affordability were mentioned. In Poland, according to one person, not only are there not too many choices in foreign cuisines; almost no one can afford to dine there.

4.4. QUESTION FOUR

The answers to the fourth question, “What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?” were grouped into these clusters:

- 1. Social Customs**
- 2. Nationalism**
- 3. Freedom**
- 4. Days of National Importance**
- 5. Choices/Options**

4.4.1. CLUSTER ONE: SOCIAL CUSTOMS

Twenty-two percent of subjects discussed American social customs that they would like to adapt and slightly change to suit their Polish cultural value system. Issues discussed in this cluster include: students’ attitude toward teachers, referring to people

by their first name, optimism, informing the hosts about the visit, social independence, and customer service.

Most of the 22% of subjects expressed their willingness to adapt, and modify the relationship between students and teachers that exists in America. Said one of the subjects: “(in America) students are encouraged to ask questions, and it does not matter how simple the question might be; the teacher will answer it.” In the Polish educational system, instructors are viewed more as adversaries than as friends or partners; students, on the other hand, are usually treated as subordinates. As a result of that, according to one of the subjects, it lowers the student’s self-esteem, and does not develop his/her creativity. Polish immigrants would like to adapt the fact that students feel comfortable when talking to their teachers, and are treated with some value. However, they would like to keep the respect Polish students have towards their instructors.

A number of subjects appreciated American optimism. As described earlier, in Poland, in order to answer a simple question “How are you?” people talk about their problems, explaining their behavior as being honest. As one of the subjects recalled, “When you asked my grandma how her day was, she always started her answer with ‘Not that good’.” With coming to the US, immigrants realized that there was no need to share the smallest problems with everyone around, and instead, being optimistic helped some of them think positively. Some of these immigrants, however, believe that being always positive may often be seen as artificial and dishonest, and that is what they would like to

modify. They would like to be able to talk to someone at work about their personal problems and to listen to somebody else's troubles.

In addition, Polish immigrants appreciated when the guests give the hosts a notice of visiting them, or simply wait for the invitation. As mentioned earlier, it is accepted in Poland to stop by at the friend's house for a cup of coffee at any time of the day without calling and notifying the friend earlier. The subjects prefer to know about the visit ahead of time in order to make sure they have time to best entertain their friends. As for modification, they said that no arrangements or appointments need to be made; friends are welcome at any time with a simple phone call before coming over.

Social independence, as the researcher decided to name it, is another practice that Polish immigrants are willing to adapt in order to suit their Polish cultural value system. According to the subjects, Americans do not comment on something they are not asked about, whereas in Poland, "you have to constantly think of what others will say." Polish immigrants appreciate the freedom they are given in the US of doing what is suitable to them, not others, and that no one will evaluate their decisions. They will be only too willing to adapt such an American behavior.

Moreover, the respondents liked the idea of customer service. According to the interviews that have been conducted with the Polish families, in Poland, it is the customer who needs to be nice to the clerk at the store, not the other way around. In addition, the

purchased items are not allowed to be returned to the store, even if they are defective. It is usually considered to be the customer's fault to purchase something that was imperfect. In America, as the subjects stated, it is not only allowed to bring the items back if they are broken, but they can be returned usually within three months no matter what the reason for the return is.

4.4.2. CLUSTER TWO: NATIONALISM

The cluster Nationalism was discussed by 20% of the subjects in the context of question four, "What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?". Issues mentioned involve: national unity, and respect for the law, country and constitution. Polish immigrants admire Americans' love for their country. According to the subjects, such an attitude unites the nation. One subject suggested that Poles need to forget about the past and history and try to move on, "It's time to replace: 'God, Honor, Homeland' for 'Freedom, Equality, Independence.'"

In addition, the immigrants have a high regard for the respect Americans have for the law, their country, and constitution. According to one survey respondent, "American citizens value the law, and follow its rules the way they are." The same person continues, "If you make a mistake, pay for it, you're guilty. Why would you try to get away with

it?” suggesting that in Poland, some people prefer to evade punishment rather than to take responsibility for unlawful acts.

Americans’ patriotism and faith in constitution is also valued by Polish immigrants. One subject believes that the American Constitution “gives us many freedoms.” However, the same person continues by suggesting a modification, “the judicial system needs change. It allows for too much liberty in certain areas. There is not enough responsibility taken for violent crimes. People don’t feel safe, because there are too many criminals walking around free.”

4.4.3. CLUSTER THREE: FREEDOM

The matters discussed here by 17% of respondents include: freedom of expression, and belief in the individual’s strength and independence that leads anyone to many opportunities. A number of subjects said that they value the freedom they are given in the United States to express themselves the way they are, not the way anyone else expects them to be. They appreciate the fact that every individual is respected and given a chance regardless of social status to exist and grow, and at the same time maintain his/her own distinctiveness and independence.

4.4.4. CLUSTER FOUR: DAYS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Seventeen percent of subjects expressed their readiness to adapt American holidays to their native cultural value system. The holidays that Polish immigrants found worth celebrating while living in America are: Thanksgiving, Fourth of July, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, and President's Day. A few families agreed that they would like their children not only to celebrate these days, but also understand them. As for modifications, some subjects suggested changes in the holiday of Halloween. Since it is followed by a Catholic All Saints' Day, November the 1st, the subjects prefer skipping the cheerful parties on Halloween, and walk only to visit the houses of people they know. Additionally, according to one of the families, in order to make the day less scary for the children, they dress up only in the costumes of nice characters such as princes, princesses, and fairies.

4.4.5. CLUSTER FIVE: CHOICES/OPTIONS

The Choices/Options cluster was organized based on the answers of 11% of subjects. The issues discussed here are: opportunities for children, teenagers' independence from parents, and tourism.

According to subjects, because of the great diversity in American culture, everyone has an opportunity to try something new. They found this option very easy to adapt. Parents discussed great options for their children, such as after-school activities

like dancing, singing, horse back riding, etc. Young immigrants appreciated the option of young families living without their parents. The ease of traveling and purchasing a car was also applauded. In Poland, there are still many families who do not own a vehicle.

4.5. QUESTION FIVE

The answers to the fifth question, “What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?” were analyzed and ranked as follows:

- 1. Social Customs**
- 2. Family Values**
- 3. Work Ethics**
- 4. Food Habits**
- 5. Choices/Options**
- 6. The Significance of Education**
- 7. Language Attitude**
- 8. Days of National Importance**
- 9. Entertainment**
- 10. Freedom**
- 11. Tolerance**
- 12. Dress Code**

4.5.1. CLUSTER ONE: SOCIAL CUSTOMS

Thirty-nine percent of the subjects found certain US social customs difficult to adjust to. The American cultural beliefs and practices that Polish immigrants living in the Bay Area find problematic are: “artificial kindness”, reference to strangers by their first names, lack of hospitality, persistence in asking taboo questions, and competitiveness and overconfidence.

Not all of the Polish subjects approve of the American optimism reflected in small talk described earlier. Some of them consider the American practice of “How are you?” or saying “See you later” as “nice words, nice smile, but different actions.” “How are you?” could be translated as a simple greeting, but for some subjects, it is an “empty phrase” that does not convey any meaning. Quoting one of the subjects, “They ask you ‘How are you,’ but they don’t really want to know how you are.”

Another issue mentioned before is referring to others by using their first names. Even though some immigrants believe it is one of the customs they would be willing to adopt, some do not agree, saying it is disrespectful. Similarly, some subjects have a hard time with what they perceive as a lack of hospitality among Americans. As discussed earlier, Polish people are known for being exaggeratedly hospitable. In America, Poles miss being offered a drink when visiting a friend, or being treated with a meal when coming to a party. And finally, some immigrants miss “having real fun at weddings.”

According to one subject, the weddings in the US are too short (a wedding in Poland usually lasts for two days, and is considered to be the biggest family celebration).

Several subjects accuse Americans of being too straightforward. They stated that Americans have a tendency to ask questions even though they should not, or they ask simple questions where the answers are obvious. In the interview with one family where the husband is American, when asked by his wife why he sometimes asks personal questions he explained, "If I don't ask I'll never know. And, if I ask and you don't want to answer, you say, 'I don't want to talk about it.'" In addition, Martin and Nakayama (2000), quote Gudykunst (1983) who distinguishes between individualist and collectivist cultures; "many people in the United States, which has an individualist orientation, ask direct questions when interacting with acquaintances. In cultures that have a more collectivist orientation, people are more likely to use an indirect approach" (Martin and Nakayama, 2000). Moreover, Hall (1976) makes a distinction between low- and high-context cultures. In low-context cultures, the majority of the information is explicitly communicated in the verbal message, whereas in the high-context cultures, the information is embedded in the context of the message. Poland could be considered to have the collectivist and high context culture where some issues do not need to be discussed during the conversation; however their meaning will be conveyed. In the American culture, on the other hand, the speaker is expected to be very explicit, or else his intentions may be misunderstood.

Americans are also considered by some subjects to be too competitive and too confident. According to Polish immigrants, Americans believe in themselves too much and become very disappointed when they get defeated. Moreover, believing only in themselves makes Americans narrow-minded, as one of the subjects stated, and limits their awareness.

4.5.2. CLUSTER TWO: FAMILY VALUES

Thirty-one percent of the subjects found some of the American family values difficult to adjust to when settling in the US. They include: family ethics, and the manner of bringing up children.

According to the survey, it is difficult for Poles to get used to the fact that family connections in the United States are not as strong as they are in Poland. In the US, teenage children move out of the house, and older parents are sent to the retirement houses. In Poland, as mentioned earlier, children usually live with their parents until they start their own families, and when their parents get older and need help, they take care of them and host them in their houses.

Furthermore, the way of raising children in America seems to be a significant issue for many Polish immigrants. The main charge is the children's misbehavior. According to the subjects, American children are "spoiled" and do not have respect for

their parents and older people, and “always question if they are asked to do something.”

As one subject stated, such a behavior might be caused by giving children too much freedom and expecting them to be independent by sending them to colleges at a very young age. Others said that sometimes pointless, lengthy and repetitive explanations to children could be exchanged with mild spanking, which, according to one subject, “has immediate results.”

Another issue discussed here is the role of a woman in the family. In Poland, it is most often the woman’s job to take care of the children, and the house. Polish women find it difficult to get used to the fact that some American women have housekeepers or nannies to help them with their responsibilities. They claim that the mother is a perfect parent and she should never be replaced by anyone, unless it is the child’s grandmother; otherwise the family relationships get weakened.

4.5.3. CLUSTER THREE: WORK ETHICS

Some of the Polish immigrants (19%) have had a hard time getting used to the work schedule that exists in the US. In Poland, work would begin at 6.00 o’clock in the morning and end at 2.00 in the afternoon. Dinner would be usually between 3.00 and 4.00pm. The rest of the day was spent either with friends or family. However, in the US, one of the subjects observed, “people’s life depends on work, not the other way around, as it should be.” Another subject stated, “Eight-hour work day, in reality, is 12-13-hour

work day, including lunch.” One immigrant added, “American work habits... work, work, no play, two weeks vacation and five days for sick time. It appears to me we substituted slavery with mid-class educated young people.”

4.5.4. CLUSTER FOUR: FOOD HABITS

Fifteen percent of Polish immigrants seemed to have difficulties with adjusting to American food, fast food cuisine, American eating manners, and the age limit for alcohol consumption.

For those immigrants who came to the US, and had to substitute Polish cuisine with either American or fast food, it was a difficult adjustment. One immigrant admitted that he could not get used to eating cereal with cold milk. In Poland, not too many years ago, the only milk soups eaten for breakfast were the ones with hot milk. Another family revealed during the interview that they had difficulties in accepting American table manners, such as for instance using the knife during dinner only occasionally. As explained earlier, Poles hold both fork and knife during dinner at all times. Furthermore, some subjects do not agree with the law of not drinking alcohol until the age of 21. One of them stated,

As much as I do not like the Polish overdrinking, I also resent the American myth of alcohol being a forbidden substance. The drinking age, drinking laws, and just about everything associated with alcohol has somehow a negative overtone. Only under American cultural believes system could the prohibition era take place. In my Polish system of cultural values it is not a sin, it is not wrong, it is just booze.

4.5.5. CLUSTER FIVE: CHOICES/OPTIONS

Some transportation options available in America were difficult to adjust to for 15% of subjects. Compared to the Polish roads, the American ones are much wider and larger. In addition, the speed limit here is much higher than it is allowed in Poland. For many immigrants who moved to the US, driving on highways turned out to be a challenge. They also discussed the dismal condition of public transportation. Those immigrants who use the public transportation claim that “it is a mess and needs to be rejuvenated.” Another subject stated, “Not enough public transportation encourages excessive use of personal vehicles and makes it difficult to move for people who can’t drive.” Others also criticized commuting, saying it is time-consuming. In Poland, there are still a number of families who do not possess a car. Traffic, thus, is not as much of a problem as in some places in the US during rush hour.

4.5.6. CLUSTER SIX: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION

Many Polish parents find the quality of education much lower in American schools than in Polish schools. According to the answers given by 11% of the subjects, students are given too much choice at schools here. In Poland, even in colleges or universities, students are given a schedule that they need to follow in order to graduate. In the US, on the other hand, students can choose from various classes, and according to one of the subjects, “At the age of 12-16 students are too young to make serious decisions

about what they will do in future. If they are given a choice between cooking class and geography, of course, they'll choose cooking." According to another, Americans focus too much on the applied/practical value of education and knowledge rather than the intellectual aspect of it.

4.5.7. CLUSTER SEVEN: LANGUAGE ATTITUDE

Eleven percent of subjects admitted that they have had problems with acquiring the English language after coming to the US. Those who came earlier and started their families here stated that they did whatever was needed to enable their children to have the best education so that they would never face similar difficulties. Those who were still struggling with learning the language confessed that not knowing the language makes them feel worthless, and limits their potential; some cannot work in their professions, while others have no social life.

4.5.8. CLUSTER EIGHT: DAYS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

The national holidays cluster was commented on by 9% of Polish immigrants who claim that they find it difficult to adjust to Halloween since it is observed the day before a very religious day in Poland, 1st of November, All Saints' Day, when Poles gather at the cemeteries and pray for departed souls. Similarly, Valentine's Day has been faced with some difficulties when being adjusted to by a few subjects. Some subjects believe that

there should not be only one day to celebrate the feeling of love but it should be done all year through. According to one person, Valentine's Day is "an artificial holiday, and it's only about buying tons of cards."

4.5.9. CLUSTER NINE: ENTERTAINMENT

Some of the subjects (9%) said that they found it difficult to get used to "the unhealthy influence of American pop culture especially on young people." The same person continues: "Media are heavily promoting pop singers and movie stars as role models; there is a strong focus on look and popularity." Another participant mentioned jazz and rock music, naming it "jungle music". He added that this kind of music is not of European character; therefore, "it's too foreign" to him. Another subject assessed listening to music in the parks by young people. In his survey he noted, "I usually go to the park to listen to the birds sing, not to loud boom boxes." Additionally, he admitted that he missed the silence that he used to experience in Polish parks, "where the only noise you heard was the birds sing."

4.5.10. CLUSTER TEN: FREEDOM

Matters related to freedom in the context of question five, "What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?", were discussed by 8% of the subjects. Although there were a number of Polish

immigrants who praised the freedom they experienced in America, there are some who claim that too much freedom may be difficult to accept or may even be harmful. One subject has trouble with having many various customs around,

There are so many cultures in America and maybe because in Poland 99% of the people look alike and come from the same cultural and religious background, sometimes it is hard for me to get used to the fact that people celebrate Christmas on a different day, eat different food, believe in different things. Sometimes the differences are extremely difficult to accept.

Another subject criticized the lack of restrictions on gun ownership. Too much freedom in this case, according to him, is dangerous.

4.5.11. CLUSTER ELEVEN: TOLERANCE

Interestingly, 4% of the subjects found American religious tolerance too difficult to adjust to. According to one person, "It's difficult for Europeans to comprehend that within one country there can be so many kinds – the broadness of them (religions) – and yet, there appears to be no particular problem in daily life associated with the differences." One subject admitted that one custom she will never get used to is passing Holy Bread by a woman in the Catholic Church. In Poland, it is usually the priest doing so.

4.5.12. CLUSTER TWELVE: DRESS CODE

Only 3% of the subjects decided to discuss the American dress code as a problematic area in their adjustment to American life. As mentioned earlier, some subjects appreciated the freedom of wearing what is comfortable for a person, instead of what is expected. However, according to one subject, there should be a limit to that. After living in the US for 18 years, she still finds it difficult to adjust to the dress code some American citizens establish at church. Quoting her, "They wear sweats to church, torn shorts, stained T-shirts". And," she adds, "they clap their hands at the end of the mass, as if to say 'the performance is over.'"

