Chapter 1

Introduction

When I arrived in the Netherlands to start my doctoral studies four years ago, emigration from Eastern Europe was a popular topic in public debate. Every day headlines in Dutch newspapers informed about the expected influx of immigrants after Eastern European countries joined the European Union. These articles expressed concerns related to socio-economic issues, but also, in an indirect way, a salient anxiety evoked by the approaching fusion with “the unknown East”. It was apparent that the topic of our research project was of great social importance. Later, experiencing myself the challenges of immigration and Eastern-Western differences, as well as hearing the stories told by my immigrant respondents, my conviction about the practical importance of our studies became even stronger. The migration research carried out hitherto was almost entirely focused on non-European immigrants, implicitly assuming that adjustment problems occur only when an immigrant’s culture of origin and the host culture are relatively distant. In the same vein, many cross-cultural studies focused on “remote” cultures, e.g., Western and Non-Western (African or Oriental), implicitly assuming that differences within European national cultures are negligible. Meanwhile, the statistics indicate that most of the cultural contacts in Europe occur between European national cultures (Statistics Netherlands, 2006). The present dissertation focused on Western and Eastern European cultures. What characteristics help Eastern Europeans to adjust to Western European society, and what are the similarities and differences in the individual characteristics of members of three Eastern European cultures and one Western European culture was the main theme of the present dissertation.

Since all but the first and last chapter of this thesis are submitted journal papers, some overlap was unavoidable.

Immigration from Eastern to Western Europe

Until the late 80s social mobility between East and West Europe was very restricted due to the political division of Europe. The beginning of the 90’s brought political changes that facilitated cultural and economic exchange, and increased population movements between East and West Europe. Throughout the communist era the reasons for emigration often were political persecution and emigrants’ desire to improve their economic status. Currently, it seems that it is economic motivations for emigration that dominate. Social and economic transitions in Eastern Europe created
unemployment and difficulties with adaptation to market requirements among the working class, the rural population, and the poorly educated. These developments stimulated unskilled labourers to find work abroad. It is thus they who form the biggest group of immigrants from Eastern to Western Europe (Iglicka, 2000). In addition to economic motivations, a number of people migrate also with the aim of starting a new life with a partner of a foreign nationality. Recent statistics indicate a growing number of marriage immigrants from Eastern Europe in the Netherlands (Harmsen, 1999). During the 1990s Dutch immigration policy aimed at attracting “knowledge immigrants” (Doomernik, Penninx, & Van Amersfoort, 1997). This policy resulted in the immigration of well-educated professionals – mostly medical personnel and computer specialists. Furthermore, European programs of student and university staff exchange also stimulated the emigration of this group from Eastern to Western Europe. Whether for work, love or study – more and more people migrate within Europe. It has been estimated, for example, that about one and a half million Polish people left Poland for short or long-term emigration after Poland joined the European Union in May 2004 (Lipiński, 2006). In 2006, the estimated number of immigrants from Poland, Russia and Hungary living in the Netherlands amounts, respectively, to 34831, 35962, and 5736 (Statistics Netherlands, 2007). Freedom to travel, common economy, currency, legislation, and governmental institutions within the EU increased the population movement and the process of merging of national cultures. Statistics show that in last year about seven million people, which is 2% migrated within the EU, and this number will continue to increase in the future (Eurostat, 2007). It seems that we witness, nowadays, the formation of a European multinational society, consisting of individuals with diverse national backgrounds. Conceivably, cultural differences between European nations will diminish in the future. However, at present they still exist. Studying them may help us to better understand the nature of these differences and to develop acceptance for diversity.

