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# Dimensions of Ethnic Assimilation: An Empirical Appraisal of Gordon's Typology \*

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Researchers often begin by acknowledging that ethnic assimilation is multidimensional, but rarely examine more than one type of assimilation. As a result, studies have used quite disparate indicators of assimilation and have yielded contradictory results. The authors of this study empirically test Milton Gordon's classic statement on the seven types of assimilation. Results of factor analysis indicate that Gordon's seven dimensions can be reduced to three—structural, cultural, and receptional.

Throughout this century social scientists have debated the proposition that an ethnically pluralistic America is becoming a more homogeneous society in which ethnicity will no longer be important. Nevertheless, the issue remains unresolved, and empirical studies continue to produce confusing and conflicting results. In his careful and extensive review of the assimilation literature, Hirschman (1983) suggested that Gordon's (1964) "landmark statement provided the long-needed clarification of concepts that has guided much of the subsequent empirical research in the field" (Hirschman, 1983: 401). Interestingly, however, the pluralism/assimilation controversy became more, not less, pronounced following the publication of Gordon's (1964) theoretical work. Neidert and Farley (1985), for example, spoke of the "flurry of writing in the 1960s and 1970s [challenging] the assimilationist view" (p. 840); examples include Glazer and Moynihan (1963), Greeley and McCready (1975), and Featherman and Hauser (1978). Other studies have found support for assimilation (Cohen, 1977; Chiswick, 1978; Alba, 1981), and still others have produced "mixed" findings (Lieberson, Dalto, and Johnston, 1975; Alba and Golden, 1986; Stevens and Swicegood, 1987).

\*We would like to express our thanks to David R. Johnson for his helpful suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper.

According to Hirschman (1983), the potential value of Gordon's (1964) theory rests primarily with his delineation of seven possible dimensions or types of assimilation: cultural or behavioral, structural, marital, identificational, attitude receptional, behavior receptional, and civic. However, our examination of the research literature indicates that, whereas investigators have acknowledged Gordon's "landmark statement" and may have been directly or indirectly guided by it, they have generally used only one, or sometimes two, measures of assimilation. Even among those few who have given more attention to the several dimensions of assimilation in Gordon's typology (Moore, 1976; Pinkney, 1987; Kitano and Daniels, 1988), the dimensions are simply taken for granted and no attempt has been made to test the validity of his typology. As a result, we do not know whether there are, in fact, seven types of assimilation, whether some types of assimilation are empirically more important than others, or whether groups which are assimilated on one dimension are equally assimilated on others. We also do not know the extent to which types of assimilation are correlated with one another. Thus, it is far from clear that assimilation is, indeed, multidimensional.

The purpose of this report is to provide findings from a study which examined the assimilation of 17 ethnic groups using indicators designed to measure the seven possible dimensions proposed by Gordon (1964). To test the validity of Gordon's typology, indicators of each of his dimensions were factor analyzed by principal axis factoring. Ethnic groups were then compared using the dimensions indicated by this analysis.

## Methods

**The Sample.** Data for the study are from a representative sample of 1,940 adults 18 years of age or older residing in the state of Nebraska in 1978. Respondents were selected through random digit dialing and interviewed by telephone, with 72 percent of those contacted providing a usable interview.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, Nebraska is not a microcosm of the United States. There are significant differences between Nebraska and other states on variables believed to influence the degree of group assimilation. In contrast to states with larger black populations, for instance, blacks in Nebraska may be more (or less) structurally, culturally, or maritally assimilated. However, if the effects of population size or density are the same across different communities and the processes underlying assimilation are the same or similar, then patterns of assimilation and the relationships among variables should not be affected. Although caution should be taken in generalizing to other settings, we would further note that the population of Nebraska is not completely ho-

<sup>1</sup>Detailed information regarding the sample and sampling procedure is available upon request. The data were collected as part of the 1978 Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey, conducted by the Bureau of Sociological Research, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

mogeneous and that the sample includes people living in a variety of different circumstances ranging from metropolitan areas to small farming communities and open country.

**Ethnicity.** To measure ethnicity, a respondent was asked, "From what country or part of the world did your ancestors come?" If a single country was named or the respondent did not know, the interviewer coded the answer and went on to the next question.<sup>2</sup> For individuals who mentioned two or more countries, ethnicity was coded as the country to which he or she felt closest.