4.6 QUESTION SIX

The answers to the sixth question, "What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?" were grouped into nine clusters:

1. Social Customs
2. Choices/Options
3. Tolerance
4. Freedom
5. Work Ethics
6. Days of National Importance

7. Food Habits
8. The Significance of Education
9. Dress Code

4.6.1. CLUSTER ONE: SOCIAL CUSTOMS

Some of the social custom issues were found to be easy to adjust to by 31% of the subjects. Listed by most of the subjects was Americans' optimism. Polish immigrants admitted that they appreciate American citizens being easy-going, polite, honest and friendly. According to one subject, "Life is so much happier and fuller with these qualities." Furthermore, dropping Mrs. and Mr. in front of others' names when conversing with them, was another custom valued by some Polish immigrants. Saying 'Hi', or sending a smile to strangers was also mentioned as a practice easy for subjects to adjust to. Some subjects also discussed "socializing outside of the house". They listed coffee shops, and restaurants as perfect places to meet with friends. In Poland, such a place was usually one's home or apartment.

4.6.2. CLUSTER TWO: CHOICES/OPTIONS

Nearly one quarter (24%) of the Polish respondents found the set of choices and options offered by America easy to adjust to. One of the opportunities that America allows access to many immigrants, and the one subjects had no trouble with getting used

to, was owning a car. According to the subjects, in the US, almost every adult possesses a car. In Poland, there are a number of families that still do not own a car. Another item that was easy to get used to was the fact that some stores are open all day, seven days a week. As subjects recalled, most stores in Poland are open from 10.00am to 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday, and from 10.00am to 2.00pm on Saturday, and they are closed on Sundays. Large malls, politeness and help in the stores, were all characteristics praised by the Polish immigrants.

4.6.3. CLUSTER THREE: TOLERANCE

The tolerance cluster was discussed by 19% of subjects. The main topics mentioned were respect for an individual, and tolerance for diversity. One of the American cultural beliefs and practices that some subjects found easy to adjust to was respect for an individual's opinion. Said one of the subjects,

When people are free to express their feelings, opinions on certain issues, it helps to improve the standard of living of citizens. When people can be heard by others, the probability that there will be something done in this matter is much higher than in the case when one cannot speak up.

Tolerance for differences is another American belief treasured by Polish immigrants. One family during the interview discussed the tolerance for handicapped people that they have observed in the United States. According to them, in Poland, "in socialism, a handicapped person was seen as an unproductive citizen. That's why all

handicapped people stayed at their homes, they didn't go anywhere, nobody thought about them." She continues explaining her experience in California,

I'm really amazed that wherever I am, there is a place in a parking lot for disabled, there is a special lift for them so that they could get down from high places, the curbs are flattened for them. And, in addition to that, there is so many jobs offered to them.

4.6.4. CLUSTER FOUR: FREEDOM

Nineteen percent of subjects found some issues of freedom easy to adjust to while settling in America. They appreciated the freedom of speech and expression that is given to them in their adopted land. Quoting one of the subjects: "The belief in freedom as the greatest good and the indisputable value of each individual are the elements I find most valuable in America. No other culture/country has these so firmly rooted in their psyche." These issues were merely mentioned by the respondents without any detailed treatment. However, the very fact that these were mentioned suggests that they highly cherish an environment that has no class system, and privacy.

4.6.5. CLUSTER FIVE: WORK ETHICS

Nineteen percent of subjects praised work ethics that they have observed while living and working in the US. They appreciate the opportunities of work and the fact that everyone who is willing to work is able to do so. One subject stated, "A man who is honest, educated, hard-working, and fair will always find a way to make a good life for

himself and his family here.” The same person shares her experience, “Hard work has paid off in our lives, and now we are comfortable and secure. We aren’t rich, but we are happy because we earned it.” Another person declared, “America rewards achievement better than anyone”.

4.6.6. CLUSTER SIX: DAYS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Nine percent commented on easy adjusting to American holidays such as: Thanksgiving, Fourth of July, Halloween, and Valentine’s Day. Most of these holidays, according to the subjects are family oriented, and “add a bit of fun to the year.” Another person reasoned that these days are “unique to America and make me feel like a true American.”

4.6.7. CLUSTER SEVEN: FOOD HABITS

Diversity of ethnic restaurants was discussed by 7% of immigrants taking part in the study. In Poland, even though different restaurants exist in big cities, it is not common to dine there. The prices of meals are often too high; that is why going there is a special treat. In the United States, as some of the subjects stated, “going to the restaurant a few times a week is affordable, fun, and sometimes very convenient.”

4.6.8. CLUSTER EIGHT: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION

Education in America was one of the practices that 6% of subjects found easy to adjust to. The mother in one of the interviewed families admitted that the material at American schools is presented in a more interesting, useful and practical way. School for her kids is seen not as a place of stress, as she recalls from her own experience from Poland, but a place of fun, where children learn through art projects in a relaxed atmosphere. Another immigrant added that it is worth obtaining education in America; “The more schools you do, the better job you will get, whereas in Poland,” as she continues, “you can finish three majors, and may still end up spending your life being unemployed.

4.6.9. CLUSTER NINE: DRESS CODE

The American dress code was easy to adjust to for 4% of survey subjects. These subjects admire the freedom of wearing what they wish, and not what others expect them to. They appreciate the importance of feeling comfortable rather than being judged by others.

This chapter on analysis and discussion presented the responses given by a section of the Polish Americans living in the Bay Area to a cluster of six questions addressed to them. In the next chapter, the researcher discusses what these responses might mean in

the specific context of cultural adjustments that immigrants make to succeed in their newly adopted land.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to find out what sort of cultural adjustments Polish immigrants living in the Bay Area make. By asking them to discuss six research questions, the researcher attempted to examine what native cultural beliefs and practices they still value or are ready to give up, what foreign values they found easy or difficult to get used to, and what kind of adjustments they had to go through in order to accommodate themselves in a new cultural system.

5.1. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The first survey question, “What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?” asked the respondents to list Polish cultural values that they hold dearly while living in their new land. Their answers were grouped into nine different clusters, and then rank ordered according to the number of responses. The most treasured Polish customs, based on the subjects’ answers, were religious beliefs and practices.

The second question of the survey, “What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?” encouraged the subjects to again focus on their cultural values and list those that are not or will not be practiced by

them. The responses were grouped by the researcher into nine clusters. The cluster of social customs had the highest frequency of mention.

“What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?” was the third survey question that the subjects were asked to reply to. The purpose was to find out whether there were any American values that Polish immigrants found useful and adoptable. All responses were arranged into ten clusters; American social customs had the highest frequency of mention.

By answering the fourth question, “What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?”, the survey respondents were given an opportunity to recall all the American customs that they find adaptable and, after slight changes, suitable to their Polish cultural values. Five different clusters were created in order to present the subjects’ answers. The highest importance was again given to American social custom issues.

In addition, the respondents were asked to reflect on the American cultural values that they had a hard time adjusting to after moving to the United States. They did so by answering the fifth survey question, “What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?” Twelve clusters were

established based on the depth of responses. Similar to previous questions, social custom matters received the largest number of responses.

“What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?” was the last question of the survey. Here, the subjects revealed the American cultural values that they found easy to get used to after coming to the United States. Out of nine different clusters the issues that received most responses were the social customs that exist in America.

The following table gives a summary of salient findings. As the table indicates, the Polish immigrants who participated in the study perceive their cultural adjustments as a mixture of (1) adherence to certain aspects of their native culture, (2) adoption of certain aspects of the culture of their new home, and (3) adaptation of certain other cultural features. There are perhaps several ways of interpreting the results. The next section presents some possibilities.

Table 2. A summary of salient findings

Cluster of cultural value	Polish elements they keep	Polish elements they give up	American elements they adopt	American elements they adapt
1. Religious Beliefs and Practices	a) Catholicism as a religion b) Sunday mass c) Christmas Eve dinner "Wigilia" d) Polish version of Easter festivities e) the unique atmosphere of All Saints' Day	a) power of the Catholic church b) First Communion celebration c) wedding parties	a) separation of church and state b) Easter egg hunting	
2. Family Values	a) unconditional help and support family b) raising children by grand/parents not nannies; spanking permitted c) respect towards relatives and elders d) strong marriage, less divorce	a) kids living with parents after finishing their education		
3. Social Customs	a) real friendship b) hospitality c) addressing others by titles d) taking shoes off when visiting others' homes	a) lack of tolerance b) negative attitude about self c) low self-esteem d) habitual behaviors: dropping by w/out invitation, kissing women's hands while greeting, receiving and giving flowers on every occasion.	a) optimism b) politeness c) self-confidence d) adaptability to changing circumstances	a) friendly relationship between students and teachers b) referring to people by their first name c) informing hosts about the visits d) social independence; e) great customer service
4. Food Habits	a) cooking from scratch b) table manners: using forks and knives c) respect for food	a) drinking vodka b) unhealthy food, coffee, hot milk	a) fast food	

5. Language Attitude	a) learn and use Polish		a) acquiring English	
6. Entertainment	a) listening to Polish music, reading Polish literature, attending Polish festivals, watching Polish TV b) playing soccer			
7. Days of National Importance	a) Women's Day b) Name Day c) Mother's Day (On a day different from the US)	a) Name Day b) Women's Day c) Labor Day (May 1 st) d) Mother's Day (May 26 th)	a) Thanksgiving b) Halloween c) Fourth of July d) Kentucky Derby	a) Thanksgiving b) Fourth of July c) Halloween d) St. Patrick's Day e) Memorial Day f) Labor Day g) President's Day
8. The Significance of Education	a) high quality education b) higher volume of knowledge		a) educational system: information available to anyone, learning through art	
9. Dress Code	a) dressing up for certain occasions; having wardrobes divided into casual and formal clothes	a) dressing for others	a) freedom in dressing for certain occasions	
10. Nationalism/ Patriotism		a) lack of patriotism b) "blind nationalism" c) lack of unity		a) national unity b) respect for the law, country, and constitution
11. Work Ethics		a) negative attitude towards work	a) strong work ethics: professionalism, responsibility, punctuality, etc. b) respect for work and money	
12. Choices/ Options		a) lack of opportunities	a) employment and housing opportunities b) ability to change one's career c) travel options d) eating out e) stock market	a) opportunities for kids; variety of after-school activities b) teenagers' independence from parents c) easiness of travel

13. Tolerance			a) respect for an individual b) tolerance for immigrants c) tolerance for diversity	
14. Freedom			a) equal rights b) freedom of speech c) free elections d) respect for an individual	a) freedom of expression b) belief in individual's strength and independence

5.2 INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher has received 54 responses to the research survey. All the answers were collected, then clustered and analyzed. Subjects provided a variety of answers to the questions, clearly presenting their awareness of what native cultural beliefs and practices they were willing to either keep or give up, and what foreign cultural values they did or did not like to adjust to. It would be productive to interpret their responses using the framework of the three major approaches – assimilation, pluralism, hybridity – to cultural adjustments. It appears that none of the three approaches fully and satisfactorily explains the cultural adjustments reported by the subjects.

The survey outcome indicates that Polish immigrants living in the Bay Area, at least those who participated in the study - have not undergone the process of assimilation, where they were expected to give up their Polish cultural values. None of them seem to have given up their own life-style in order to adopt the new culture.

Cultural pluralism, a model that describes the immigrants practicing their native and target cultures separately without allowing any dominant role for any of them, did not take place either. Subjects seem to be able to practice both cultures while adjusting to the new environment, and in addition, they still go through a process of cultural growth. One subject articulated the sentiment this way:

We, immigrants, evolve. Upon initial contact with America we love certain things about it and dislike others. Few years later these feelings are mitigated at

both ends of the spectrum. As we learn the American way more and more, we evolve further. In some cases we may ultimately fall in love what we disliked before about the American culture and also the other way around.

The survey results did not show any convincing signs of cultural hybridity either. The subjects do not seem to have created a “third space” (Bhabha, 1990), or a “third culture” (Kramsch, 1993) distancing themselves both from their native culture and from the adopted culture. Instead, it appears that they are able to operate in their new cultural setting, without being forced to give up any of their native values, or to create a third space or culture.

While it is difficult to come to any concrete conclusions, one way of explaining what was reported by the subjects is to look at their cultural adjustments from the point of view of the concepts of cultural multicompetence introduced by Kumaravadivelu (2000), and post-culturalism proposed by Clausen (2000).

Critiquing the limited and limiting nature of cultural assimilation, cultural pluralism, and cultural hybridity, Kumaravadivelu (2000) argues that they offer only a narrow understanding of cultural adjustments. As an alternative, he presents the concept of what he calls “cultural multicompetence.” He defines it as a “compound state of mind that results from meaningful encounters with more than one culture in more than one cultural context” (p. 10). He believes that an immigrant is able to function in several cultural contexts at the same time without fully losing native traditions or fully assimilating foreign ones. According to him, cultural multicompetence can be created by

“constant and continual self-reflection” on one’s own native cultural experience. By doing so, as the author promises, one will not only broaden his knowledge about his own culture but also about other cultures. “... in understanding other cultures, we understand ours better; in understanding ours, we understand others better. This does not mean one is culturally assimilating. This does not mean one is culturally hybridizing. To me this means, one is culturally growing.” He thus emphasizes multiple cultural identities.

Clausen (2000), in his book, *Faded Mosaic*, introduces a new concept called post-culturalism which helps to explain the Kumaravadivelu concept of cultural multicompetence. Clausen states that,

At its deepest level, post-culturalism is the outgrowth of liberties that people in many countries would, and frequently do, die for. On the less apocalyptic level of day-to-day living in America, why should anyone be forced to choose once and for all between knishes and curry? Or, to put the advantages positively, why shouldn’t we all be free to choose among as many of the earth’s possibilities as exist, not only in food but in the more important realms of art, attitudes, heroes, philosophical insights, and marriage? ‘Assimilation’ today need not mean giving us everything that came from somewhere else. In its post-cultural form it means having access to all the world’s inherited intangibles (Clausen, 2000, p. 15-16).

Whether the cultural adjustment behaviors reported by the Polish American subjects studied by the researcher can be fully and profitably explained by the new emerging concepts of cultural multicompetence or postculturalism remains to be seen. Certainly, a more systematic study with a larger and more varied sample of subjects is needed before any conclusion can be drawn. What is clear from this study is that there is at least a tendency towards multicompetence and postculturalism.

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APPENDIX A: COVER LETTER FOR SURVEY QUESTIONS

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Katarzyna Rudnicka and I am a graduate student at San Jose State University. Currently, I am working on my Master's thesis entitled: "Continuity and change in the cultural values of Bay Area Polish Americans." As part of my research, I need to conduct a survey among Polish immigrants living in the Bay Area. Could you please spare some time answering the questions given below? I will not use your name or e-mail addresses in any writing my thesis. All the information you supply will be kept confidential. If you choose to respond (either in Polish or English), please answer in detail and with specific examples. Should you have any comments or questions, please contact me at katerudnicka@hotmail.com or (408) 867 6847.

Thank you very much for your interest and cooperation. I very much appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Katarzyna Rudnicka

APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS**PART I**

1. How long have you been in the US?
2. What is your highest educational qualification?
3. What is the reason for your coming to the US?
4. Are you planning on staying in the USA permanently?
5. What primary language do you speak at work in the US?
6. What primary language do you speak at home in the US?
7. How often do you read in Polish?
8. How often do you watch Polish TV, videos? (indicate hours per week)
9. What do you do in order to keep in touch with Polish culture?
10. When you are in the US, how do you like people to refer to your ethnic/cultural background? (Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other, please, specify)
11. When you are in the US, do you dislike it when people refer to you as Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other (specify)?
12. How often do you go to Poland?
13. How long do you usually stay when you visit Poland?

PART II

1. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?

2. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?
3. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?
4. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?
5. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?
6. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE SURVEY RESPONSES

There were 49 respondents to the survey questions. This part of the appendix contains sample responses from 10 respondents (respondents no. 1, 2, 5, 8, 18, 20, 21, 25, 33, 48).

RESPONDENT # 1

PART I

1. How long have you been in the US?

It will be 50 years on May 7, 2002.

2. What is your highest educational qualification?

I completed the Electronic Technician Certificate Program at Newark College of Engineering in New Jersey approximately in 1963.

3. What is the reason for your coming to the US?

Real freedom.

4. Are you planning on staying in the USA permanently?

Forever.

5. What primary language do you speak at work in the US?

I'm retired, but during my working career it was only English.

6. What primary language do you speak at home in the US?

Polish.

7. How often do you read in Polish?

About 3 hours... newspaper, magazines, organizations' newsletters, etc.

8. How often do you watch Polish TV, videos? (indicate hours per week)

Also about 3 hours: I watch the 6.30 a.m. International channel (65).

9. What do you do in order to keep in touch with Polish culture?

When I was still working and living in New Jersey, it was many, many things: Sending my children to Polish school on Saturdays, supporting several Polish-American organizations, actively participating in SPK (Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantow),

attending all the Polish films, shows – both generated in New York/New Jersey and those from London and from Poland, listening to the Polish radio programs, frequenting the Polish Home in neighboring towns. I also had my own dance band – for almost 30 years! We played primarily Polish music for dances, weddings, and played my primary instrument, the trumpet, and over the years I introduced a lot of Polish music to the repertoire. I insisted that my children speak Polish at home, and for their primary school, they attend Polish Catholic schools. We went to a Polish church, where the 10.00a.m. high mass was always in Polish. Since I retired in California, my wife and I go to San Francisco to the Polish church, I'm still active in my veterans' organization (through which I recently received a long-overdue military promotion to officer from the Polish delegate to Washington D.C.), and I watch Polish TV, listen to Polish music on the radio and on tapes given to me by my children and friends, and frequently read in Polish.