Differences between the four national cultures under study
Although the four national cultures under study belong to the broader European culture, noticeable differences can nonetheless be found between theses cultures. Aside from the most apparent – such as language differences (Dutch is a Germanic language; Polish is a Slavic language with a Latin alphabet; Russian is a Slavic language with a Cyrillic alphabet; and Hungarian is a Finno-Ugric language), there are differences forged by recent history. In the past the Netherlands was a part of the so called “Western Bloc”, where people could enjoy democracy and freedom of speech, whereas Poland, Hungary and Russia were parts of the “Eastern (or Communist) Bloc”, where democracy and freedom of speech were very limited. This
division resulted in big economic differences; the Netherlands is listed as the 9th most affluent country in the world as measured by GDP per capita, whereas Hungary, Poland and The Russian Federation, although now economically blossoming, are much less wealthy: these countries are ranked respectively at 39th, 48th and 59th position in terms of GDP per capita (HDR, 2006). Accordingly, the welfare system in the Netherlands is far more developed giving Dutch people more existential security than the welfare systems in Eastern European countries. A better economy and a better welfare system contribute to a higher satisfaction with life and a higher general health reported in the Netherlands, as compared to Central and Eastern European countries. In the Netherlands Satisfaction with Life ranked 15th in the world, while in Poland, Hungary, and Russia – 99th, 107th, and 167th, respectively (UN, 2006). People’s perceptions of their health and level of control over their life was also found to be better in the Netherlands than in the three eastern European countries (Carlson, 1998). Also the percentage of the population with higher (university or college) education differs in the four countries: 18% in Dutch society; as compared to 7% in Poland; 11% in Russia and 9% in Hungary (CBS, 2006; HCSO, 2001; PCSO, 1996; CIA, 2007). Religiosity is lower in the Netherlands than in the three Eastern European countries: 41% of Dutch people are not affiliated to any religion, 31% are Roman Catholic, 20% are Protestant (Dutch Reformed or Calvinist), and 5.5% are Muslim; in Poland, 90% are Roman Catholics, 1.3% Eastern Orthodox, and 0.3% Protestants; in Hungary, 52% are Roman Catholic, 19% are Protestant, 3% - 14% declare themselves non-believers; in Russia there are 15-20% Russian Orthodox, 10-15% Muslims, and 30-40% are non-believers (CIA, 2007). Differences in religiosity and traditionalism are probably related to attitudes towards the family and children in the four countries. Statistics show, for example, that the average age of marriage is the eldest in the Netherlands (28 for women and 31 for men), a bit younger in Hungary (26 for women and 28 for men) and in Poland (for women 24 and for men 27), and the youngest in Russia (21.8 for women and 24.8 for men) (UNICEF, 2002; UNFPA, 1990). Also the average age for women to give birth to a first child is the eldest in the Netherlands - 28.6 years old, followed by Hungary - 25.1, Poland - 24.5, and in Russia - 22.7 (NationMaster, 2003). The ratio of dissolved marriages differs in the four societies as well; in 2004 the Russian Federation had the highest divorce rate of the four countries with 4.42 divorces per 1000 residents, while Hungary, the Netherlands and Poland had 2.44, 1.91 and 1.48, respectively (United Nations Statistics Division, 2004). Differences are also found in policies promoting gender equality: the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary, and Russia rank respectively 7th, 30th, 41st and 62nd in the world on the Gender Empowerment Measure (HDR, 2006). Differences between the cultures
under study were found in cross-cultural psychological studies. For example, Bond and colleagues found that Russian respondents scored higher (M=3.34, SD = 0.30), than Hungarian (M=2.98, SD = 0.41), and Dutch (M = 2.89, SD = 0.37) on dynamic externality, the social axiom referring to the general belief that effort, knowledge and careful planning will lead to positive results (Bond, Leung, Au, Tong, & Chemonges-Nielson, 2004). In the same study Russian respondents scored higher (M= 2.98, SD = 0.38) than Hungarian (M= 2.90 SD=0.47), and Dutch (M=2.59, SD=0.47) on cynicism – the dimension referring to a negative view of human nature (a Polish sample was not included in this study). Hofstede (1980) found that respondents from the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary and Russia score differently on cultural dimensions: Power distance, Individualism-collectivism, Uncertainty avoidance, Masculinity-femininity, Long vs short-term orientation. Power distance was the lowest in the Netherlands (the calibrated position was 38), as compared to Hungary (46), Poland (68) and Russia (93). Individualism was equal in the Netherlands and Hungary (80), lower in Poland (60) and the lowest in Russia (39). Masculinity was the highest in Hungary (88), lower in Poland (64), Russia (36) and the Netherlands (14). Uncertainty avoidance was the highest in Russia (95), lower in Poland (93), and Hungary (82) and the lowest in the Netherlands (53). Long term orientation was the highest in Hungary, lower in the Netherlands and lower again in Poland (32) (no data available for Russia) (http:/www.geert-hofstede.com). In sum, the three Eastern European cultures seem to be more similar to each other, than each of them are to Dutch culture.