**Assimilation.** Gordon (1964) defined his types of assimilation assuming an "unbalanced" model, i.e., one group being completely absorbed by a "host." Thus for the United States Gordon used Anglo Americans as the standard or "core society." However, Gordon (1978) recognized that reciprocal influences can occur, and he addressed this possibility in his work. He stated, for example, that "the seven variables of the assimilation process which we have isolated can be measured against the 'melting pot' goal as well as against the 'adaptation to the core society and culture' goal" (1978: 172). He noted that it is possible to analyze the typology against a pluralist model, as well. For our study, assimilation is measured by the degree to which a separate ethnic culture, social organization, or identity currently exists, i.e., the extent of pluralism. By definition then, the less the pluralism, the greater the assimilation is, regardless of whether the assimilation more closely approximates a melting pot or Anglo conformity.

**Cultural or Behavior Assimilation.** Gordon (1978) defined this as a "change of cultural patterns to those of the host society" (p. 169). However, as mentioned above, our concern was with the retention of ethnic culture.

Very few comparative studies have examined possible differences or changes in ethnic culture. Although limited to Irish Catholics and Italians, the work by Greeley (1974a) and his colleagues (e.g., Greeley and McCready, 1975) provide one important exception. Additionally, language (or mother-tongue shift) has received extensive and explicit attention with respect to assimilation (Lieberson and Curry, 1971; Castonguay, 1982; Stevens, 1985; Stevens and Swicegood, 1987).

Two measures of **cultural assimilation** were used in the present study.

1. Language. Respondents whose ancestors came from non-English-speaking countries were asked, "Do you speak or know *any* (Language of Country)?" If yes, they were asked if they spoke it very well, not so well, or

<sup>2</sup>There is one category, however, where national origin refers to a nation other than the one from which the immigrating ancestors came. Nebraska has a population of descendants of Germans who settled in Russia before emigrating after 1873. Thus persons answering "Russia" were asked if their ancestors originally came from Germany, and, if they did, whether they felt closer to Germany or Russia. Persons answering "Germany" were placed into a category called "German Russians."

knew only a few words or phrases. Those respondents speaking only English were considered most assimilated.

2. Cultural Practices. Respondents were asked if they participate in any ceremonies, traditions, and customs from the country they named. They were told that this included "things like special holidays, food, music, dances, crafts, and religious ceremonies." For present purposes this measure is treated dichotomously.

*Structural Assimilation.* This was defined by Gordon (1978) as "large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of host society, on *primary group level*" (p. 169, emphasis added).

Cohen's (1977) use of interethnic friendships is one of the few comparative studies measuring this type of assimilation, although studies of the perpetuation and integration of ethnic residential areas, such as census tracts, are at least peripherally related (Lieberson, 1963; Guest and Weed, 1976; Massey and Mullan, 1984).

Our measures focused upon primary contacts with persons other than those in one's own ethnic group.

1. Organizations. Respondents were asked, "Thinking now of the various groups or organizations you may belong to here in your community, about how many of the people in them have the same (Country Named) background as you? Would you say all or nearly all, more than half, some but less than half, or none of them?"

2. Neighbors. Using the same response categories as for organizations, respondents were asked, "About how many of the people living here in your neighborhood are of (Country Named) origin or descent?"

3. Friends. Similarly, respondents were asked, "Of the people you consider to be your close friends living in your community, how many of them are of (Country Named) origin or descent?"

*Marital Assimilation.* This is defined by Gordon (1978:169) simply as "large-scale intermarriage."

Marital assimilation has been the most frequently studied form of assimilation. It has been measured in two ways: whether individuals have ancestors from two or more ethnic groups (Williams, Johnson, and Carranza, 1980; Alba, 1981; Alba and Chamlin, 1983; Tomaskovic-Devey and Tomaskovic-Devey, 1988) and whether spouses have the same or different ethnic backgrounds (Cohen, 1977; Castonguay, 1982; Stevens, 1985; Stevens and Swicegood, 1987). Alba (1976) and Alba and Golden (1986) used both measures. Both methods were used in the present study.

*Identificational Assimilation.* This occurs, according to Gordon (1978), when there is "development of sense of peoplehood based exclusively on host society" (p. 169). The assumption of Anglo conformity may be avoided by examining the degree of identification with one's ethnic group.