10. When you are in the US, how do you like people to refer to your ethnic/cultural background? (Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other, please, specify)

Just plain American works best for me, but any of the others is fine as long as it is said with respect.

11. When you are in the US, do you dislike it when people refer to you as Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other (specify)?

No, same reason as above.

12. How often do you go to Poland?

I have been back there only once since 1939, but my daughter has been.

13. How long do you usually stay when you visit Poland?

I stayed for 3 weeks with my older sister.

PART II

1. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?

Religion, Polish language spoken at home, and Polish traditions maintained, because these are the things that have made me who I am, and I wish for them to be passed along to my children and grandchildren. I was a good Polish citizen, fought for my country, was a prisoner-of-war in Germany for almost 4 years, was with the Occupation Forces in Germany under British command after the war, then emigrated to England (for 5 years) and finally America, where I became a citizen as soon as it was possible and I have remained a good citizen for 50 years. That is a legacy my children and grandchildren can be proud of, and I wish at least as good for them.

2. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?

None. I don't have any particular "Old World" beliefs or superstitions that prevent me from being a rational man or a successful husband, father, and American citizen. Since America is a melting pot of nationalities and cultures, there is room enough for the good Pole to also be a good American.

3. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?

Oh, I like Thanksgiving... and the Kentucky Derby! The Thanksgiving holiday is a good one because it comes from early American history but it is also good for this year and all future years; it's a good idea to take time to be thankful for our freedoms. On my second answer, I worked with horses when I was in the military, and all through my working life I went to horse races in New York, to see the thoroughbred horses, not only to bet on them. Polish Arabians are acknowledged the best thoroughbred horses in the world, and I just like them.

4. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?

The Constitution gives us many freedoms, but I have objections. The judicial system needs change. It allows for too much liberty in certain areas, because criminals are getting away with crimes. I believe that the death penalty should be given to murderers. There is not enough responsibility taken for violent crimes. People don't feel safe because there are too many criminals walking around free.

5. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?

Great religious tolerance. It's difficult for Europeans to comprehend that within one country there can be so many kinds – the broadness of them – and yet there appears to be no particular problem in daily life associated with the differences. It's great.

6. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?

No class system, freedom almost to excess, and the many choices and opportunities. Of course, after so many years in this country, I am more American in my outlook than Polish; I was in Poland for just less than 30 years and in America for 50! You often can't tell whether a person is a millionaire or on welfare by his clothes or his car. That's something! Sometimes it makes me sad and angry that the freedom that I risked my life for and came to America for is taken for granted by some people here. Maybe democracy is valued only when it doesn't come easily. I also don't have any respect for those who don't make something of themselves in the US because everything

is possible with hard work and determination. In spite of temporary difficulties and occasional prejudices, a man who is honest, educated, hard-working, and fair will always find a way to make a good life for himself and his family here.

7. Is there any other information you would like to share with me regarding your cross-cultural experience in America?

It seems to me that even today, Europeans still lead the world in education, intelligence, discoveries, etc. The other races are still behind, but they are catching up, especially Asia. Since America is still mostly populated by European descendents, I think it ought to lead the way by being a good example around the world. Over my lifetime here, I have had many American friends, and from the beginning, I have been treated exceptionally and sometimes unexpectedly well by them, even though I still have an accent. Everywhere I have lived, I have treated my neighbors and friends with respect, and my family and I have been treated that way, too. I have always tried to treat every person as an individual. If I had no respect for someone, I just stayed away from him. This country has real equality – that is, the opportunity for anyone to be successful in life, but he has to work for it. I have no respect for those who don't because there is always more than one way to make it. My life has not been easy, but it has been very good, very rewarding and fulfilling. I'm an old man now, and I am content to die in my adopted country. American is not perfect, but is close enough to heaven for this man!

RESPONDENT # 2

PART I

1. How long have you been in the US?

Since 1952. It will be 50 years on May 7 this year.

2. What is your highest educational qualification?

I finished only 7th grade before I left school to go to work for my large family.

3. What is the reason for your coming to the US?

I relocated with my husband and children from England, where the climate didn't agree with us. Unfortunately, we went from 5 very cold years in England to the hottest summer on record up to that time, May 1952.

4. Are you planning on staying in the USA permanently?

Yes, of course. "Till death do us apart."

5. What primary language do you speak at work in the US?

I'm retired, but I worked for many years doing hand sewing in the Ladies Garment Workers industry in New Jersey. Most of the workers there were immigrants

from various countries, and the bosses were either Jewish- or Italian-American, so we spoke mostly English, but a few of us were Polish and Russian, so I spoke both those languages occasionally at work.

6. What primary language do you speak at home in the US?

Polish. English only when we have company who are not Polish.

7. How often do you read in Polish?

About 1 hour; not much any more, because newsprint bothers me.

8. How often do you watch Polish TV, videos? (indicate hours per week)

Not at all, but my husband does.

9. What do you do in order to keep in touch with Polish culture?

Mostly activities with friends and family, and then mostly on the holidays.

Otherwise, we are very Americanized.

10. When you are in the US, how do you like people to refer to your ethnic/cultural background? (Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other, please, specify)

Polish, plain and simple. My accent is noticeable, so there's no mistaking me for a native-born American, and most people will ask me where I'm from, so I tell them. It's not a secret. Most people are polite.

11. When you are in the US, do you dislike it when people refer to you as Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other (specify)?

No. Nobody has ever insulted me to my face. I have always been in the Polish community primarily, so I haven't had any problems.

12. How often do you go to Poland?

Only once. I went to see my sister and her family for a month, but that was a long time ago, and she has passed away since. I do write to my family in Europe, though; I have a lot of nieces and nephews. I have been sending packages there for over 30 years.

13. How long do you usually stay when you visit Poland?

There is no "usually"- only that one time, when I spent one month.

PART II

1. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?

Mainly religious beliefs and rituals around Christmas and Easter. Going to church. Cooking. I still cook mainly the Polish way. Music. I hate American rock and roll.

2. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?

Nothing. There is no harm in any of them. It is good to have traditions to pass down to your children.

3. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?

Freedom, wonderful music from the Broadway shows and television, lots of medical information available to all people, education possibilities for anyone willing to go to school – even if it is very expensive, voting regularly, helping neighbors, poor people, and anyone else in need. Philanthropy is wonderful in this country. Nobody else can equal the generosity of Americans.

4. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?

I have had bad experiences (a long time ago) with crazy PTA ladies and terrible teachers. This country has a lot of smart people; more of them should be teachers, and the bad ones should be thrown out. There is also too much shouting about discrimination. American discrimination exists, I am sure, but it's nowhere near as bad as in Europe and Asia and the Middle East; I lived through the war time and I know how the societies with class structures discriminate against people, particularly the poor, but many Americans have a victimization problem. They need to stand on their own two feet more and complain less.

5. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?

Dirty politicians, corruption in government, and the ability of people to buy their positions – bribery. There is also so much materialism. Everywhere you turn, you are encouraged to buy something, as if it would make you happy. Learning the English language has been the hardest thing for me and my husband, but we did and we got along okay. We made sure our children wouldn't have a problem, so we educated them well.

6. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?

To be able to work when you are willing to work. Hard work has paid off in our lives, and now we are comfortable and secure. We aren't rich, but we are happy because we earned it.

7. Is there any other information you would like to share with me regarding your cross-cultural experience in America?

The thing I treasure most is my freedom. I love this country because ours was gone for so many years under communism. We had to go around the world to find a good place to raise our family, and then we were lucky to come to America and be able to help those we left behind. We could never betray this country. The Social Security system works well; we worked hard and paid into it, now it takes care of our retirement and medical, at least some of it. Medicines are very expensive, and when you're old like us and on a pension, sometimes it gets very expensive. We are okay because we saved our money, but not everybody is so lucky. There should be better care of the old people. We are grateful for our success and that our children and grandchildren are here, and no amount of money or talk could ever persuade us to think that there is any place better than America for us. Thank you for asking me about these things.

RESPONDENT # 5

PART I

1. How long have you been in the US?

41 years

2. What is your highest educational qualification?

B.Sc. (Eng.), London University/M.Sc., Boston University (part), San Jose State University (part).

3. What is the reason for your coming to the US?

Opportunity for professional growth; I received an invitation to come over and work for the US Department of Defense. US Government issued me a "First Priority Visa."

4. Are you planning on staying in the USA permanently?

Yes

5. What primary language do you speak at work in the US?

English

6. What primary language do you speak at home in the US?

English

7. How often do you read in Polish?

About 14 hours

8. How often do you watch Polish TV, videos? (indicate hours per week)

1-2 hours/ week

9. What do you do in order to keep in touch with Polish culture?

Belong to some Polish Cultural and professional organizations. Keep contact with many Polish friends.

10. When you are in the US, how do you like people to refer to your ethnic/cultural background? (Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other, please, specify)

All of the above. I think I like best "Polish American."

11. When you are in the US, do you dislike it when people refer to you as Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other (specify)?

Not at all, I like it.

12. How often do you go to Poland?

About once in 3-4 years.

13. How long do you usually stay when you visit Poland?

2-3 weeks

PART II

1. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?

Belief in ethics and morality. I also cling to Polish prose, poetry, music, songs and dances.

2. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?

- a) Belief that individuality counts above group interests.
- b) Belief that vodka is good for you ("Wodka krzepi")
- c) The practice of bowing while greeting; kissing of ladies hands; clicking of heels.
- d) The practice of referring to everybody as "Pan" (Mr.) and "Pani" (Mrs.).

3. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?

Belief in freedom and free enterprise.

4. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?

Belief in strength and independence, in individual opportunity regardless of social status.

5. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?
- a) Advertising, because it is so stupid and time wasting, it offends any thinking man.
 - b) Jazz and rock music, because it is foreign to me. It is not of European character; to me it is "jungle music".
6. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?
- a) Politeness on the roads, in the stores, restaurants, government offices, etc.
 - b) Efficiency of doing business.
7. Is there any other information you would like to share with me regarding your cross-cultural experience in America?

Yes, it has been wonderful to live in America for 41 years. I have many American friends of various backgrounds and different walks of life. It feels good to be Polish American!

RESPONDENT # 8

PART I

1. How long have you been in the US?
20 years
2. What is your highest educational qualification?
BA
3. What is the reason for your coming to the US?
My parents moved here for a better future.
4. Are you planning on staying in the USA permanently?
Yes.

5. What primary language do you speak at work in the US?
English

6. What primary language do you speak at home in the US?
English – I am married to an American

7. How often do you read in Polish?
Not at all except when I visit my grandma who reads Polish books and magazines.

8. How often do you watch Polish TV, videos? (indicate hours per week)
Not at all.

9. What do you do in order to keep in touch with Polish culture?
My mom works for a Polish firm in CA so she keeps me up to date on all the film premieres and events they go to. I subscribe to the Bay Area email network to receive information about Polish activities. I also try to find relevant articles about Poland in the news/internet. The main way that I keep in touch is by continuing my family's Polish traditions and cooking Polish foods.

10. When you are in the US, how do you like people to refer to your ethnic/cultural background? (Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other, please, specify)
Polish.

11. When you are in the US, do you dislike it when people refer to you as Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other (specify)?
No – most people do not realize I am Polish but I am proud to tell them that I am.

12. How often do you go to Poland?
About once a year.

13. How long do you usually stay when you visit Poland?
Lately only a few weeks. When I was younger my sister and I would go for a few months each summer.

PART II

1. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?

I definitely value our holiday traditions. I continue to celebrate Christmas Eve, Easter and any other holiday the Polish way rather than American. For example, even though I am married to an American we spend Christmas Eve with my family, enjoying Polish specialties and going to church. When we were married we celebrated with having our reception in a Polish restaurant and ate bread and salt to celebrate the

marriage. I also am very also to my family which I think is an important part to Polish culture – honoring your family and elders, especially by showing them respect.

2. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?

There are some holidays that I no longer celebrate such as Name Day – since most of my friends are American keeping such a tradition becomes not too meaningful. Not eating meat on Fridays is another tradition, but that is more of a Catholic tradition than a Polish one. I no longer do this since I do not feel it impacts my faith or my being Polish. Other than that this question is a bit hard to answer for me but I do know that most of my friends in Poland live with their parents a long time and families live together. I have not lived with my parents since college and will probably not (unless my elders need to live with us) because I feel a need to have independence and my own separate family with my husband.

3. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?

Once my husband and I have children we will celebrate Christmas both in the Polish and American tradition – with Christmas Eve the Polish way and Christmas Day the American way. I would do this to have my family follow American traditions but yet have a bit of their Polish heritage. I will also celebrate Easter not in just a religious way but participate in Easter Egg hunts and Bunny rabbit things that kids in America do – I do not do this today but will when I have children. I have fully adopted Thanksgiving since that is purely an American holiday – it is a nice holiday because it allows the family to come together.

4. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?

Now that I read this question I guess I should have stated Christmas since we will celebrate it both the Polish and American way. For other holidays we bring a little Polish into the events – whether that is with food, music or Polish stories. I will also teach my children Polish since it is important for them to know their mother's family native tongue – I find that most people do not know how to speak their parents' native tongue once they are here longer than one generation – sort of an Americanization. Although television is not a cultural belief I do not believe in watching a lot of television or having video games, etc. In Poland we did not watch television but read books so I plan on keeping that tradition as much as I can with my family.

5. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?

As funny as it might sound I find it hard to believe how most Americans are focused on work, work, work. In Poland things were much more relaxed – but that could be my imagination. The hardest thing for me has been to adjust to the materialism of America – how almost all holidays and events are centered around gifts and material presents. This was not the way in Poland and it really bothers me.

6. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?

Easiest adjustments have been certain holiday traditions such as Thanksgiving, Valentines Day, Halloween – just because we are surrounded by them and they add a bit of fun to the year. They are unique to America and make me feel like a true American.

7. Is there any other information you would like to share with me regarding your cross-cultural experience in America?

The hardest part about the experience for me was when I was younger – when I first came to America I wanted to fit in with all the kids, speak English and not be different. I did not want to speak Polish but my family refused to speak English. Now I am thankful to them and am proud of my country and heritage and hope to do the same for my children.

RESPONDENT #18

PART I

1. How long have you been in the US?

I have been in the USA since August of 1977, which makes it almost 25 years.

2. What is your highest educational qualification?

I have an MS in civil-structural engineering.

3. What is the reason for your coming to the US?

Partially curiosity and partially my contradictory nature. More specifically, I was forbidden to leave Poland by the Gdansk Security Office (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa), so I left, illegally of course, a few months later.

4. Are you planning on staying in the USA permanently?

I am way beyond planning, I am here permanently.

5. What primary language do you speak at work in the US?

English

6. What primary language do you speak at home in the US?

English 80%, Polish 20%

7. How often do you read in Polish?

3 hours per week

8. How often do you watch Polish TV, videos? (indicate hours per week)

Never, if not counting 1 or 2 pictures per year, which my daughter brings home.

9. What do you do in order to keep in touch with Polish culture?

I talk very often on the phone with my friends in Poland; otherwise I have lost substantial touch with current cultural events in Poland. Nevertheless I read a lot about Polish history, which also happens to be one of my hobbies.

10. When you are in the US, how do you like people to refer to your ethnic/cultural background? (Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other, please, specify)

I prefer just Polish, no hyphens.

11. When you are in the US, do you dislike it when people refer to you as Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other (specify)?

Definitely not European-American. This sounds stupid and racist just like African-American, or Asian-American. I do not have any problems with just Polish or just American or even European if you will. Once again – no hyphens.

12. How often do you go to Poland?

I was there six times in last 25 years.

13. How long do you usually stay when you visit Poland?

The shortest trip was just 3 days and the longest one 5 weeks. They average about 1 week.

PART II

1. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?

Actually, when I really think it over, there are very few elements of Polish culture, which I was not willing to negotiate. Christmas is one of them. I love the Polish way of celebrating Christmas, specifically Christmas Eve. I find two more elements of Polish culture, which I cannot depart from.

In raising my children I insisted on conveying the tradition of unconditional respect for adults. My children were taught to get up, when talking to adults, and not to oppose any of their political views in front of them, even if those adults were wrong. They are supposed to, instead discuss those peoples' opinions, which they found

incorrect, later with their parents. An exception to this rule can be made if they are requested to express an opinion by the adult.

And, finally soccer. I am not, and I never was a sport fanatic. I am not even sure if sports can be considered a cultural element. But if there is any sport ever followed by my family it is to be soccer and only soccer.

2. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?

First, I gladly gave up Polish coffee. It is probably the worst warm drink ever developed by mankind. We used to pour boiling water over medium course ground coffee and then drink it using our own teeth as a filter. Not that traditional American coffee is much better, but at least espresso is available everywhere.