**Acculturation: Definition and Historical Perspective**

When culturally disparate people come into continuous direct contact with each other, the cultural differences between them tend to become salient and their original cultural patterns may undergo changes under the influence of the other culture (Bochner, 1982). This process is called acculturation. The term acculturation was introduced by American anthropologists as early as the 1880s (Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000). Numerous definitions of acculturation have been presented in the literature, most of them adaptations of the definition proposed by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits, 1936 (quoted from Arends-Tóth, 2003):

*Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. (p. 149)*
Although changes in both cultural groups are implied in this definition, in fact most changes occur in the non-dominant group as a result of influence from the dominant group. Consequently, migration research focuses on changes which migrants undergo, more than on changes which they induce in the host society. Acculturation was originally defined as a group-level phenomenon; later the term *psychological acculturation* (Graves, 1967) was proposed, to be replaced afterwards by the term *adjustment*.

**Facets of Immigrants’ Adjustment**

Leaving familiar surroundings and starting a new life in a foreign country is a major life-transition for an immigrant. It is easy to imagine that such a life-transition might be problematic. Language barriers, cultural differences, the lack of a social network are all a challenge to immigrants’ adjustment. The term *adjustment* (or *adaptation*) is used in the present dissertation with reference to the outcome of the process, which occurs as a response to the change of environment or life situation. In recent migration literature a distinction has been drawn between *sociocultural* and *psychological* adjustment (e.g. Searle & Ward, 1990). Sociocultural adjustment is the process by which immigrants become a part of the new society, both as individuals and as a group. This process is related to changes in their identity, acquiring fluency in the host country language, increasing frequency of the use of the host country language, an increasing amount of contact with members of the host society and the satisfaction given by social interactions with the host society (Berry, 1992). It depends upon successful sociocultural adjustment, whether an immigrant is able to establish new social networks in the immigration country. Psychological adjustment refers to overall psychological well-being (or psychological health) and depends on strategies for coping with the stress associated with immigration (e.g. Ataca & Berry, 2002; Holmes & Rahe, 1967). Consistent with findings in general populations (Berkman, 1977), studies on immigrants show that social relationships are of major importance to psychological health and that psychological and sociocultural adjustment are correlated (e.g. Ataca & Berry, 2002).

**John Berry’s Framework and its Critique**

Early research on sociocultural adjustment focused on immigrants’ orientation towards the host culture. It was believed that when immigrants acquire features and characteristics of the host culture they relinquish characteristics of their culture of origin (see Figure 1-1).
Recently, this unidimensional approach was replaced by a bidimensional approach in which maintaining the original and acquiring the new culture are perceived as independent, non-excluding processes. The most wildly used bidimensional framework in immigrant studies has been John Berry’s (1992) framework. He proposed that immigrants have to deal with two major issues in their daily encounters: the extent to which they wish to maintain their own culture and have contacts with members of their native cultural group; and the extent to which they wish to have contacts with members of the host society. Treated as dichotomous dimensions, they can be used to define four acculturation orientations: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization (Berry & Kim, 1988) (see Figure 1-2).

When immigrants regard contact with members of the host culture as important, and at the same time wish to maintain their native culture, they are said to prefer the integration strategy. Assimilating immigrants are those who prefer contact with the new culture and give up their native culture, while separating immigrants maintain bonds with their native culture and reject the new culture. Finally, marginalization is characteristic of those who have no relation with either culture. A number of studies indicate that the majority of immigrants prefer integration (e.g. Berry, Kim, Power, & Young, 1989, Van Oudenhoven, Prins & Buunk, 1998). It is known that the integration strategy is related to the most adaptive forms of adjustment (Berry & Kim, 1988), whereas marginalization, when both cultures are rejected, is related to poor adjustment (Berry et al., 1989).
The four acculturation attitudes described above (e.g. Berry et al., 1989) are the basis of the fourfold measurement of acculturation attitudes. Although the fourfold measurement was used in numerous studies, it has met a lot of criticism, for poor psychometric qualities amongst others. For instance, double-barrelled items (e.g. “I like both Dutch and Russian culture”) used in a fourfold measurement are ambiguous, because we do not know if the respondent’s answer pertains to only the first part (e.g. Dutch culture), the second part (e.g. Russian culture) or both parts of the question (Dutch and Russian cultures) (Rudmin & Ahmadvadeh, 2001). Moreover, previous studies indicate that the acculturation strategy used by immigrants may vary in different domains of their lives. Some immigrants, for example, choose assimilation in their professional life, but prefer a separation strategy in private life (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003). Therefore, it is often impossible to gauge the general (not domain-of-life specific) acculturation strategy of an individual. In Chapter 3, instead of assessing four acculturation strategies, we used a bidimensional measurement of sociocultural adjustment based on the two issues presented in Berry’s model.
Correlates of Immigrants’ Adjustment