Among the several types of assimilation, Yinger (1985) indicated that "identification is perhaps the least well conceptualized and measured"

(p. 155). Alba and Chamlin (1983) attempted to measure ethnic identification by asking people what country their ancestors came from and then dividing responses into those who named a single country, those who named two or more, but said they felt closer to one, and those who either did not feel closer to a single country or who did not know where their ancestors came from. Tomaskovic-Devey and Tomaskovic-Devey (1988) used a similar measure and asserted that "it is an approximate measure of ingroup marriage in the last generation and of the intensity of current ethnic identification" (p. 653).

Identificational assimilation was measured more directly, but using the same conceptualization, in the present study by asking respondents if thinking of themselves as a person from the country they named was very, somewhat, or not very important to them.

*Attitude Receptional Assimilation.* According to Gordon (1978:169), complete assimilation of this type has occurred when there is an "absence of prejudice."

Although not usually thought of as such, studies of attitude receptional assimilation would include all those which have measured levels of prejudice toward ethnic groups. A social distance scale developed by Bogardus has been administered to national samples of Americans since 1926 (Bogardus, 1967). For this study, social distance scores were assigned to the groups based on national data (Owen, Eisner, and McFaul, 1981).<sup>3</sup>

*Behavior Receptional Assimilation.* Gordon (1978:169) defined this as the "absence of discrimination."

Most studies of discrimination have focused on specific groups, especially those defined as minorities. Included among the relatively few studies providing information about discrimination against white ethnic groups are discussions of discrimination historically (Dinnerstein and Reimers, 1975) and studies which have used indexes of socioeconomic status to measure assimilation (Featherman, 1971; Lieberman and Carter, 1979; Hirschman and Wong, 1981; Alba, 1981; Neidert and Farley, 1985).

While discrimination may be inferred from socioeconomic differences among ethnic groups, other factors contribute to such discrepancies as well. Thus, for the present study discrimination was measured by asking respon-

<sup>3</sup>The social distance score used in this study is an average of scores from national studies conducted in 1926, 1946, 1956, and 1977. Since German Russians are not included in these studies, German and Russian scores were combined and averaged. Average social distance scores were used because 1977 data show a strong "Communist bloc" effect (Owen, Eisner, and McFaul, 1981). The social distance scores for countries of Eastern Europe have increased dramatically in the last decades, leading to social distance scores comparable to those of U.S. racial minorities. This pattern reflects change in international relations and may, in fact, accurately reflect attitudes toward nationals of Communist states; we use average social distance scores because we believe the 1977 data distort the experiences of current U.S. citizens. A comparison of national scores with comparable Nebraska data for Arabs, blacks, Canadians, Chinese, Germans, Italians, Mexican Americans, and native Americans shows similar results, both in terms of actual social distance scores and in the rank order of groups by score.

dents if they have encountered any negative actions toward them because of their ethnic background. If so, respondents were asked whether this occurred often or infrequently.

*Civic Assimilation.* This was defined by Gordon (1978) as "absence of value and power conflict." He further elaborated by saying that this form of assimilation exists when group members "do not raise by their demands concerning the nature of (the host) public or civic life any issues involving values and power conflict with (host members)" (1978: 168). He used birth control, divorce, and abortion as examples.

While there have been numerous studies examining the views held by members of ethnic groups on various public or civic issues, relatively few have examined them with an eye toward their possible opposition to values held by those of the larger society. Greeley (1974b) has compared the political opinions of white ethnics with those of Anglo-Saxon Protestants, and Stein and Hill (1977) have analyzed both traditional ethnic value orientations and countercultural views arising from the resurgence of ethnic identification in the 1970s.

In this study, civic assimilation was measured as deviation from the mean position with respect to two quite different and volatile issues in American society.<sup>4</sup>

1. Abortion. Gordon (1978: 175) specifically mentioned attitudes toward abortion as being one of his reasons for judging American Catholics to be only partly civically assimilated. Thus, to measure civic assimilation, a cumulative scale was constructed from responses to questions about whether abortion should be allowed under five different conditions or circumstances (Granberg and Wellman, 1980). Deviations from the average scale score were calculated as a measure of value or power conflict with the mainstream or dominant culture. However, findings indicate that there is no mainstream view toward abortion; the distribution is clearly bimodal. Measuring assimilation as a deviation from a mean location is therefore misleading. Gordon's use of abortion attitudes as an example of civic assimilation notwithstanding, this measure was dropped from the analysis.