Then I gave up celebrating name days. It is a personal holiday, which has an advantage and disadvantage over celebrating birthdays at the same time. It does not reveal the age of the celebrant without any mercy like a birthday does, but in the same time it has to be shared with a lot of people, particularly if your name is popular (like Andrzej, Jerzy, or Maciej). I have switched to celebrating my birthday without a tear.

Poland has several holidays, which are not equally emphasized in American culture (and of course –vice versa). I gave up Easter rather easily. In my memory it was always associated with an ugly time of the year, no more snow, but not yet spring either. I am also happy to not be invited to my friends' children's First Communion. Since I have become an adult (some 35 years ago) I do not relate to children very well, except to my own. In Poland it was unavoidable. Because of a heavy cultural emphasis on religion, typical for Poland, it is an uncomfortable event for people, who are not particularly religious, like myself to attend. Here it is O.K. not be very religious, even among Polish immigrants. It is more a matter of choice rather than a social obligation. I do however miss All Saints' Day (Nov. 1). It is a beautiful holiday, much more spiritual than Halloween.

Another adjustment, which I did not mind to make is gender equality, on social basis only, versus Polish overzealous respect for women, including kissing their hands during greetings and generally treating them more like flowers instead like equal human beings. There is a fine point of equilibrium here.

I also found sometimes an American cultural approach to alcohol better in some aspects (not in all aspects – see also pt. 5). When I lived in Poland, I did not particularly care to be forced to drink constantly, vodka in particular. In Polish culture it is impolite for a man to refuse a drink, and it never ends with just one. I am not particularly opposed to alcohol, although much more prefer good wine than heavy liquor, but it should be exclusively on voluntary basis.

Next, I gladly gave up flowers. When I lived in Poland, I had to bring flowers everywhere and be ready to receive them as well, even airports and train stations. It was in my opinion the dumbest habit in the world – somebody had to carry, for example, four suitcases – now, he had to carry flowers on top of it. I hated it, yet complied with this strange cultural twist.

Also guests dropping by without any invitation – sometimes it was cute, but in most cases disrupting and annoying but widely accepted.

I also found it fairly comforting that I do not have to publicly subscribe to certain Polish myths or holy cows if you will. Examples are the pope, battle of Monte Cassino, Ukrainians, or blue-green combination. The first is the holy man, the second is an example of heroism and valor, the third are bad people, and the fourth is mismatching combination. Although I strongly disagree with all four of them, in Poland the best I could do was to be silent. Otherwise I would be guaranteed to meet staunch opposition and possibly make enemies.

3. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?

In Poland, it was impolite to talk about money. I found the American approach to money to be an extremely practical one. No questions are left unanswered – in every transaction it is always clear what and for how much. Profit was sinful. It was probably the only point where Polish Catholicism agreed with Polish communism in the post – WWII Poland. Polish culture, which I remember did not clearly distinguish between greed and profit.

American dress code is wonderful. I remember so many times getting dressed for Sunday walks, for simple parties, for my first dates, for a family dinner at my aunt's. In America it is rarely done at all. I like the freedom of going to a supermarket dressed like a slob.

Finally, politeness. Although many things have changed in America since I came here 25 years ago, I am still willing to risk a thesis that overall Americans are more polite than Poles. Their code of polite behavior is less complex than the Polish one, but is used more often. This observation can be only made by a person who would understand that 'how are you' in English does not translate to 'jak sie masz', but rather to simple 'dzien dobry'.

4. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?

Acceptance of almost any cultural element needs modification. Let's start with cuisine. My family still subscribes rather faithfully to Lwow-style Polish cuisine, which is now enriched by some California and Asian style cooking. It made, by the way, a winning combination.

Some Hallmark holidays I found acceptable, Mother's Day – for instance, and some others not so much. Normal holidays also need adaptation. I do not go to work on Labor Day, Memorial Day, or Thanksgiving, but I do not embrace a special spirit of celebration, since I did not grow up with those holidays.

5. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?

I taught my children my Polish family code of ethics, rejecting an American approach to ethics, which is based too much on legality and not enough on honesty. This applies also to adults. Polish ethics have lot more to do with right and wrong, which is quite often subject to different interpretation by individual families, and very little with the law. American culture would perceive such an ethical system as somewhat chaotic or disorderly. I don't.

Also, I rejected American paranoia about safety and security. My children, when they were little they were never taught to distrust strangers, but rather be polite to them and they were free to play outside on the street until late at night (and we lived in Oakland – back then), providing that their homework was taken care of. I think, we Poles do not subscribe easily to the American zero-risk life philosophy. I do not have a gazillion insurance policies, except of those, which are mandatory and enforced.

And, finally the approach to alcohol. As much as I do not like the Polish overdrinking, as I have pointed in p. 2, I also resent the American myth of alcohol being a forbidden substance. The drinking age, drinking laws, and just about everything associated with alcohol has somehow a negative overtone. Only under American cultural believe system could the prohibition era take place. In my Polish system of cultural values it is not a sin, it is not wrong, it is just booze.

6. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?

It is almost the same question as number 3. It would be difficult for me to point a single American cultural belief which I adjusted myself to without any modification. Probably behavior in the public, certain body language, which as a young immigrant I observed and almost instantly adopted to blend in better. It was almost automatic and painless. An example would be a raised hand for a greeting, not typical for Polish culture at all.

7. Is there any other information you would like to share with me regarding your cross-cultural experience in America?

What I think should be pointed in this write-up, is that we-immigrants evolve. Upon initial contact with America we love certain things about it and dislike others. Few years later these feelings are mitigated at both ends of the spectrum. As we learn the American way more and more, we evolve further. In some cases we may ultimately fall in love with what we disliked before about the American culture and also the other way around. Here are examples: When I came here I hated secrecy about money we make. I found rather stupid that I was not told how much money my co-workers make. In Poland this was a public knowledge. Now, I find it rather comforting that my co-workers do not know how much I make, and I could not care less how much they do. On the other side of the spectrum, 25 years ago I loved American fire trucks, shiny, heavily chromed with fancy gauges and uniformly dressed firemen comparing to rather beat-up Polish fire department riding poorly looking vehicles. Today I hate the powers, which fire departments are vested with in America and look at all this chromium as a waste of taxpayer's money. Effectiveness of fire department does not have anything to do with this.

At the end of this rather long letter I would like to share with you minor thoughts about what I still miss after 25 years here. I miss some Polish social-cultural events, which do take place here, but not in the same form. I remember full gala carnival balls and hunting season. They both exist here but the form is different. Both differences are associated with the fact that Polish society is divided into social classes, not necessarily along economic lines. Here it is purely economic. Hunting, for example, in Poland was a social event requiring certain etiquette, certain language, ability to converse on different subjects, a place, where I could strike a deal or develop a business relationship. I guess golf courses in America serve a similar function to some degree. Here, hunting is reduced to a bunch of rednecks shooting animals or read signs on occasions and, unfortunately, I hate golf.

RESPONDENT # 20

PART I

1. How long have you been in the US?
13 years
2. What is your highest educational qualification?
Master's Degree
3. What is the reason for your coming to the US?
Parents moved here.

4. Are you planning on staying in the USA permanently?

Yes

5. What primary language do you speak at work in the US?

English

6. What primary language do you speak at home in the US?

Polish

7. How often do you read in Polish?

1hr

8. How often do you watch Polish TV, videos? (indicate hours per week)

0 hrs

9. What do you do in order to keep in touch with Polish culture?

Music, e-mails, Polish festivals, Polish church

10. When you are in the US, how do you like people to refer to your ethnic/cultural background? (Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other, please, specify)

Polish

11. When you are in the US, do you dislike it when people refer to you as Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other (specify)?

I don't dislike to be referred to as Polish or European.

12. How often do you go to Poland?

Used to go at least once a year. Now I can't go more than about once every 2 years. If I had more money and vacation time I would go more often.

13. How long do you usually stay when you visit Poland?

1-2 months

PART II

1. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?

Speaking Polish at home, especially around kids when they arrive. I think it will be hard for them to learn Polish given the fact they will live in the US, and starting early will make it a lot easier. They will also be reading in Polish and going to Poland as often as possible.

2. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?

I don't want to give up anything related to Polish culture except maybe the negative attitude. I do not like constant complaining in Polish people.

3. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?

I like the easy-going approach to life and optimism in general in Americans.

4. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?

Referring to older people by their first names. In some cases it is okay to call someone older by his/her first name (for example, a neighbor that you know well) but in other cases I prefer that being conservative and calling people using Mr. or Mrs. is better. I think children especially should be taught to call adults by using Mr. or Mrs.

5. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?
 - a) Americans believe they are no.1 in almost everything. I will never adjust to this attitude and it really bothers me to hear that over and over. It's great that they are proud to be American (I am proud to be Polish) but actually saying that they are better than anyone else reminds me of Hitler.
 - b) Speaking English. I still prefer to speak Polish even though I've lived here for 13 years.
 - c) Shallow friendships which end when you finish school, when you move, etc. People are friendly and nice but only on the surface.
6. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?

Saying 'hi' to strangers on the street. I think it is a nice practice.

7. Is there any other information you would like to share with me regarding your cross-cultural experience in America?

I'm not sure if this relates to your question as this has to do more with economy than with culture, but you may find it useful... I like the 'You Can Do It' approach to life here in the States. There are many opportunities here that do not exist at this time in Poland. For example, I can find a job in my field of interest and do what I like.

RESPONDENT # 21**PART I**

1. How long have you been in the US?

2 years

2. What is your highest educational qualification?

MA in Marketing and Management

3. What is the reason for your coming to the US?

Studying

4. Are you planning on staying in the USA permanently?

Yes

5. What primary language do you speak at work in the US?

English

6. What primary language do you speak at home in the US?

English

7. How often do you read in Polish?

30 min

8. How often do you watch Polish TV, videos? (indicate hours per week)

0

9. What do you do in order to keep in touch with Polish culture?

Meeting with Polish friends, celebrating Polish holidays

10. When you are in the US, how do you like people to refer to your ethnic/cultural background? (Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other, please, specify)

Polish

11. When you are in the US, do you dislike it when people refer to you as Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other (specify)?

No

12. How often do you go to Poland?

1-2 times a year

13. How long do you usually stay when you visit Poland?

4 weeks

PART II

1. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?
 - a) going to church every Sunday; religion, baptism
 - b) being in a close relationship with parents
 - c) holidays: Christmas, Easter- remind me of home; great family atmosphere
 - d) eating manners: quietly
 - e) raising kids with respect for elders; talking with respect; teaching methods
 - f) cooking from scratch, no cans, no premade food, only healthy
 - g) taking shoes off at home
 - h) respect for teachers
 - i) hospitality: guests at home should feel like guests - serve them!
2. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?
 - a) Name Days
 - b) lack of customer service (being ignored)
3. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?
 - a) Thanksgiving – gather with the family and being thankful
 - b) gifts for Christmas – for everybody – friends!
 - c) go out to various restaurants; different kinds of food; affordable
 - d) dry clean – does a great job; saves time
 - e) being able to afford things even earning a few dollars per hour (not having to save to go to the movies once a month)
4. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?
 - a) kids have many options/possibilities: skating, dancing
 - b) students – open at school; friends with teachers (but with respect)
5. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?
 - a) No news about Europe. In Poland we know everything.
 - b) “How are you” – don’t want to know how you really are. When you ask you’re ignored.

- c) Talking about me and saying “she”, “her” while I’m present!
 - d) Language – hard to understand clearly, idioms.
 - e) Driving on highways.
6. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?
- a) calling everyone by name; no Mrs. and Mr.
 - b) saying “hi” to strangers
 - c) having a car for yourself; not sharing with the spouse.

RESPONDENT # 25

PART I

1. How long have you been in the US?
Since August 1998
2. What is your highest educational qualification?
MA Psychology (Jagiellonian University)
3. What is the reason for your coming to the US?
Married an American
4. Are you planning on staying in the USA permanently?
Yes
5. What primary language do you speak at work in the US?
English
6. What primary language do you speak at home in the US?
English
7. How often do you read in Polish?
2 hours/week
8. How often do you watch Polish TV, videos? (indicate hours per week)
Hardly ever
9. What do you do in order to keep in touch with Polish culture?
Keep in touch with family and friends in Poland.
Attend Polish church on Sundays.
Read “Gazeta Wyborcza” on the internet.

10. When you are in the US, how do you like people to refer to your ethnic/cultural background? (Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other, please, specify)

Polish

11. When you are in the US, do you dislike it when people refer to you as Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other (specify)?

-

12. How often do you go to Poland?

Once every 2-3 years

13. How long do you usually stay when you visit Poland?

2-3 weeks

PART II

1. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?

Close family/friends attachments, ability to rely on family/friends

2. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?

Polish cuisine

Polish negativism and fatalism

alcohol at every social gathering

constant presence of Catholic church in media, politics, etc.

3. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?

multiculturalism

tolerance of different religions, ethnic backgrounds, lifestyles, etc.

flexibility/adaptability to changing circumstances

strong work ethics

belief in individual abilities/potential

optimistic and energetic approach to life

4. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?

I don't really like the fast food/take out culture but it fits the local lifestyle.

5. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?

Complete reliance on a car.

Lower position of women in the workplace.

Materialism (evaluating people by their possessions).

Intrusive sales techniques (in stores and telemarketing).

Anti-intellectualism (Americans focus on applied/practical value of education and knowledge rather than intellectual).

Unhealthy influence of American pop culture especially on young people – media are heavily promoting pop-singers and movie stars as role models, there is a strong focus on look and popularity, etc.

6. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?

In general, this culture is very inclusive and accepting. There is no pressure to conform to American values; individual differences are always respected.

RESPONDENT # 33

PART I

1. How long have you been in the US?

3 years, 4 months

2. What is your highest educational qualification?

MA in elementary school teaching

3. What is the reason for your coming to the US?

further education, first English language, then MBA

4. Are you planning on staying in the USA permanently?

don't have any plans, either going back to Poland or staying in the US will be fine

5. What primary language do you speak at work in the US?

English

6. What primary language do you speak at home in the US?

English

7. How often do you read in Polish?

3-4

8. How often do you watch Polish TV, videos? (indicate hours per week)
the only source of Polish news/readings is internet
9. What do you do in order to keep in touch with Polish culture?
go to Polish church, call friends/family back in Poland, often read news from the internet
10. When you are in the US, how do you like people to refer to your ethnic/cultural background? (Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other, please, specify)
Polish, European
11. When you are in the US, do you dislike it when people refer to you as Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other (specify)?
-
12. How often do you go to Poland?
haven't been there since coming here
13. How long do you usually stay when you visit Poland?

PART II

1. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?
 - a) being close to your family (cousins, uncles)
 - b) holidays: Christmas, going to church, Easter
 - c) being social
2. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?
 - a) images of 40 year old people
 - b) no honesty
 - c) drinking alcohol, smoking
 - d) big parties – weddings for 200 people – you don't know half of them
 - e) conservatism – no fun
 - f) pride – unnecessary in customer service
 - g) complain
 - h) no believing in yourself – low self esteem
3. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?

- a) openness – easy to make contact with people
 - b) opportunities for kids; at school – fun, more practical, less stress
 - c) Americans are children oriented
 - d) Thanksgiving
4. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?
- a) economy
 - b) Thanksgiving
 - c) great customer service; being able to buy something and bring it back
 - d) nice roads – easy to drive on
 - e) optimism “Hi” to strangers; “How are you?” “Good!” – no complaining
5. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?
- a) Americans are not serious; “see you later” – don’t mean it!
 - b) Americans believe in themselves too much
 - c) diversity – too many races, too many religions
 - d) driving on highways
6. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?
- a) saying “Hi” to strangers
 - b) optimism – Americans are very easy going
 - c) weather

RESPONDENT # 48

PART I

1. How long have you been in the US?
4.5 years
2. What is your highest educational qualification?
Master of Business Administration
3. What is the reason for your coming to the US?
I wanted to experience different culture, improve my English skills, and travel.
4. Are you planning on staying in the USA permanently?
I’m not sure yet.

5. What primary language do you speak at work in the US?
English

6. What primary language do you speak at home in the US?
English

7. How often do you read in Polish?
One hour or less.

8. How often do you watch Polish TV, videos? (indicate hours per week)
None

9. What do you do in order to keep in touch with Polish culture?
I meet my Polish friends a few times a week, attend events organized by Polonia, attend Polish church occasionally, correspondent with friends in Poland, look for articles about Poland in newspapers and on the Internet, read books in Polish, visit Poland once a year.

10. When you are in the US, how do you like people to refer to your ethnic/cultural background? (Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other, please, specify)
Polish

11. When you are in the US, do you dislike it when people refer to you as Polish, Polish-American, European, European-American, other (specify)?
People refer to me as either Polish or European, and I am fine with both.

12. How often do you go to Poland?
Once a year.

13. How long do you usually stay when you visit Poland?
Usually for three weeks.

PART II

1. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you value so much that you would steadfastly cling to them, and why?

I really value a long-term relationship. I believe that if both sides nourish it, it can last a lifetime. I find it hard to find friends like that in the US. Americans are preoccupied with their work or school more than with people and social life and that is why I look for friends among Poles.