Research on acculturation focuses on two types of variables: variables related to immigrants’ individual characteristics, such as psychological and demographic characteristics and acculturation attitudes, and variables related to the acculturation context, such as characteristics of the host society and of the migrant group, as well as the relation between the migrant and majority group, and in particular the cultural distance between the host and migrants’ native cultures. In the present research we investigate the role of the first category of variables in immigrants’ adjustment.

The relation between demographic characteristics and immigrants’ adjustment has been relatively well researched (for an overview see: Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). It has been found that the better the educational attainment of immigrants, the better is their sociocultural and psychological adjustment (Jayasuriya, Sang, & Fielding, 1992) and fluency in a host country’s language (Scott & Scott, 1989). Young age at emigration also relates positively to linguistic adjustment (Stevens, 1999; Jancz, 2000) and negatively to acculturation stress (Ha Kristic, 2000; Padilla, 1986). Length of residence proved to be related to a positive attitude towards the host culture (Cortes, Rogler, & Malgady, 1994) and to positive mental health (Ouarasse & Van de Vijver, 2005). While the role of demographic variables for immigrants’ adjustment has frequently been studied, far less attention has been given to personality factors, and to attachment styles in particular. In this research project we focused on attachment styles, as attachment is a promising, and up-till now rarely used, framework in immigration research (for exceptions see: Bakker, Van Oudenhoven, & Van Der Zee, 2004; Van Ecke, Chope, & Emmelkamp, 2005). The Bakker et al. study (2004), for instance, demonstrated that attachment styles were better predictors of immigrants’ psychological and social adjustment than Big Five personality traits. Moreover, a number of studies showed that attachment style is related to psychological adjustment and coping with problems (e.g. Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Lapsley & Edgerton, 2002; Lopez, Mauricio, & Gormley, 2001) and affects regulation and problem coping (Lopez at al., 2001), attitudes towards the out-group (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001) and own group members (Smith, Murphy, & Coats, 1999). Last, but not least – attachment is a concept that attributes individual differences to environmental influences, in particular, parental practices, which, on the one hand, acknowledges the meaning of culture in individual development, and on the other, gives an optimistic view of the human condition: if cared for properly, we grow up to become open-minded and well-balanced human beings.
The Foundations of Attachment Theory

Attachment theory was developed by John Bowlby who described its foundations in a three-volume series, *Attachment and Loss* (1969/1982, 1973, 1980). In the first volume, *Attachment*, Bowlby argued that human beings evolved biologically to fear being alone, especially in potentially dangerous situations. This inborn tendency demonstrates that a person, especially during infancy and early childhood needs the protection and support of others, preferably others who have a special interest in the person’s survival and well-being. An organized system of emotions and behaviours that enables the establishment of a close relationship with a protective caregiver – an attachment relationship – was according to Bowlby developed as an outcome of evolutionary selection; attachment to a protective caregiver increased the likelihood of survival. An attachment relationship serves as a safe base from which to explore the environment and to which to come back to when the exploration brings unsettlement. The first such relationship in most people’s life is the one with the mother, because in most societies mothers take care of their newborns. But an infant’s primary attachment figure might also be the father, a grandparent, an older sibling – anyone who regularly plays the role of caregiver and comforter. Attachment theory uses the term “primary” caregiver to suggest that there is a hierarchy of attachment figures, with one being preferred in times of trouble.