2. Alcohol Use. Attitudes and behavior with respect to alcohol have long been a point of contention in American society, and that this continues to be true is clearly indicated by the formation of such groups as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the recent conflict over beer commercials on television. To measure civic assimilation with respect to this issue, drinking

<sup>4</sup>Civic assimilation may be Gordon's most poorly specified type. As one reviewer suggested, groups may have different civic issues. Although Gordon doesn't say this, the idea is appealing. However, such a conceptualization creates a difficult question—if each group has its own issues and if there is some sort of group norm (host or otherwise) to which they assimilate, how would one compare groups in terms of overall level of civic assimilation? Both assimilation and melting pot theory propose that groups will come to share a common view. Consequently, we believe it is appropriate to compare groups on a single civic issue.

patterns were assessed through questions that asked respondents how often and how much beer, wine, and liquor they consume. For each type of beverage, individuals were asked whether or not they ever drink it, approximately how often they do so, and finally about how much they usually drink on those occasions when they do consume alcohol. A cumulative scale was constructed that ranges from abstainers to those consuming one or two beers, glasses of wine, or drinks on a daily basis. Deviations from the average scale score were calculated as a measure of value or power conflict with the mainstream or dominant cultural position.

## Findings

Among the 1,940 respondents, 173 (8.9 percent) were eliminated because they could not name a country of origin. Among the 703 (36.2 percent) respondents who named two or more countries, 219 (11.3 percent) were eliminated because they were unable to choose one country they felt closer to.<sup>5</sup> From the remaining 1,558 we eliminated those from countries with too few cases for analysis. This left 17 countries of origin and a total of 1,484 respondents.

To test the validity of Gordon's typology, group means on all indicators of assimilation (with the exception of the abortion measure) were computed and then factor analyzed by principal axis factoring ( $N = 17$ ). The initial analysis using varimax rotation yielded only three orthogonal factors. The extracted factors are shown in Table 1.

The first factor, which we have labeled structural assimilation, accounts for nearly half of the variance, .499. It can be seen that there are large loadings for the three indicators of structural assimilation (organizations, neighbors, and friends) and for the two measures of marital assimilation (current and ancestral exogamy). That the two sets of variables are related is not surprising in that when an individual marries someone belonging to another ethnic group there is an increased likelihood of having neighbors and belonging to groups containing members of the spouse's ethnic group and of forming interethnic friendships. Of course, the reverse is equally likely, i.e., having friends and neighbors of a different ethnicity and belonging to interethnic organizations increases the probability of marital exogamy. Apparently, then, marital assimilation is one type of structural assimilation rather than a separate dimension.

The second factor appears to be a measure of cultural assimilation. As can be seen, there are large loadings for language and practices, the two measures of cultural assimilation, and for the measures of identificational and civic assimilation. This suggests that identification, or the importance of eth-

<sup>5</sup>These percentages are virtually identical to those obtained in a national study using the same questions (Williams, Johnson, and Carranza, 1980).

TABLE 1

Orthogonally Rotated Varimax Pattern Matrix for Factor Analysis of 11 Indexes of Ethnic Assimilation for 17 Ethnic Groups

Indexes	Factors			Communa- lity
	1 "Structural"	2 "Cultural"	3 "Receptional"	
Cultural:				
Language	.287	.876	.068	.854
Practices	.429	.767	-.179	.804
Structural:				
Organizations	.763	.497	.231	.883
Neighbors	.948	.031	.173	.930
Friends	.915	-.065	.285	.922
Marital:				
Current	.610	.164	.661	.837
Ancestral	.767	.327	.401	.856
Identificational:				
Importance	-.123	.874	.238	.836
Attitude				
receptional:				
Social distance	.211	.416	.799	.856
Behavior				
receptional:				
Perceived				
discrimination	.263	-.101	.890	.872
Civic:				
Alcohol use	-.497	.607	.347	.736
Eigenvalue	5.485	2.460	1.441	
Proportion variance	.499	.224	.131	

nic background to the individual, is strongly related to the existence of a cultural tradition. Although civic pluralism refers to the extent to which a group has a value and power conflict with the dominant or mainstream society rather than simply the existence of a particular cultural practice, this type of assimilation seems to be part of the cultural dimension rather than a separate type. In our view, this points to a conceptual difficulty with the notion of civic assimilation. That is, while an ethnic group may hold some values that put it in conflict with the dominant view, this would seem to be only a particular class or category of culture, not a unique dimension of assimilation.