I enjoy Polish food and I would not be willing to give it up, I still prepare it in the US. I also want to practice traditional Polish Christmas and Easter, ex. no meat on Christmas Eve, sharing "oplatek" and wishes, opening presents on Christmas Eve, coloring eggs and "swiecenie pisanek."

2. What are your native cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to give up, and why?

I am willing to give up stereotype thinking and lack of tolerance. I do not believe that everybody needs to be a Catholic, everybody needs to get married especially at a certain age and to certain people. I think Poles are really narrow-minded when it comes to other cultures and customs. We are not exposed to cultural differences because 98% Polish residents are 100% Poles. I am really glad that by coming to the US I had a great chance to meet people from so many different countries, of different races and with various religious and cultural beliefs.

I am also willing to give up the so-called "what other people are going to say about you" attitude. I do not believe that I should do something only because everybody of my age, or sex, or social status is doing that. And I am certainly not interested in what my neighbor will think about my behavior. I am really glad that American neighbors pay attention to their own business more than to mine!

3. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adopt fully without substantial modification, and why?

I really like the fact that everybody has equal rights here. Everybody can get education and make a career if he has necessary skills.

4. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you would be willing to adapt and modify to suit your native cultural value system?

I like many aspects of American way of bringing up children. I really like the fact that both parents are spending quality time with kids. In Poland it is usually the mom who has that responsibility and dad's role is to support the family (at least that was the way in my family and as a result I did not really know much about my dad and vice versa). Also kids in the US have much more choices in spending their free time such as various camps, sports, art classes, etc, which I believe has very positive influence on their development. Additionally, I think that teachers in American schools are much more understandable than Polish teachers. Students are encouraged to ask questions, and it does not matter how simple the question might be, the teacher will answer it. In Poland students are afraid to ask many questions because not only other students would laugh at them but also the teacher. I believe that this system does not help students' development at all.

However, I think that in many American families, kids are not taught a proper respect for parents and other elders and this is what I would change if I bring up my kids here. Also I think some kids are paying too much attention to material things and not enough to feelings and other non-materialistic values – and this is what I would need to modify too.

5. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find most difficult to adjust to, and why?

I still have a hard time to use empty phrases such as: “How are you?” to people I don’t know and I don’t care about, as well as to have “little talks about nothing.” I still believe in saying things only if I really mean them.

6. What are the American cultural beliefs and practices that you find easiest to adjust to, and why?

Freedom and equal rights.

7. Is there any other information you would like to share with me regarding your cross-cultural experience in America?

Yes, darling, I am really grateful that I met you and that you are my true friend. Life without you and our other friends would be much more difficult here, wouldn’t you agree?

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE INTERVIEWS

Five families were interviewed for this study. This part of appendix contains sample interviews with two families (family no. 1 and 5). Names have been changed to protect anonymity.

AN INTERVIEW WITH FAMILY #1

K – Kate - the interviewer

M – Monika - the interviewee

M: OK, What do I like about my country? Men, whom America lacks. Also, I think that men in Poland have more respect for women. There are more men, the handy man. Isn't it how you call them? They are ready to do everything, and are able to do anything. But, in this country, men are not even raised to be the men of the house. And, to prove it, I can give you an example. I sold my sofa to my friend Beata, who is renting a house with some guys who are Americans.

K: Is she Polish?

M: Yes. We took the sofa apart, drove the pieces over to Beata's house, and we were supposed to put them together over there. I was so sure that if there were 3 guys at least one of them would help us. However, they were just coming into the room to ask if we were making any progress! 'How is it going?' And, two girls were putting sofa together. In Poland, I think it would never happen. Every guy who'd see two girls working on something would want to help right away, especially if there are 3 guys. And, Beata told me: 'See, that's the way they are'. And, she said it wasn't the first time that they behaved like that. Another thing that I like in my country and that I would like to bring over here is raising the kids with the respect for elders. I have never seen young people here letting the older people go through the door first, or being willing to help. I think that the fact that everybody addresses each other by the first name makes it more difficult to have respect for elders. It was very difficult for me at the beginning when a 50 year old woman, at my mom's age, told me 'I'm Linda, please, call me Linda.' And, I've never really seen any signs of respect from the younger generation towards the older one. My friend also told me that when she was pregnant in her last month, it was very difficult for her to move around with her big belly. Nobody ever let her go first even though sometimes she did everything to show how uncomfortable she was. Oh, and also, I think that Polish women are more... women. For instance, my wardrobe is divided into clothes that I wear at home and clothes that I wear when I go out. Here, I don't see anything like that. But, on the other hand, this is something that I like in this culture that people are not as... as Poles are. We were brought up the way that we always have to think what other people think about us, and that this is very important. I don't think this kind of idea exists here. And, I feel very sorry for my and all American kids, who are not with their grandmothers, for whom grandma is... they see her twice, three times a year. And, they also emphasize that. My husband's supervisor has his family here in Saratoga. They

always say how lucky they are that the grandma lives in the same city, that they can always drop the kids off at her place, and that the kids are close with somebody who is related with blood and not with a stranger, and that they don't need a baby-sitter, that they don't need a stranger to take care of their children. By the way, there is something else that I don't like here and that I'm sure I wouldn't like to move to my country. America is said to be "pro-family." I don't see it here. Not only do people value the career but an average woman has a problem here. She doesn't get the maternity leave. In Poland, it is very well developed, and this is something that I would move to America if I could. Besides, there are no maternity service systems. So, the woman who is in a tough situation at home, let's say her husband is not able to support the family especially when Americans have more needs than Poles. So, with only one salary, even if they were to have a little worse situation, the woman doesn't have the guarantee in the form of maternity leave and then nobody will give her unpaid vacation and the opportunity to come back to work. And, it's really sad that young children are separated from their mother and there is not even this half-year period. Right now, in Poland, there is a half year full paid vacation. The most developed country in this case is Sweden where the upbringing leave even is paid. In Poland, we can at least take the unpaid upbringing leave, but at least we are guaranteed that we can go back to work. Here, nothing like that exists. But, this is the result of the capitalism. And, this is very sad that little kids are separated and taken to a daycare. Such a little child, instead of being with its mother, is taken care by a stranger. And, even if this person has a great approach towards children or had graduated from great schools, he will not have this love to your child especially if he's taking care of a group of children. The child doesn't have the exclusiveness of one person's feelings, not even assured protection. And this is very important. The family and teaching how to live play an enormous role in Poland. There is something else that I like here on one hand, but on the other, I'm not sure if you are interested in it because it is not a culture. It is the easiness of getting a loan here, and that at the beginning you have as much as you'd have in Poland after 20, 30 years. And, I think it's easy and I would like to transfer it. But, on the other hand, there is something in it that can get you lost. For example, and that's what I don't like here, living in a constant debt. It would be difficult for me to obtain a complete peace of mind especially if I'm raised in a different culture. And also, I'm not as optimistic as Americans are, so there would be always something within me: what will happen to me? My husband... If something happened to him unexpectedly, I would have no money for paying off the loan and I would still have 20 years of having to pay off the house. It scares me a bit. It's kind of like living in a constant debt. And, I think, a lot of people get lost in such a reality. It seems to me that they... they don't see their money, they don't think about it, they go and buy things. In Poland, I won't buy anything if I don't have money to pay for it. I will get a loan for something that is really needed. And, I won't sleep calmly until it's paid off. In the meantime, here, such trivial things are bought on credit as the fifteenth sweater, tenth pair of pants, something that is superfluous. And, I get it on credit. You pay for it with the credit card and you don't see the money. Very often, you don't have it on your account – you get it on credit, and then you work for it. For me, it's an absurd to buy a super nice cream for myself in advance, then work for it and then pay it off. I know that a lot of

people... because America is a country of a thousand cultures, there is not a single culture here, so that's why more problems with this system here with paying off the credits, loans. People who have those problems are usually those who were not raised in this country and for whom it's a novelty. They came to America: 'oh, I can buy this, this and that', and then 'oh, no, I have to pay all of it off.' This is sad. I had a neighbor in Chicago who did have a difficult situation at home, but all her credit cards were all full. Every month, she was paying with the minimum payment. You can get lost in it so easily. Because it's our culture and belief, we borrow the money only if there is a big need. We don't do it just because I want to get something for myself. I would like to transfer Polish hospitality here. In Poland, if you are a host, you know it's your responsibility to take care of your guests. Sometimes it's exaggerated. And, there is even this Polish saying: "Zastaw sie a postaw sie" (pawn yourself, but at the same time present yourself in the best way). This is what I wouldn't like to transfer here, but I really like Polish hospitality, and the fact that when there is a party the hosts really try to do their best. And here, all the parties that I went to were so poorly organized, for example with regard to food. The host didn't even..., OK I'm offering the house, and the others are bringing the rest. Another thing that I like in Poland or I don't like here is that there is no tradition of eating together, cooking. Actually cooking is seen as a painful obligation. Many people try to avoid it as much as they can by buying already made food or eating fast food. I like this tradition of cooking that exists in Poland. I noticed that something is wrong here, in this country. On one hand, people count calories, they want to eat only things that are good for them, but on the other hand how does it go with eating junk food and all other already made meals? And, I also like the tradition of eating together that is in Poland – at least, if not every day, every weekend. And, this is something that unites the family – sitting together at the table. I always chase the kids because I want to eat dinner with everybody at one table, not the little one, because it's small and they could watch TV at the same time, no! We sit at the same table, we eat together, and we share our perceptions. This is also the time when the whole family gets together. What else I don't like here is the system of working. On one hand, in Poland, well, maybe it's hard to get up earlier; at least the day is not so disrupted because of the lunchtime. The break for eating is shorter but at least counts towards the working hours. Because of that you're at home at... you finish work at 3.00pm, or even 4.00 and you're at home at 4.30. So, you still have a long evening for yourself. Here, the weekday is so disrupted and unfortunately it takes forever to get to work. A lot of people come home very late and they are so tired and it's the end of the day for them. So, everybody is waiting for the weekend. What else I like about my country and that I'd like to transfer here, even though it would be difficult, is the tradition of those tiny shops. Here, it's not possible because of the economic situation where big companies have a power over the little businesses, which stop them from developing. And, in Poland, it's also been happening. And, some Poles even fight with supermarkets, what would be unacceptable here, because they are a threat to small businesses. And, also, there is such a practice here, that I don't like. It's the fact that shopping is a form of spending your time, a form of relaxing. It seems like you earn your money just so that you could spend it right away. And, people have a great pleasure from spending money. And, shopping is a way of

spending your time. For example, if the stores were open right after Christmas, I'm sure they would be full of people. And, I like the fact that Sunday in Poland is a day for a family. You spend that day at home, with your friends, or you go for a walk, but not shopping. What I like here and what I think would be hard to adopt in Poland is the tradition of a baby shower. I think it would never work in Poland since Poland is a very superstitious country. In Poland, you're not supposed to buy anything before the baby is born. And here, it's even done as early as the seventh month. No! In the place that I lived, the grandmas were saying that nothing should be bought before the baby is born. Another thing that would be impossible to adapt in Poland, as we're talking about showers, is the wedding shower. Our country is too poor. What a couple gets here for a wedding shower, are presents that a Polish couple gets for a wedding. And, for the last question – the tolerance for handicapped that exists in this country. Unfortunately, Poland has been in this system for such a long time, and I even read the other day, that it's a result of the system. In socialism, a handicapped person was seen as an unproductive citizen. That's why all handicapped people stayed at their homes, they didn't go anywhere, nobody thought about them. I'm really amazed that wherever I am, there is a place in a parking lot for disabled, there is a special lift for them so that they could get down from high places. In Poland, we're slowly getting to this point. Oh, and that there is so many jobs offered for them. In Poland, unfortunately, it's not like that. And, especially if there is a big unemployment. What else would I want? Social system. I think it would be easy to introduce it in Poland, because the system has already been changed, and I know that it's been thought about and that it's being slowly introduced. But still, it's not to such an extent as here.

K: What do you mean by a social system?

M: I mean social security, help. In Poland, an 18-year old girl who is pregnant and kicked out of the house by her parents, doesn't have a choice and lands in some place controlled by nuns. Here, maybe I can find this article for you; it was in "Twoj Styl" (a Polish magazine), where you could see a comparison of a Polish and American in such a situation. The American girl, in this case gives a birth for free, gets money for the baby and if only she wants to give a birth to her child she obtains a huge help from the society. Also, what would be difficult to adopt in Poland would be bringing up the kids without any rigor, and teaching them that they are the biggest values in the family and that they don't need to have any responsibilities. Taking the garbage out is seen here as: 'oh, I have a huge responsibility.'

K: What about the education system? Can you see any differences?

M: Yes. I heard that my son goes to the best school in Saratoga. So, I can see the difference. But, I think I see the difference only because it's a good school. The kids learn through art. They do wonderful projects that they have never done in Poland.

K: There is a new major recently introduced in Poland, teaching through art. My sister is doing this program; it's her second year.

M: They play with the play-dough, paint. I think the teachers are already prepared for that. They make various books, projects. I like it a lot – this learning through art.

Unfortunately, kids are faced with very simple things here, and that's what I don't like about education here, very low level. There is this joke, actually it's not a joke, but my

friend was telling me that here it's like that - the teacher is asking a kid: what is 2 times 2? 'five,' see, you're very close today, getting closer, and closer. In Poland it's incorrect, and you get an F. The level is very low here. And, the fact that you can choose different classes, and that you can finish a high school with one class and the rest like cooking, knitting, and some technical classes. Actually, all the European kids, at least all the ones that I know have no problems with facing the demands of American schools, the American educational system. But, what they learn is presented to them in a more interesting way. It's more practical and useful. In Poland, you study a lot, and I think the level is really high, and Matura - it's such a difficult exam. Really, to learn all of it, especially Polish literature - it was a nightmare. It still comes in my dreams from time to time. Going back to the kitchen, I think there is no respect for food here. In Poland, it's a sin to throw out anything. And here, maybe it has something to do with the fact that people don't need to worry about saving every cent as much as we do, and for them spending money comes much easier, so throwing away some food seems not to be a problem. In Poland, on the other hand, where things don't come so easily, people appreciate more things.

K: You're right. When I was living with the first family, the mother cooked for all of us. When the food was served, I tried to put as much on my plate as I thought I could eat. The kids, on the other hand, would cover their plates with food and they would not eat a half of it. After some time, I asked the family if it's a part of their culture to leave food on the plate. I felt terrible because my plate was always empty after dinner and it looked I was just very hungry. They told me: 'No, we just don't care if we throw something away.'