In his second volume, *Separation: Anxiety and Anger*, Bowlby explained the significance of the quality of early attachment relationships. First, he argued that if a person is confident that the attachment figure will be available whenever needed, the person will be much less prone to chronic fear, than will a person who for whatever reason does not have such confidence. In other words, self-confidence and freedom of anxiety are based on the quality of a person’s present and past attachments. Second, Bowlby proposed that confidence in availability of attachment figures is built up during infancy and early childhood; whatever expectations of an attachment figure are developed during those years tend to persist relatively unchanged throughout the rest of life. Thus, attachment relationships affect personality development, and insecure and abusive attachments can cause lasting psychological problems. Early attachment relationships are conserved as mental representations which Bowlby and later attachment researchers call internal ‘working models’. When attempting to understand a person’s feelings and behaviour in later love relationships, it is helpful to know what happened in earlier ones. In his third volume, *Loss: sadness and Depression*, Bowlby stated that the mind naturally recoils from the idea that there is no attachment figure to rely on. When a primary attachment figure departs or dies, a person often grasps at an alternative attachment figure, which helps to recover from the loss.
Attachment theory assumes that all of us come into the world with a capacity to monitor attachment figures, to become anxious when left alone, and to make a fuss in order to assure proper care. Drawing on Bowlby’s theory, Ainsworth and colleagues (1978) demonstrated how these universal abilities are expressed in different caregiving environments to produce important personality differences. In her landmark study - The Strange Situation experiment, she observed mother-infant dyads when infants encountered novelty toys, an unfamiliar adult experimenter, and a temporary separation from mothers. Ainsworth noted the differences between three major kinds of mother-infant dyads: secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant. Infants form secure dyads kept up their exploration activities even when mother was temporarily out of sight and sought for proximity when mother returned. Infants from anxious-ambivalent dyads showed less exploration activities, and were not easily soothed on the return of the mother; finally, infants from avoidant dyads kept up exploration in the absence of mothers and seemed to actively avoid the mother after her return.

In one of the earliest studies on attachment patterns’ continuity during infancy, Waters (1978) found that 96 percent of fifty infants from middle class homes exhibited the same attachment when assessed twice in the Strange Situation, once at twelve months of age and again at eighteen months. Studies of this kind have since been conducted with children of a wide variety of ages and with different methods of assessment. Most of these studies suggested that around 80 percent of infants whose environment is fairly stable show the same attachment pattern or style across time (Shaver & Hazan, 1994). This continuity supports Bowlby’s idea that early attachment experiences shape our personalities.

A number of attachment styles and measures have been proposed in the recent literature (see Cassidy & Shaver, 1999 for an overview). The present research was based on the Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) model of attachment. The following chapter will give a more detailed description of this model and will examine its validity.

**Overview of the present dissertation**

In total, the data from 4089 respondents were analysed (743 immigrants in the Netherlands, and 3346 non-emigrant respondents) in the present dissertation. Immigrant respondents were approached in the places where they usually meet (clubs, parishes, etc.) and via immigrant organisations. We used the snowball method, and we also placed questionnaires on the internet (via internet we received in total 196 responses). Non-emigrant respondents were students of secondary schools and their parents in three countries. We
approached them at schools. In Chapter 4, non-emigrant respondents were recruited in a survey in public places and via the snowball method.

The main methods for data analysis used in this dissertation were factor analysis, multiple regression analysis, and multivariate analysis of covariance. Factor analysis was used to explore and identify the dimensions of individual differences (Chapter 2 and 5). Multiple regression analysis was used to test the relation between variables and to examine the exploratory power of certain variables with reference to other variables (Chapter 3). Multivariate analysis of covariance was used to examine differences in the mean scores on certain variables when controlling for the effect of other variables (Chapter 4 and 5) and to test the main and interaction effects of predicting variables on dependent variables (Chapter 5).

This dissertation comprises four empirical studies described in Chapters 2-5. In Chapter 2 we address questions about the validity of the model of attachment styles and its measurements. In Chapter 3 we compare the predictive value of attachment styles and demographic factors for immigrants’ adjustment. In Chapter 4 we examine if individuals display predispositions for migration in terms of attachment styles and what is the role of attachment styles in the well-being of migrant and non-migrant respondents. Finally, in Chapter 5, we examine differences in attachment styles between the respondents from Eastern and Western Europe and the effect culture and parental characteristics have on attachment styles.