A third factor, which accounts for a relatively small proportion of the variance, .131, shows large loadings for the two hypothesized receptional dimensions, absence of prejudice and discrimination. Interestingly, interethnic marriage, especially current marriage, loads on this dimension as well as on structural assimilation. We know from research in the area of minority rela-

tions that interethnic and interracial marriage typically is the most resisted form of structural assimilation and thus of all forms of primary interaction, this would be the most likely to be reflected in measures of prejudice and discrimination. Following Gordon's (1964) terminology, we have labeled this factor "receptional assimilation."

Having identified three factors, assimilation scales were created for each of the 17 ethnic groups, giving equal weight to each of the variables loading highly on a factor. Because having a spouse of the same ethnicity loads highly on both Factor 1 and Factor 3, it was omitted from subsequent analysis. Thus, structural assimilation is the summation of  $z$  scores for organizations, neighbors, friends, and ancestral exogamy. Cultural assimilation is the summation of language, ceremonial practices, and alcohol use. Receptional assimilation is the sum of discrimination and social distance.<sup>6</sup>

If the various indicators of assimilation were interchangeable, i.e., if assimilation were a unidimensional process, we would expect to find high correlations among the three types of assimilation we have identified. Correlation coefficients, however, tend to be low. The correlation between the cultural and structural factors is .29, and the correlation between cultural and receptional is .31, neither of which is statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ). The correlation between the structural and receptional factors is moderately large, .52, and is significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 2 shows the scores and rankings for the groups for each dimension. The ranks are arranged from 1, most assimilated, to 17, least assimilated.

The rankings within each of the assimilation dimensions generally are consistent with the observations and findings of previous research. However, a comparison of groups across the dimensions of assimilation is particularly interesting with respect to the multidimensional nature of assimilation. That is, we can examine the consistency of patterns across dimensions.

Beginning with structural assimilation, it can be seen that persons of African, German Russian, German, Mexican, and Czechoslovakian origin are the least assimilated, ranking 17, 16, 15, 14, and 13, respectively. Persons of

<sup>6</sup>While orthogonal rotation produces factors which are uncorrelated, such results would not be expected in the real world. For instance, it is unlikely that the different modes of assimilation are totally unrelated; studies indicate that some of the same variables influence both structural and cultural dimensions. Using scales based on orthogonal rotation and factor loadings, then, will exaggerate differences between types of assimilation. This is particularly problematic for this study because one of the objectives is to assess group variation in patterns of assimilation. Use of simple summated factor-based scales is less likely to produce results which are simply artifacts of orthogonal rotation. Although the correlation between scales based on factor loadings and the summated scales used here is high—ranging from .91 to .99—use of the latter allows factors to be correlated with each other. (The exact correlations between factors are discussed in the text.) When we conducted our analysis using traditional factor scales, group differences were even more dramatic than those reported. Thus, our use of summated scales provides a more conservative test of the multidimensionality of assimilation and for group differences in patterns of assimilation. (See Dawes and Corrigan [1974] and Kim and Mueller [1978] for further discussion of these issues in factor analysis.)

TABLE 2

Ethnic Group Rankings from Most to Least Assimilated on Three Equal-Weighted Assimilation Scales

Nation of Origin	Factor 1 Structural		Factor 2 Cultural		Factor 3 Receptional	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Africa ( <i>n</i> = 24)	17	-6.063	6	1.674	17	-6.151
American Indian ( <i>n</i> = 13)	1	6.118	13	-1.195	14	-0.822
Czechoslovakia ( <i>n</i> = 90)	13	-2.454	15	-1.877	12	-0.267
Denmark ( <i>n</i> = 70)	7	1.238	7	0.603	7	0.892
England/Wales ( <i>n</i> = 199)	10	-0.387	3	3.570	1	1.733
France ( <i>n</i> = 30)	3	4.254	1	4.062	2.5	1.240
Germany ( <i>n</i> = 640)	15	-4.298	4	2.333	10	0.701
Ireland ( <i>n</i> = 159)	8	0.634	5	1.773	5	1.056
Italy ( <i>n</i> = 28)	9	0.195	16	-2.628	15	-0.942
Mexico ( <i>n</i> = 11)	14	-4.246	17	-9.543	16	-1.849
Netherlands ( <i>n</i> = 22)	6	1.374	8	0.310	8	0.846
Norway ( <i>n</i> = 28)	5	1.499	10	-0.058	9	0.776
Poland ( <i>n</i> = 32)	12	-0.934	9	0.129	13	-0.523
Russian German ( <i>n</i> = 15)	16	-5.524	14	-1.227	11	0.034
Scotland ( <i>n</i> = 24)	4	4.242	2	3.697	4	1.101
Sweden ( <i>n</i> = 86)	11	-0.684	11	-0.740	6	0.985
Switzerland ( <i>n</i> = 13)	2	5.037	12	-0.882	2.5	1.240