M: At my house, we had such respect for bread, that it was kind of a base for us. It's connected with our religion. Bread was never thrown away. And, I have a problem with it here, because nobody comes to collect bread for the horses, or I can't save it for neighbor's ducks. There is even this commercial: 'Get a new compactor garbage can where you'll be able to throw away whatever you want instead of keeping the leftovers for the next day.' Halloween, I think it's a pagan holiday, and I don't think it will ever get adopted in Poland as much as it is here. The kids are not raised to respect certain things. It comes from the financial situation, the huge difference between the US and Poland. In Poland, the kids are taught to respect certain things and also somebody else's work. When Polish kids enter somebody's house they take off their shoes, because they know that their mother cleans, and for sure their friends' mother cleans, too. So, there is this respect for somebody's work, bigger than in this country. Oh, and also, I don't know if it's like that here, or maybe I made it up - there is not racism here. I'm sure there are some areas, where racism still exists. But, I think it's easy to get rid of it, since there are so many different cultures here. And in Poland, where there is only one culture, there is no tolerance for people who are different, maybe not culturally different, but with a different nationality. I was raised the way that, and I think this is the result of a low tolerance of the Polish society, that a woman who is about 40 years old and is pregnant is pointed out by others. And, that's what I would like to adapt to a Polish culture without any changes, not only the trend for a late motherhood, but the tolerance for that. It's the same mother, a little bit more mature - but it may have some bad consequences. I know

some kids here, who are 2, 3 years old, and who have a 50-year-old father. I wonder how long, because nobody is able to predict that, how long he is going to live. Even when you think about the average of men's age of dying, it is possible that the kids will be orphaned at the age of 15-16, when it's very difficult to accept the loss of one of the parents. So, it has its good and bad sides. On one hand, I would like the tolerance for a late maternity to be adopted in Poland, but on the other hand, it is a danger for the kids – moving the age border for having the kids to such an old age. I think it comes more difficult for Polish women to use their husbands' money for their own expenses. I don't think American wives have a problem with that. Even though she doesn't work, she freely uses the money that her husband earns. For me, or for Gosia from Chicago, or for this woman that you know, it seems to be a problem. Even though Mateusz tells me that this money is also mine, because I take care of the kids, otherwise we would need a nanny, a housekeeper, a cook, and it would never be as well taken care of as if I would do it, so I'm saving actually money. So, he tells me that I also have the right to money he earns. But, whenever I see a nice sweater for \$100, I think three times before I buy it. I think whether I really need it, and if it's not too expensive, because I'm going to pay it with money that I didn't earn. And, if I have any responsibilities towards my family, I feel really bad about asking my husband for the money for my parents. Because, I know it's my family, from my side, even though we are married. My family looks at it the same way. When I go to Poland and bring them some gifts they always say: 'why did you bring them? You know that it's your husband who worked for it.' I don't think any American family would look at it this way. What else do I like here? The respect for a patient in the hospital. But I think it's the matter of money. I'm not sure, but this is my opinion. So, this is something that I would like Poland to adapt, but I know it would be hard. In Poland, the family helps a lot young married couples. I talked yesterday to a friend of mine who is from Argentina. She told me that her fiancé who is American has a father who owns three houses here. He lives in one, and rents two other ones. Plus, he is married to this lady who is also the owner of some other houses. And, this guy has only one son, the fiancé of my friend. So, she told me that the father offered them help in paying for one of those houses. In Poland, if you have only one son, I think the desire to help him is so deep in you, especially when you own three houses. Even if your son has already a family, but his financial situation is not as good as yours – helping him comes so naturally. I also don't like here the fact that children are paid for whatever they are asked to do. It looks to me like a paid slavery. My parents were always telling me this: 'Honey, we work, we earn money, you are too little to go to work and have as much input in our family as we do. And, just because we are able to buy you things, it doesn't mean that you deserve all of it. You also need to participate in some housework.' Each of us always had some responsibilities: cleaning our rooms, helping our mom in cleaning the house before holidays. It is obvious, that our mom wouldn't be able to do all of it by herself when working full time. And my dad, also working full time, always had extra work to do, so that he could get extra money to build the house. So, we always had our responsibilities, and those were big responsibilities. We did complain about that, it's true. But now, when I compare myself, maybe I'm too old now, but when I was 20, with a 20 year-old American girl, I was way more responsible. I knew many more things that

you do at home and that I think were basic, for example your parents teach you to do things this way or that way or how to behave in a certain situation. In Poland, especially in socialism, a kid usually had a key hanging from his neck. When he was coming home he knew he was supposed to open the house with it. He knew how he was supposed to behave in a certain situation. Here, the kid always has somebody to do his work for him. The kids here are not independent. In Poland, children are very independent and that's something that I would like to be adapted here. And, that's the way I'm going to raise my kids in. First of all, respect for my work and others', certain responsibilities, independence. I won't let my kids learn how to be independent by themselves because that will take forever. Then, the kid comes out of the parents' secure safety coat and can't find himself in the world, or takes too much advantage of the new freedom. A friend of ours who is doing PhD here was telling us that when he sees young people starting college, those who have just moved out of their parents', he can tell that it's too much for them; they don't know how to be independent; they don't know what to do in certain situations. He said that his father taught him how to drink alcohol when he was 18. He showed him what it was and how to drink it. I think, it often happens in Poland. I remember when my dad gave some alcohol to my brother for the first time. Here, on the other hand, you can't drink until you are 21, not even a beer. And then, suddenly, when they finally can, they want to try everything and they get lost! Those from this college, they party on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. And that's the lack of being independent, and picking them up and dropping them off everywhere. Well, it is the fact that the transportation is not too well developed here, not as it is in Europe. In Poland, for example, an average 12 or 13-year-old kid can get from one end of a town to another without any problems. However here, when the kid is 17, he gets his own car and driver's license, he gets picked up and dropped off by his parents. Even my ESL teacher told us that even though this is her first year of teaching, she taught in summer, and now this is her regular evening class, we are the best class in that high school. None of other classes, as she said, behaves as well as we do and shows her such respect as we do. So, there is this respect for others, and the border that this is the teacher, and I'm her student. Or, there is this classification that if it's an older person, she needs some respect, you are young, you can stand, not sit when there is not enough seats on the bus. Here, nothing like that exists. I even saw a similar situation when I went to a party. It was a party mostly for adults, but those whose children were too old to have a babysitter came with the kids. So, when the adults left the table just for a while, the kids took their seats right away. And, the parents didn't even say a word to them for instance: 'Listen, kids' room is over there, please, try to stay there, because this room is for adults.' In Poland it wouldn't be acceptable to see the kids coming and taking the adults' spots. There is a certain limit and classification. You are a child. Also, it's not acceptable to address your friend's mother as 'you'. My friend from Sunnyvale told the kids who come to her house to play with her kids to call her Mrs. Kasia, and not just Kasia, or Katarzyna. Otherwise, the border between the kid and adult starts disappearing and it becomes easier to say things that shouldn't be said. Oh, and in Poland, children are also taught things like: 'You're allowed to say it, because you're old enough, but remember not to say it in front of your boss, your teacher or an older person. Things that you tell your mom shouldn't

be said to a stranger.' Here, addressing people with just their first names makes it easier to say things that in some situations shouldn't be said. I also address a 50-year-old woman by her first name, but I would never say to her: "Hey, Barb, what's up, dude?" I'll call her "Barbara", but I will always think about the fact that she is older than me and that there are things that I won't say to her. One thing that I would like to transfer to this culture is that when I'm outside of the house I want people to talk about me well. I usually change my clothes. A Polish woman has her closet divided into clothes that she wears at home and clothes that she wears when she goes out. You won't see a woman with the curlers in her car or even in supermarket, as you can see it here. Also, there is one religion in Poland, which I believe unites our nation. I liked to see everybody in my residential area walking each Sunday morning in one direction. Church is a place where you meet your friends, and here, everybody gets in the car and goes to their own church. In Poland, if somebody tells you that he is a believer and that he goes to church that means that he is Catholic. And, that's a united community, which you won't find here. But, on the other hand, because of the fact that there are more cultures and religions here, there is a better tolerance for others.

A SAMPLE OF A TRASCRIPT OF AN INTERVIEW WITH FAMILY #1 (IN POLISH)

M: OK. Co mi sie podoba w moim kraju? Szarmanccy faceci, ktorych jest w Ameryce na wage zlota. Uwazam ze meszczyzni w Polsce bardziej szanuja kobiety, i jest wiecej facetow, takich handyman, tak to sie nazywa? Ktory jest w stanie zrobic wszystko. A w tym spoleczenstwie, po pierwsze nie wychowuje sie meszczyzny na pana domu. I na dowod tego mam taka sytuacje. Ostatnio sprzedalam moja sofe, sprzedalam ja Beacie, ktora wynajmuje swoj domek z kilkoma facetami, Amerykanami. Rozebralismy ja na czesci, zawiezlismy tam i mielismy ja na miejscu skladac. Bylam przekonana, ze skoro tam jest trzech facetow, to ktorys nam pomoze chociaz. Tymczasem oni wpadali, patrzeli, „No i jak tam progress? Jak wam idzie?” A dwie dziewczyny meczyly sie ze skladaniem sofy. W Polsce, uwazam ze byloby to nie do pomyslenia. Po prostu od razu facet ktory widzi ze dwie dziewczyny mecza sie i jeszcze jest trzech facetow, natychmiast jest skory do pomocy. A tutaj, Beata mi powiedziala, „Widzisz jacy oni sa? To nie jest pojedynczy przypadek, to nie jest wyjatek”. Druja sprawa, co mi sie bardzo podoba w moim kraju i chcialabym przeniesc: wychowanie dzieci w szacunku dla doroslych. Nigdy nie widzialam, zeby mlodziez przepuszczala w drzwiach starszych ludzi, czy byli chetni do pomocy. To ze jest zamazana granica miedzy mlodym pokoleniem a starszym, w tym sensie ze wszyscy zwracaja sie do kazdego po imieniu. Dla mnie bylo to na poczatku trudne jak 50 letnia kobieta, ktora byla w wieku mojej mamy, mowila mi „Jestem Linda, mow mi Linda.” No i nigdy nie widzialam zadnych przejawow jakiegos wiekszego szacunku z mlodszeo pokolenia do starszego. Moja kolezanka opowiadala mi ze w jej ostatnich miesiacach ciazy bylo jej bardzo trudno i ciezko z tym brzuchem. Nikt nigdy jej nigdzie nie przepuscil, nawet jak ostentacyjnie to pokazywala. Uwazam tez ze Polki sa bardzo zadbanymi kobietami. Na przyklad moja szafa to jest podzial na ubrania po domu i ubrania na wyjscie. Tutaj tego nie widze. To co mi sie podoba w tej kulturze to to ze ludzie nie sa tak zakompleksionym spoleczenstwem jak Polacy. Nas wychowano w takim podziale ze musisz zawsze uwazac jak inni ludzie cie postrzegaja, to jest bardzo wazne. Tutaj nic takiego nie istnieje. Tak jak ty sie czujesz ze soba, najwazniejsze zebyś ze soba byla szczesliwa. Nie wazne ze to jest stroj akurat nie na wyjscie, musisz zrobic zakupy, wychodzisz w tym. To tez rowniez widac u kobiet z nadwaga. Ja nie widze zeby te kobiety byly zakompleksione, bo skoro ktos taki zaklada spodniczke krotka i jeszcze eksponuje swoja tusze – w Polsce byloby to nie do pomyslenia. Polacy sa spoleczenstwem bardziej zakompleksionym. I non stop na wszystko uskarzaja sie. Tutaj, i to tez jest cos co chcialabym przeniesc, ze ludzie sa bardziej optymistycznie nastawieni i tacy sa bardziej, zawsze wszystko jest fine i nawet jesli zadasz takie pytanie i ktos mial taki dzien, to on o tym mowi. Dzisiaj ide kolo pani w szkole i pytam czy miala fajny dzien, a ona do mnie „Great day”. W Polsce nikt nie jest taki otwarty i nie przejawia w takich krotkich odpowiedziach, ze mial na przyklad super day. Polacy sa nie dosc ze zakompleksionym spoleczenstwem, to jeszcze non stop complain. Bo czasami naprawde nie ma sie na co uskarzac, ale juz maja taka mentalnosc. „Dzien dobry”, „Wcale nie taki dobry”,

odpowiadala babcia. Nawet jak niczego nie ma to zawsze sobie cos wymysla, zawsze cos w zanadrzu maja. Co mi sie jeszcze bardzo w moim kraju podoba co bym chciala przeniesc, ze Polacy sa bardzo family oriented, ze rodzina w zyciu czlowieka bardzo duza role odgrywa. Moze to jest cos co trudno by bylo do Ameryki przeniesc, z tego wzgledu ze Ameryka jest takim wielkim krajem. Ja sie tez tego obawiam, ze jak bede miala tylko dwojke dzieci, jedno dostanie prace w Nowym Jorku, drugie w Chicago, ja zostane w Californii i bedziemy sie widywali raz w roku. To jest dla nas bardzo przykre i bardzo mi sie podoba to ze w Polsce babcia bardzo duza role odgrywa w wychowaniu wnukow, i ze rodzina trzyma sie razem. I na przyklad, nie ma czegos takiego ze matka, to jest zawsze ktos do kogo zawsze sie mozesz zwrocic, nie musisz do niej telefonowac i pytac o pozwolenie jak jest w tym kraju. Nawet do matki sie tutaj dzwoni zeby zapytac sie czy mozesz do niej przyjechac, czy to jest OK. Wiec bardzo mi sie podoba ze Polacy sa tacy family oriented, bardzo bym to chciala przeniesc i jest mi zal moich dzieci i innych amerykanskich dzieci, ktore nie sa zzyte z babcia, ktore widza babcie 2, 3 razy w roku, jak babcia daleko mieszka i nawet oni to sami podkreslaja. Mojego meza supervisor ma jedna rodzine tutaj w Saratodze i oni sie czuja lucky z tego powodu, ze babcia mieszka w tym samym miescie, ze mozna i dzieci podrzucic do babci i dzieci sa blisko z kims kto jest spokrewniony krwia, a nie z kims obcym, ze nie potrzebuja opiekunki, nie potrzebuja nikogo obcego do wychowywania dzieci. A propos tego tematu co mi sie nie podoba i czego na pewno nie chcialabym przeniesc do mojego kraju, to ze mowi sie ze Ameryka jest taka profamily. Ja tego nie widze. Nie dosc ze stawia sie tutaj na kariere, to kobieta naprawde ma tutaj problem. Nie ma zadnego urlopu maciezynskiego. W Polsce jest na tyle dobrze rozwiniety system swiadczen maciezynskich. Tutaj nie ma urlopow maciezynskich, nie ma czegos takiego jak urlop wychowawczy, wiec kobieta nie jak ona jesli chce ale jak ma trudna sytuacje w domu, ze maz powiedzmy nie jest w stanie utrzymac tym bardziej ze oni maja wieksze potrzeby jak my.

AN INTERVIEW WITH FAMILY #5

K – Kate - the interviewer

G and A – Grazyna and Adam - the interviewees

K: So, how did you meet each other?

G: We've been married for 8 years.

A: This year it will be 9 years.

G: And, we've known each other since 1989, so that's what 12 years?

A: No, it's 2002, so, it's 13 years.

G: Wow, that's a lot.

K: And, you met here in the States.

A: Mhm.

K: And, you came here as an au-pair?

G: Yes.

K: And, you met while you were working.

G: Yes.

K: How did it happen that you actually got together?

G: Oh, it's a really funny story. I was here for one year, right? And, I lived with a family and that family let me go, they fired me. And, I don't really know why. I mean, that lady had a very interesting story, whatever. She didn't want any young girls living with her, so I ended up living with friends' cousin, and she was a very nice girl. I didn't know anybody and I met through another au-pair I met some people and this guy invited me for dinner, so I went with him and then we went to a bowling ally. He said do you want to go to the, to, do you want to go bowling and meet my friends?

A: The guy was from Mexico.

G: He was Mexican, yes.

A: He was studying at Menlo College.

G: So, he was, yeah, he was an international student here, and I went with him to dinner, and then to bowling. And, this is where I met Adam. He was with a group of students. And, this was the first time I ever went bowling, so this was an interesting experience. We beat the American team.

A: There were two Americans.

G: There were two Americans and the rest was a bunch of different international students, so this is the first time that I met Adam. And, we became friends through the girl who he used to know. She was Hungarian-Swiss. Oh, this is another interesting... She was born Hungarian, and she moved with her parents, her mom to Switzerland. So, we got to know Adam through Anies, her name was Anies. We started meeting together, and Adam was always somehow there, I don't know how that worked. Somehow, whenever I saw him, yes he was there. So, we became friends for... it wasn't that many months, because it was already... There weren't too many, right?

A: No, we met each other in October, and our first date was...

G: Halloween party, yes. So this is a very interesting story. So, I met him at the bowling ally, our first date was at Halloween party and we ended up winning the scavenger hunt.

There was like this very big scavenger hunt, it was very difficult, and we won. We got everything.

A: And, we won dinner.

G: And we won a dinner! So, we obviously had to go to the dinner. It was very fun. So, we first got to go to the dinner together. So, that was a free date. So, that was October, and I went back. When did I go back? For Christmas? No.

A: No. I think it was April, March or April.

G: April, or something like that because I remember I got there before summer holidays, or something like that. So, we knew each other for maybe six months?

A: Mhm.

G: Maybe six months. Before I went back. Yeah. And, you know we became friends, and we started going out. And, Adam had this beer experience, when he actually asked me out, because he said he couldn't do it when he was sober, so that was fun. And, then I guess...

A: So, she went back, and I decided... I just got out of the coast guard, I was there for 5 years, and I got out in November, before...

G: So, when I met him, he was the coast guard.

K: What's the coast guard?

A: It's like the Navy, but you patrol the coast. It's like the police around the water.

K: Ah, OK.

A: So, the first try out of the coast guard was I went to a computer company and in this computer company... she left for Poland, and I convinced my boss that I'll pay for my airline...

G: to sell computers to Poland.

A: Yes. And I'll make a deal with you, I'll pay for the ticket to Poland, I'll take vacation, but if I sell anything you'll pay for the whole trip. But, you also have to give me two computers, so I can give them to Walesa. I just picked that just because.

G: Adam was working very hard with his mind to figure out how to get to Poland, to have a good reason to do that.

A: This was the time when Walesa was running for the president. So, I went to Poland, and I told her the first thing we have to figure out how to get this computer to Walesa, otherwise I have to pay for the whole trip.

G: You also had some business... there were some people that you wanted to see, I remember that.

A: Right, during my staying there I had some conferences and stuff like that.

G: So, yes, so we went to Gdansk to Walesa. Because I knew some people, I was in the... not Solidarity, because I was in the University, so I was in the independent students' union, so I knew a bunch of people and I had connections. So, they called this one guy, who was actually in Solidarity, and he called Gdansk, and there were no problems, they called me, so we went to Gdansk. And we had a little audience with Walesa.

A: I got to meet Walesa, I got to give him a computer.

G: Yeah, Adam has this cute picture that they first blew off afterwards. His company blew it up and they...

A: And, then... speaking ahead...

G: Yes.

A: So, we got everything taken care of, came back. And, there is this computer show here called Contacts that happens every year, there was even one last year. We made those pictures very large, and they were in the booth, and from that we got about million dollars from the sales.

G: So, his crazy idea worked actually really well, because I remember...

A: because...

G: This company had a lot of sales.

A: So, during 2,5 almost 3 years of working there, I flew to Poland every 2 months, 3 months.

G: And, he went, and then the company just started selling to all these different countries because he went all over Europe.

A: Yeah, I went all over Europe.

G: So, out of this one coincidence with me came up this idea, and, man this company should be very thankful to you.

K: What a story!

A: So, over the course of following four years, Grazyna came back and forth here, and I went back and forth there.

G: I came here twice.

A: Yes.

G: For summer vacations.

A: Yes, and I went over 13, 14 times over the course of 4 years.

K: Wow. And Grazyna, you were doing school there?

G: Yes. Because, when I came here for about one year, I was done with the third year of my Master's. So, I went back to finish, so I had basically fourth and fifth year, because I had two years, and I had two years of school, right?

A: No, you went back there, but you didn't go to school then, because you went to Nigeria with your father.

G: Yeah, it wasn't two years, it was three years.

A: Yeah. Three and a half years. You went to Nigeria with your father for a while.

G: My father spent a lot of time there. When I was growing up, I basically went to high school in Nigeria. So, my father loves this place. So, I convinced him to go back and he did. And, I went to visit him for a while, and that's how I ended up coming here for one of the summer vacations, because I had this interesting trip from Nigeria, through the States, and back. And, I remember that's why I didn't have a problem with getting a visa, because I was worried... at that time it was hard to get a visa to the States. It's really... I never had any family here or anything, and I never had any problems. First time I got a visa, second time I got a visa. So, all in all, there was a plan. Someone had a plan up there. It must have been the case. Because you know, my dad when he saw Adam flying back and forth like this, he said, OK this guy is either crazy or is very rich.

A: Or neither. Just very stupid...

G: And, then he would say, see Californian people are so out of this world when it comes to the weather. And, Poland has very cold winters, right? And, he would come in this

very tiny leather jacket and his cowboy boots. My dad said, OK this guy must be very poor. He asked me, 'is he very poor or something, can't he afford buying a jacket?' To him it was a very warm jacket, because he was dressing in that leather jacket, so we just had a lot of fun. Yeah, we had to give him my dad's clothes, because you know... we have pictures of that time, when my dad gave him... it was so cold, so cold, it was freezing.

A: You know, the coldest it gets is 50 degrees.

G: Right, and even when you go to Tahoe, it's not that cold at all. From my perspective, it was very funny. And, still, this is something that I still don't understand about Californians, I would look outside, I see the thermometer, it's you know, 40 degrees Fahrenheit, and 5 or 6 degrees Celsius – that's cold! And, you go out there, and there are people in shorts. That still goes beyond my mind.

A: And then, the year that you came to visit right on Valentine's Day. It was the second time, or the third.

G: The second time, because I only came two, oh no, the third time. Because, we, you know, obviously, we spent hours on the phone. There is a little anecdote... Adam hadn't had a credit card at that time. Was it AT&T?

A: It was a Pacific Bell calling card, I gave her for the second trip.

G: Oh, no, I wasn't going to say that. Was it AT&T who gave you the credit card?

A: Oh, yes.

G: They didn't even do the background check, he spent so many hours on the phone with Poland, that they just sent him a credit card, pre-approved membership and everything, because he spent so much money. Oh, and he was going to say, he gave me the calling card number, and...

A: One of our first big lessons about the US.

G: That was... I felt like such a little idiot...

A: I gave her the calling card number. She flew first to New York, and I told her to call me when she gets to New York, to make sure that she is OK.

G: And, I did.

A: So, she calls me on the payphone using the calling card number, and everything is fine. Great. So, she gets to move on, I flew to Las Vegas, because there's another show in Las Vegas. And, I was there for two days, and I thought I would call my brother and remind him to pick me up at the airport. So, I call him on the payphone on the convention floor, using the calling card – it doesn't work. Hm, what's wrong with that? So, I call the operator, and she says, oh you went over your limit. Over the limit? It was my first call this month. No, no, no... Can you tell me how much it is now? No, we can't do it, because of the security reasons? You have to wait for your bill to arrive. So, I had to call collect to my brother to pick me up at the airport. I arrived on Thursday and the next day, there is a knock on the door. UPS was there with a small box from Pacific Bell, a box this big, by this big, by this big, with my phone bill. It was almost \$15,000 for the phone calls. Well, what happened, in New York at the airport, there were people with the binoculars...

G: Standing on the balcony...

A: They were standing on the balcony watching people taking the calling card numbers, and they would write them down and sell it to immigrants and say for \$15 you can call anyone in the world.

G: He had people, I mean he had phone calls sent almost one after another.

A: Simultaneously, China, Columbia, Argentina, Russia.

G: Fortunately, it was so obviously strange that they didn't give him too much of a hard time.

A: And, they also said I was a good customer before.

G: Well, yeah, but I don't call Columbia, Argentina, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and... I felt so bad, and yeah, it was my first lesson, I needed to be careful, and obviously now, when I type in numbers I keep my hand over it, but I'll never forget it, I felt so bad, he gave me this number, and I just... Well coming back to our story... Was it after my second visit? In the summer?

A: Mhm.

G: When you kind of proposed to me or something like that. We have some interesting stories because Adam proposed to me several times, I have all the rings to prove it.

A: Then, in summer of '92 we decided that you went back because you had to finish school, and you came here in February, on Valentine's Day.

G: Yes, we consciously knew that we were going to get married here. Because the whole story that we heard that if we followed the legal way, I mean this is not illegal way, but what they preferred you do is that you, the person with the Polish citizenship stays in Poland and the American comes there and signs the papers in the embassy, but that process takes about a year. So, we didn't find that very amusing, you know you're married and you're separated...

A: A year or two we found out, yes.

G: Right, and we had a couple of friends who were going through the same thing... And, we decided to get married here, and get the process going. Since this theoretical marriage was just going to be for the paper, it wasn't a big deal for us. So, what we were going to do later was we were going to get married in church in Poland, after this. So, the service was going to be very simple. Actually, it turned out to be very nice. We didn't expect it to be so nice. We went to Tahoe, but we didn't go to any of those civic...

A: We actually went to the Justice of Peace.

G: Chapel, or something. We went to the judge, and the judge was very nice, and he picked the special poem for us, and it was very, very surprisingly very nice moment for us. Although it was very funny, because when we went there, both of us, we were dressed pretty nicely, we were trying to make it a special occasion, and there was a couple coming out in shorts, and he had a t-shirt, and... So, we got married in front of the Justice of Peace, and we had Adam's parents with us.

A: For our witnesses.

G: For our witnesses, and we just stayed... And it was on the Fourth of ...

A: Second...

G: Second of July, so from now on we always go to Tahoe for the Fourth of July, because it's like our anniversary, so... So, yeah, it was the second of July. And, then my father was sick, and to cut the story short, we never were able to go and get married in

church in Poland. Instead, my dad had a surgery. So we basically, right after we got married on paper, and after I got my papers, no, I didn't have them, I got my temporal working permit.

A: You actually got the stamp in your passport.

G: Right after I had to get this special permit stamp to be able to travel, because I had to go to Poland. So I went and I stayed for 3 months. My dad had a surgery and he couldn't travel. So, that part of our story is a sad part because he wasn't able to do that. And then, we said OK no big deal we'll go through it; we'll have our ceremony. So, we found a church, St. Michael's Church, and the pastor was very nice, another Adam, Irish, he was just so great. And, here comes the sad part. My dad didn't get a visa. And, this was just something that blew our minds away, because my father traveled all over the place, he was everywhere. Even when it was so hard to get a visa to Great Britain, he had it. And, they didn't give him a visa. And, we had father Adam write a letter.

A: Congressman, senator...

G: I mean, we worked at this time for this company and I knew that girl... Anyway, we had a phone number to Clinton's secretary, we talked to her, and they basically told us: the embassies are their own kingdoms, we can't do anything to help you. So, it was so frustrating. Because, I remember Adam talked to the embassy in Warsaw so many times, and they only talked to people from the States for an hour in the morning.

A: Hour their time in the morning, so it's midnight here.

G: No, no, it was the opposite. It was the evening their time, and it was very early here. It was 6.00 in the morning.

A: Yeah, yeah, it was the afternoon there.

G: And, only one hour. We just couldn't understand why. And, we really don't know till now, why.

A: No.

G: So, anyway. It was just very sad, and we were very upset, and we talked with my dad, and we decided all together that it was very important that we would get married in the church, because we felt we had to do it in front of God, it was very important. And, it was very hard, we decided it was more important to do it for God not for people. And, yeah, it was very sad, because my dad wasn't there and I'm the only daughter, and my mom...

A: She is the only child.

G: The only child, and my mom is not alive. So, it was just really really hard, but we got married, and right after basically we went to Poland, and...

A: This is in December.

G: And, Adam went to the Embassy, and I remember you saying that this is the guy that you talked on the phone, you recognize his voice, you were so upset. And, Adam had all this paper work prepared. And, to cut the story short, they gave my dad a visa.

A: They called him on the phone and said, come to the embassy and bring your passport.

G: But, it was like you know *musztarda po obiedzie*. It's too late. It was ridiculous.

A: And, I wrote this lengthy letter. And, I brought a computer and a printer, so I could make it look very nice.

G: Yeah, Adam made sure that it looked very proper, you know? And, to me, it always seemed like at that point when my dad got a refusal, somebody made a decision, and then, they didn't want to seem like they are idiots so they didn't want to change that decision. But, it was just another decision.

A: Right, so in the letter I wrote, I explained my background in the military, trying to be as patriotic sounding as possible, and on and on.

G: We just wanted to explain that we never did anything wrong. I don't know why, even if he stayed here, which he wouldn't have.

A: But, he got a 10-year visa.

G: The next day, right?

A: Yeah, we left...

G: We left, and they called and told him to come. But, it was too late.

K: Wow, so did your dad get to come here?

G: Oh, yes, almost every year.

A: Six times...

G: He's been here quite a few times already, and always complains. I mean it's not easy to make the trip here. I mean for the last few years it's been really hard, because we've started our family, and I just had a baby so we can't go. So, yeah, since then, he hasn't had any problems. It's just that the beginning was very hard. Maybe they wanted him to stay in Poland, but why?

A: We'll never be sure.

G: Yeah, we'll never be sure. We even asked...

A: I think it was just he went there one day and someone misunderstood what he said, or had a bad day, or they decided no, and from that on is just a no. Even the person from the stage program that we've talked to said that the very first job that these guys get out of diplomatic school is...

G: Counties that they really don't want to go to.

A: Right, Poland, the Eastern Block. And, you're the first person, who...

G: Yeah, and they are very young there too. Even our Aga, I've talked to her even today. They have such a really really tough procedure, they give them such a hard time to grandmas and grandpas. And, then all those terrorists come to US. The process is not right, something is not right, but anyway.

K: Let's see. Was there anything, like you were saying about the calling card, I was thinking about that, any conflict, not especially with you guys, but any conflicts or problems that had something to do with cultural differences?

G: Oh, I'm sure there were a lot.

A: From the simplest things, Americans like cold drinks. Poles do not. It was a hard thing at the beginning. I went to Poland I wanted a coke with ice. Even though it was freezing outside, I wanted coke with ice.

G: And, they said, we only give ice for whisky.

A: I mean, from the simplest things like that...

G: I guess, you know, that most Poles, for example I like to drink tea. Some Poles do, some Poles don't, right? It's not like we all drink tea. But, I like to drink tea. So, Adam tried to be nice and so he made me some tea. He poured some water and then put a tea

bag in it. When I saw it, to me this is not tea, this is toilet water. I mean, he learnt his lesson. He learnt to boil the water to make a proper tea. There is a lot of differences. The short sleeve kind of thing, you know? I always say, it's cold outside, we need a jacket. Well, I don't need. Well, but I do. I might have to go to see the baby.

K: That's OK.

A: Oh, I know that she always had a hard time with not so much American, but Californian thing, oh we should have some lunch some time; oh, give me a call, we'll have lunch. Everybody tries to be, they act like they are your friend, and actually they are not. And, most Polish people don't like that, they are not going to say: give me a call and let's have lunch. If they say that, they really mean it.

K: They will call.

A: They will call.

G: And, here it's like: I'll never see you again, bye.

K: I always felt the same. I was always waiting for the call.

A: It's like you should have called me!

G: Oh, OK. Here is another example. In Poland, or at least when I was there, we always wear slippers in the house, especially when it's cold. This guy never wore slippers, and that just drove me crazy.

A: I never wore PJs.

G: Yeah. That's another thing.

K: Did you have to change it, or you just stayed your way.

A: Oh, no, no, no. It's taken 9 years, but it's slowly.

G: You wear slippers from time to time, right?

A: Yes.

G: You wear PJs from time to time. It's very funny, because now that we have our daughter, Ania says: Tata, gdzie sa twoje kapcie? (Dad, where are your slippers?). And, she will bring them from the garage. It's hilarious, she's been brought up in the manners that are ours, and she is transferred... Gdzie sa twoje kapcie.

K: Do they speak Polish, your girls?

G: Well, Basia is 6 months, so theoretically, she speaks nothing.

A: The other one does.

G: Yeah, Ania speaks Polish, and she speaks English.

A: And, she switches between the two really well.

G: And, she speaks English to Adam, Polish to me. And, she speaks some Polish to Adam and it's really funny, because she knows that he doesn't understand some of the things, so she will say to me in Polish, and then she'll say: Powiedz tatusiowi (tell daddy). And, then he gets upset and says: I understand it. And, then she says: I don't know, powiedz tatusiowi. But, she doesn't need to tell anybody, because somehow he understands.

A: Or, she will say the word in Polish, but she will break it up into...

G: Oh, she says...

A: Phonetically.

G: She looks at Adam and she says: Skar-pe-tki. (socks) I have to go, so you can either stop it, or continue talking.

K: I have some questions for Adam.

A: OK.

K: Let's see. What was it that you had to give up, do you remember anything, like cultural things, anything that you had to give up, or learn? You can think about it, and I'll ask you another question. Do you consider Grazyna Polish or American, or something between?

A: She's both. She just became a citizen, after being here for so long, just this past year, but I don't want her to become Americanized. This was not the reason to marry somebody from Poland. I want her to be Polish. I want my children to know books, to know about both cultures, to experience both sides. To me American women are money hungry, you know? Especially here in California, they don't really want to have family, they don't want to settle down, they don't want to live together. They want to be their own independent person. They'd rather have someone else raising their kids, and you know that's what I like about Grazyna. She loves being a mother. And, there's nothing wrong with getting out of the house. I really want her to continue being a teacher, she can get out of the house and meet people; too much at home is not good. So, that's the answer to your question, yes, I want her to be Polish.

K: And, so you think that it's good for the girls to learn about Polish culture?

A: Of course. We have a satellite TV. The reason why we have it is because there is a Polish channel there. When our daughter wants to watch, she always watches bajeczka (children show), she likes those little cartoons from Poland. And, she watches Winnie the Pooh from Poland all in Polish. We bring tapes from Poland and watch them here. Yeah, I want them to know that they are Polish. And American...

K: What was it that you had to learn to make this life with Grazyna?

A: Communication. Most of American men don't communicate very well. I was like that at the beginning. We're taught to be very quiet, keep things to yourself, do what is expected of you, and you don't need to tell anyone what is going on inside, because you're the man of the house, you're supposed to be carrying, to bring the money, the father figure... And, from my feelings, going to Poland I see that Polish men are so, some Polish men are slightly different, and that is they communicate a lot better. Polish people in general love to talk, they love to express their feelings, whereas we're not used to it. I'll try to think of more things.

K: I'm sure there are a lot of things.

A: Another thing is the religious side. Americans believe in God, we are a Christian country, and we go to church on perfect days on Christmas, Easter, you know? Those are the major days, right. With Grazyna, it's every Sunday. So, over 9 years, we have a custom to go every Sunday, and to go as often as possible. And, of course, we go to Polish church; we don't go to English speaking church. So, we get a lot of culture from this side. And, kind of tradition side, Americans, my family, we celebrate Christmas on Christmas Day, we didn't go to church. Santa would come at night when we are asleep, and all those good things we would do during the day. Grazyna's side is, you know they have Wigilia, the friends would come over the night before, and everybody in the house expresses their best wishes to everyone that is in the house. In our American tradition,

we don't do that. For an American the first year might be difficult to express wishes to everybody; you don't know 90% of those people.

K: That's so interesting.

A: So, those kinds of traditions, they start to grow in... Oh, yes, I prefer Polish food; or Polish slash Grazyna slash American food: for Christmas we had, this lady came to our house and she made... Grazyna made this filling and this lady made... Grazyna made pierogis a hundred of them, first half of them we ate right away. So, we had very international food. So, it is not a hard thing, I mean kielbasa, no problem. Although, Polish people like soups, Americans don't.

K: Really?

A: Because soups that they eat are mostly Campbell soups, instant soups, so it's hard for me to say: Yes, I'll have soup. Soup is not in my blood. And, sort of like back to the ice. Even if it's a 100 degrees outside she won't have anything that's cold; cold is not good for you. Let's see what else?