Russian German and Czechoslovakian descent also have fairly low ranks on both receptional assimilation, 11 and 12, and cultural assimilation, 14 and 15. Thus, these two groups are fairly consistent across types of assimilation. German and African Americans, on the other hand, show inconsistent patterns, with high cultural assimilation and low structural assimilation. As German Americans account for about one-third of the state population, the high structural pluralism for German Americans may be, in part at least, a function of group size. With respect to the African Americans, it seems likely that their very low receptional assimilation is responsible for their limited structural assimilation, i.e., it is imposed rather than fostered through

cultural bonds. The very high degree of structural assimilation for the American Indians was unexpected, especially since they are among the least assimilated receptionally, at 14. Obviously, this pattern would not be found for American Indians living on reservations. The native Americans in this sample, however, live in urban areas and are, as the data show, structurally integrated.

Mexican Americans are by far the least culturally assimilated. It is interesting to compare the assimilation pattern of this group, America's second largest minority, with the African Americans. Both groups are victims of high social distance and discrimination, ranking 17 and 16. African Americans, however, are among the most assimilated culturally and least structurally, whereas Mexican Americans are much less culturally assimilated and somewhat more assimilated structurally. Italian Americans, to a lesser degree, appear to follow the same pattern as the Mexican Americans, i.e., some cultural retention, ranking 16, lower receptional assimilation, ranking 15, and moderate structural assimilation, 9. With the exceptions of the African and Mexican Americans, all of the groups in the sample seem to be receptionally assimilated to a large degree. Thus, the rankings beyond these three have less meaning. Nevertheless, the higher rankings of those of Italian, American Indian, and Polish origin, 15, 14, and 13, are consistent with previous research.

## Conclusions

For several decades, now, there has been an ongoing debate over the extent to which ethnicity remains an important dimension of American social life. Despite the accumulation of a substantial body of research, the controversy is far from resolved. Perhaps the basic flaw in the entire literature, and the reason for contradictory findings, is the failure to seriously consider whether the question itself makes sense. To ask if groups are becoming increasingly similar assumes not only that one *can* construct a global measure of similarity, but that it is meaningful to do so. Although Gordon's typology of assimilation is widely cited, even the most recent and methodologically advanced studies have used only one or two measures, indicating structural or cultural dimensions of assimilation, but rarely both. Results reported here caution against a unidimensional approach to studying assimilation, and indeed suggest that at a minimum three components must be taken into account—structural, cultural, and receptional.

The results of this study indicate that different ethnic groups have substantially different patterns of assimilation. Thus, for example, Gordon's (1978) proposition that "cultural assimilation, or acculturation, is likely to be the first of the types of assimilation to occur" (p. 178) does not appear to be valid for all groups. While longitudinal data would be ideal and in fact necessary to trace the assimilation process of any particular group, our com-

parison of group patterns using cross-sectional data shows that Mexican Americans are much less acculturated than African Americans, but they are more assimilated structurally.<sup>7</sup> This kind of difference is found among European ethnic groups, as well as ethnic minorities. The Swiss and Swedish groups, for instance, rank about the same on cultural assimilation, but the Swedish descendants are considerably less assimilated structurally than are the Swiss. Differences of this kind strongly suggest that the *process* as well as the pattern of assimilation varies across groups. Analysis of patterns and process using a multidimensional approach is likely to resolve the heretofore puzzling contradictions in research on ethnic pluralism and assimilation. SSQ

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<sup>7</sup> Another point that should be mentioned is that theory and research have been almost entirely directed toward ethnic groups rather than individuals. Thus, testing Gordon's typology requires measures at the group level. Although ethnic group members may have much in common and be treated similarly by others, within-group variations in assimilation doubtlessly occur. Research into the conditions which hinder and foster assimilation (i.e., causal factors) should analyze data at the individual as well as the group level.

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