K: Did you notice anything in Grazyna that she changed from the first time you saw her, or the first couple of years? Did she change culturally somehow?

A: I mean, she learned what to say and what not to say to people. A good example is the telemarketers, they call you up and they start asking questions, she had no problems telling them and I said: No, stop! And tried to explain her these kinds of people are not the ones whom you want to tell where you live and who you are. And, she said, well they were just asking what kind of food we eat. Well, we don't tell them that stuff. You don't know who can hear this. Or, another example is the guy who came up to the front door and says: Hi, I'm selling stuff. Well, who are you? Let's see your license. How do I know you're not someone who's just looking into my house to figure out is this a good place to rob? You know, these kinds of things. I had to remind her, but she got really good at it, you know? It's very easy to be suckers in US coming from Europe, it's very very easy. So, that's a good thing that she learned that there are some things that you shouldn't say.

K: Is there anything in her, something Polish, that you don't or didn't like. When you went to Poland and you saw all those Polish people, was there anything that you didn't like in their behavior?

A: I mean, OK. Every country has its problems. The first trip I took there, I'm asking Grazyna what's this building what's that building. Because to an American coming there every building looks like a government building. And, she was like, that's an apartment row. Oh, that looks like some office building. Every building had a flag on it. So, for me, an American, it must be a government building, because you don't put a flag on every office or apartment buildings like that. That looks so official with an eagle on it, right? So, everything looked like a government building. That's the first trick. And then, of course, as we're going through down town and I see all those guys hanging out in front of those shops with the little bags. What are they doing? Oh, that's where you can buy alcohol at.

K: Yeah, you don't see people like that here.

A: You don't see them in front of the store, but you see them still, you still see them, not congregating, but you still see them. Another thing that I thought would be interesting

was that what we take for granted here is water. Here, we turn the tub on and we get nice water, in Poland or in Warsaw, you always, or every other day we had to drive a couple blocks away, or to walk around the corner, and get the special water. Are you from Warsaw?

K: Kalisz.

A: Did you have to go and get your water?

K: No, but we couldn't drink what we had at home.

A: Right, so you had to go and get your water, yes?

K: Or, we had to boil everything.

A: Grazyna, I was just telling Kate about my first trip to Poland, asking you, oh, what's that building over here?

G: Everything was a government building. So, what is this? I don't know!

A: I think the main reason was because every building had a flag with an eagle on it.

G: No.

A: Yes.

G: Every building he was asking me about was just people's apartment, and he...

A: And, Warsaw in general, a very gray city, especially in 1990, it was very depressing.

G: Yes, we don't know recently, it probably changed, but anyway, it was very gray.

A: And, the architecture that the Russians imposed was flat. And then, Grazyna's father was coming here, we were looking for the first place to buy, and his saying: Everything here is made out of sticks, it's going to fly away.

G: We had to help them understand why the homes in California are made out of paper and wood. Because if you kick it hard, it's going to fall. I remember it was very funny.

K: Grazyna, I was telling Adam that, and I want to ask you also. Do you prefer people call you Polish, or American or Polish-American, or European. Which one do you prefer? If they ask you: Who are you? What do you say?

G: You know, I have to say, that it has evolved. When I came here, I entirely wanted to be Polish. And, that was it. I was Polish, I was from Poland, I never denied it, I never hid it. I'm like Schwarzenegger, I can even talk with a heavy accent if I want to, but it depends. Sometimes I do it, sometimes I don't. But, throughout the years I've been living here, I started accepting the identity of a Polish-American. It's taken a while, but I have realized that this is my home now. I didn't want to give up any of my Polishness, if there is a word like that, but this is a different reality. I'm always a person who wants to be really involved, so of course I had to start working at the Polish-American congress. I became a secretary. But, that was something that I have realized that, but it took me 7 years, and it took me 7 actually to get my citizenship, because I'll tell you honestly, I didn't want one. I had this thing in my head, I have my Polish citizenship, so why should I become American? But, then I realized that this is my new home, and that I should have an American citizenship. And, what if something happens to me or whatever I wouldn't be accepted a full citizen, but a resident, and it's different. And, nowhere does it say that I have to give up my Polish citizenship. So, it took me 7 years to understand that there is nothing wrong with that. And, I accepted it. And, I just got my citizenship, I just got it. So, yeah, I progressed from being Polish to Polish-American. And, I'm happy with that. I know that many Poles have created a very negative image of a Polish person

or Polish-American. There are a lot of Polish jokes, and a lot of negative pictures of a Polish person. But, that's not entirely the case, and what I've noticed in my personal experience is that Americans really appreciate if you value your ethnic background. And, I think a lot of people who are treated maybe a little bit negatively or maybe a little bit, not as equals... those people will try to really hide their background, and sometimes it's a joke. I do translations and I meet all kinds of people. And, I meet those people sometimes like those two guys, I don't even remember their names, but they come here, they want the translation done.

K: They are Polish.

G: They are Polish. They talk to me on the phone in English. This is how it was, they talked to me in English, and they needed a translation. They come here and they speak in this really broken Polish to me, and then, they start talking to Adam and they speak English like, oh my gosh, Ania speaks better. And, they just didn't know the language yet, so they just pretended like they already forgot Polish, and they've been here for two years. And, to me it's a joke, because obviously they have a problem with their own realization. But, you know there are a lot of people like that. Personally, I don't think I've ever met a person who treated me as a less, because I was something else.

A: I think from the American side, most people don't remember Polish jokes. Most people don't. I mean Polish jokes were in '70s and '80s.

G: Oh, come on. There are people around going and saying: What is this? A Polish digital calculator.

A: But, it's not as prevalent as it used to be.

G: Yes.

A: It really really isn't.

G: But, when somebody meets you, like when I met you. And, you know, you bring me to your grandpa, and the first thing he says is: Oh, I know a Polish joke. He doesn't say: Oh, I know a Polish writer, or...

A: OK, as I said, I'm saying, it's a different age. You get jokes on everybody. So, he wasn't being mean. He's got jokes on everybody. But, going back to your question: is there anything on a Polish side that I dislike? And, there is nothing in Grazyna, but in a Polish community in general, there is this tendency to create a lot of noise, and do no action, to create a lot of gigantic problems for themselves and never accomplish anything except from, I'm sorry, bitch and moan, and do so much to piss everybody else, and no one talks to each other and accomplishes anything.

G: OK. I have to introduce you. Adam has gotten to know Polish people very well. He is very good about it. This is I think the huge difference between Anglo Saxons, and their upbringing. This is so different. Americans are very pragmatic, they want to see it, see it organized, and they want it done. Polish people can sit for hours.

A: No, no, weeks, months, years, and still they're arguing about it... And then, you know what, when the guy finally dies, they'll say: You know what? He was right. I mean, everyone complains about Polish fair, about this, or Polish-American congressman in Chicago, he sucks. But, you know what, they reelect the guy every year. Why?

G: But, that is so true. What do I always say when I come from the meetings? Why are they doing this? Remember what I always say? It's the Polish people arguing, and I'm

just: OK. Every time I come from the meeting, I always say: Again, we spent 3 hours talking about this and that, and we didn't accomplish anything.

A: Or, I go to the Polish-American engineering place and every time I go they've started a new group. So, I was like Poles like to start these groups.

G: And, there is one person in each group.

A: And, those are the same people who've started the other groups. We have the Polish-American Congress, don't you think we should be in one group together with one voice. No, no, we can't have that. We can't have one voice, there is 500 of us.

G: And, that just drives me crazy. I mean this is a basic, I mean the life out there is different. Like for example, when my dad comes here, we have those conversations, the outcome is always... you just won't understand each other, because you have a different understanding, but that's a good story for you, because, for all those years that they've known each other, tatus (daddy) and Adam, have experienced and stuff. You've really grown to understand each other, because my dad is an old generation man, he fought in a war, and is a very Polish person.

A: No, he's a Polish person, but...

G: He is an older man.

A: He is, but he is pragmatic. He is not like these guys who sit here and argue over the color of this chocolate for hours and hours. And, it's like why even argue about it? Eat the damn thing. He won't get in any of those stupid discussions.

G: Yeah, that's true.

K: Are you talking about Polish people living in the States, or you actually noticed the same thing in Poland?

G: I think it's the same thing...

A: I think it's the same in Poland.

G: I think anywhere they are in the world it is the same, either in Poland, or...

A: But, you know I met some Poles from Poland that lived in France for a while and that were not like that. What's his name, the computer, the printer guy?

G: I don't know.

A: He wasn't like that. He was very pragmatic. I had a lot of business deals with Poles.

G: Oh, and that's why I'm saying, he met some amazing people. And, he knows Poles.

K: I've got those six questions that I e-mailed you before...

G: Oh, yeah, this is a very good thing, because we just had Christmas, and we just had this conversation, and we had an argument, not an argument, a vivid conversation.

K: Mhm.

G: So, when are we opening the presents? Wigilia, or the Christmas morning?

A: Yeah, which one is it?

G: And, you know what? We did half half. This year we decided that our presents we're going to open on Wigilia.

A: Yes, our presents. But, my parents, when they come over, we open them on Christmas Day, because to them it's Christmas.

G: So, we open presents on both days.

A: Previously, opening the presents was on Wigilia, and stockings on Christmas Day.

- G: So, I'm such a bad person that even if there is only the two of us, we still have Wigilia, and we still have 12 or 13 dishes.
- A: Another thing about cultural beliefs is name days. And, name days are very important in Poland, that's true.
- K: Right.
- G: Yeah, Adam has a name day, did you know that?
- K: No.
- G: It's a dzien dziecka, actually, the first of June is Adam's name day.
- K: Do you like it?
- A: Any holiday is a good day. That's something else she will not give up, that's something else we shouldn't give up. Especially for those small presents.
- G: Yeah.
- K: What about those stockings? Did you have stockings in Poland? That's kind of new.
- G: Yeah, that's a new thing, so that's what I accepted, but it's taken me a while too.
- A: No, you did well.
- G: But, did I put anything in your stocking at the beginning?
- A: No, but I put something in yours.
- G: Well, that's what I'm saying.
- A: Maybe the first year.
- G: I felt very bad, because he didn't get anything in his stocking, yeah. But, we do Swietego Mikolaja, which on the 6th of December, so we do that, and Adam has accepted it very readily.
- A: Very readily, I have no problems with that.
- G: So we do that.
- K: So, you exchange presents on that day?
- G: Mhm, Santa comes at night, we don't. But, in the morning we all have something.
- K: OK, cool.
- K: Adam was telling me about food, that you like cooking Polish food.
- G: Oh, yeah, oh yeah, that's a practice, that's right.
- A: So, making soups is not American. They are not in my blood.
- G: What cooking?
- A: No, cooking in general is not American. Soups.
- G: Oh, soups. I do Polish foods, and he actually likes a lot of them, just not the red barszcz, because he doesn't like beets, but...
- A: But, the mushroom soup is fine.
- G: But, he likes a lot of things.
- K: Was there anything that when you came from Poland you stopped doing and you felt good about it. For example, when you go shopping in Poland...
- A: You carry plastic bags with you?
- G: OK, yeah, in Poland I would always carry plastic bags in my purse, just in case. I forgot about it.
- K: Yes, they never gave you any bags in the store; you had to pay for them.
- A: OK, the practice of having to drive, OK, I'm going to this one shop that is on one side of Warsaw to get this bread, because it's the only place that has good bread. And then, I

have to drive to this other part of town to get meat, because that's the only guy I trust. Then I have to go to this third part of Warsaw to get fish, and then this spice guy...

G: Yes, one of those things that I don't have to do here is the public transportation.

A: You don't have to boil your milk. In Poland you guys boil the milk.

G: And, in Warsaw, because it's so unsafe, and here it's not safe either, but you don't have this feeling being so... you feel safer to have locks. We had four or five locks on the door in the house.

A: I remember this one very long key, you had to put it this way, turn three times this way, three times this way, half way out, turn it that way, back in this way... If you messed it up, you had to start all over again.

G: Yes, I rented an apartment for one year, when my dad moved to Nigeria, and they had the strangest security locks. That was too funny.

G: And, yes dressing for people. Here, you feel very free, if I dressed like this in Poland, they would think I'm a beggar. You are so free here, that you can do whatever you want, but if you don't have a self discipline, you start looking like a... because nobody cares. I remember having this conversation with my dad some time ago, because he went the other way. He started wearing sweats only. He wouldn't put his shirt on, and all the suits he brought, and he said 'I'm never going to wear them'. And, I said, 'Nobody expects you to wear them. You should do it for yourself, and you'll feel good, and people who will see that will appreciate it.' And, then after some time he told me, 'Yeah, I noticed there are men wearing suits here, too'. So, it's actually true. You don't have to do it to show off, but you do it for yourself. Again, there are some holidays, like Thanksgiving, that we celebrate here, the way other Americans do. They have turkey; we have turkey.

A: The 4th of July.

G: We celebrate the 4th of July.

K: Halloween?

G: Well, Halloween is a holiday that personally I don't really like. We do celebrate it in a modified fashion. So, we dress up, but we don't have witches, spiders. The next day is the All Saints' Day. When we were single it was a lot of fun. But, when we have kids we don't want that. This is a small child and this is a scary thing. So, what we do we dress up in nice clothes, princesses, ferries, and we have candy.

A: We go to one person's house that we know.

G: We go to people that we know. So, we don't have to go to strangers. We just do it with friends, and we visit each other. And, shopping is very different experience here. The way you shop is very different.

A: I'll add to that shopping experience. She's fully adopted shopping on the internet. She'd rather shop on the internet than get out of the house.

G: I was gonna get to the fact that shopping is a completely different experience here, I was just starting... People live for shopping. If I need to do shopping and I don't have time, I want to do it the most efficient way.

A: And, when the Webvan went out of business, she was very sad.

G: OK, here is the deal. Something that I adopted for pure pleasure is the convenience of life, of everyday life. Everything, there is a lot of things here, that are convenient. And, this is good. Starting from cleaning chemicals for the house, through the

convenience of shopping, through the convenience of fast food, through the convenience of restaurants, traveling, meaning going anywhere. Adam can say, when we traveled through Poland, he tried to go pee on the road. Yeah, here is the forest, go and hide behind the first bush. And, here, stops everywhere, easy to travel with a little baby, hotels everywhere, that's a huge advantage. Oh, and Americans are very straightforward, they ask personal questions.

A: Related to money, related to job, related to your personal...

G: We prefer to have *domniemanie* (conjecture) that would lead you to a conclusion. And, you are the one who will come up with a conclusion. Americans are not going to waste their time, coming up with conclusions. They ask questions. We do it within a group of our friends. And, it takes a long time to even get to a threshold where I can ask certain questions, but there are certain questions that I don't want to ask, such as how much money do you earn. And, Adam meets a person and 10 minutes later he asks this question, and it kills me. I just want to hide my face. And, he says: 'so, what do you do? why don't you do that?'. And, he just asks very open questions. And, then I think what is it that Americans don't get upset about it.

A: Because, Americans think, you know, if somebody asked me a question that I don't want to answer, I say: 'I don't want to talk about it.' So, you don't want me to ask this question, but unless you ask this question, you will never know.

G: And, Poles get offended, so even we were in situation, where we were having a conversation with a person. And, when this person leaves, I told Adam: 'What the hell did you think you were doing?' And, he said: 'What?' and I said: 'You don't do that!' Oh, and one of the things that came up to my mind was that the customer is always right here. And, I guess, in Poland they are adapting things, that the business environment is more now, but when I was there it wasn't like that. So, I remember I thought to myself that I got very spoiled here, because somebody messed up something in the store, and I was so upset 'why did you do this? I ordered something and you brought me something else.' And, it's something that I really learned here. Because in Poland, if somebody gave me something wrong, or messed up on my order I would just deal with it, I would shut up and I would be 'OK, I'll do that'. But, I learned here that it's not right. I learned how to say, and I could never do it before, I learned how to say: 'this is not right'. If someone, let's say, oh, I'll give you an example. The guy that sprays for ants here he comes and he sprays and two days later we have ants. This is a problem, he just came and sprayed and now we have ants. Before I would say, you know maybe it's just a coincidence, and he will come next month. But, now I will call and say: 'what's going on here? You just did this, and you obviously didn't do a good job'. This is something that I learned here, I guess some confidence. I think I'm learning to stand up for myself, because there are so many different situations here, and you just have to stand up for yourself. I learned a lot of it here, through my experience of working here in a business, in the computer industry, which was totally because of Adam. He kind of made me do that because I really didn't want to. I thought I could never do it, and of course I did. And, it was great. And, I was promoted because I am an intelligent person, and you don't really need too much of it, just some intelligence, so I did just fine. And, you know if I stayed in a computer industry I would probably be doing really well by now, because I

started as an IQ tester, and I was a manager in a few years, and I manage like 18 people in my laboratory, so it was... I did really well, and I enjoyed it. But, I made a conscious decision that I'm going to stick with teaching. And, I'm glad, because personally I don't think I'm made for that. I was just stressed out all the time. I probably would have ulcers by now. But, you know, that taught me a lot. That taught me to stand up for myself and stuff like that that I didn't know in Poland.