

2004

# Cultural Identity, Existential Anxiety and Traditionalism

Pawel Boski

*Warsaw School of Social Psychology*

Katarzyna Strus

*Warsaw School of Social Psychology*

Ewa Tlaga

*Warsaw School of Social Psychology*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/iaccp\\_papers](https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/iaccp_papers)

 Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Boski, P., Strus, K., & Tlaga, E. (2004). Cultural identity, existential anxiety and traditionalism. In B. N. Setiadi, A. Supratiknya, W. J. Lonner, & Y. H. Poortinga (Eds.), *Ongoing themes in psychology and culture: Proceedings from the 16th International Congress of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology*. [https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/iaccp\\_papers/246](https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/iaccp_papers/246)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the IACCP at ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Papers from the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology Conferences by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@gvsu.edu](mailto:scholarworks@gvsu.edu).

## CULTURAL IDENTITY, EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY AND TRADITIONALISM

Pawel Boski, Katarzyna Strus, and Ewa Tlaga

Warsaw School of Social Psychology

Warsaw, Poland

### Social vs Cultural Identity

As was recently observed (Boski, 2002a), cultural identity has been absent as a theoretical construct in the field of cross-cultural psychology. Rather, following the mainstream, our textbooks refer to, – and journals report works on, the theme of social identity (Berry, *et al.*, 1997, Vol. 3; Smith & Bond, 1998). This situation is surprising on at least two counts: (a) based on the idea of minimal group paradigm, social identity theory (SIT) has remained programmatically acultural (Turner, 1999); (b) postulating and measuring cultural variables (values, syndromes, etc.), cross-cultural psychology cannot afford to ignore identity that derives from them.

Social identity has been conceptualized as a sense of *We-ness*, or attachment to a group that one is a member of, and by comparison to *Others* (Turner, 1999). It has been demonstrated that a single distinctive criterion is sufficient to create such elementary psychological phenomena. The sense of *We-ness* remains culturally empty, however. Even with natural groups it is portrayed in trait-attributes, which is not different from those used to characterize individuals.

Cultural identity refers, in contrast, to the content of values as guiding principles, to meaningful symbols, and to life-styles that individuals share with others, though not necessarily within recognizable groups.

Research evidence demonstrating possibility and usefulness of a distinction between social and cultural aspects of identity comes from several studies. As a rule, these studies employ methodologies showing *culture in motion*, and are enacted in actors' behaviors. Boski (1988) crossed ethnically-defined Nigerian actors (Hausa and Ibo), with their culturally consistent (traditional Islamic for Hausa vs. business-achievement for Ibo) and inconsistent (reversed) narratives. Observers-participants from these two ethnic groups showed a typical *in-group bias* only for consistent (tradi-

tional) actor-presentations; whereas culturally inconsistent individuals from own group were most disliked (particularly among traditional Hausas). This refers to a well-known phenomenon that in-group members who violate own culture are harshly condemned (as traitors, dissidents, schismatics, etc.).

More recent research evidence concerning the social (ethnic) vs. cultural distinction comes from Sanchez-Burks, Nisbett, & Ybarra (2000). These authors successfully unconfounded *ethnic in-group vs. out-group* contrast from *task vs. (task + interpersonal)* cultural relational scripts. The latter dichotomy represented Anglo-American vs. Latino-American (Mexican) cultural contexts in work-related behavior. In their two studies, Sanchez-Burks *et al.* found cultural scripts to be overall more important determinants of preferences than the in-group vs. out-group distinction. The task-oriented cultural style was generally more favored than the (task+interpersonal) alternative, particularly among Anglo-American participants, for whom actors' ethnicity did not matter. Mexican and Latino participants, however, demonstrated some degree of favoritism towards ethnically similar actors.

A similar research paradigm appears in Landis, Bakir, Moore, Noguchi, & O'Shea, III (2002). These authors manipulated ethnicity ("race") and culture (value syndromes) of simulated virtual team workers to examine the effects of these variables on productivity and reward allocation. There was some evidence for in-group bias among Anglo-American participants of this study; also, collectivistic values of team workers favored higher productivity. Lowest productivity was obtained when white participants were facing Asian individualistic co-workers, possibly because of incongruency expectations contained in this message.

Still another way of conceptualizing cultural identity emerges from studies with bicultural (Chinese-American) individuals: Hoffman, C., Lau, I., Johnson, D. R. (1986); Hong, Y., Morris, M. W., Chiu, C., Benet-Martinez, V. (2000). By switching linguistic codes (Hoffman, *et al.*, 1986) or by symbolically activating one cultural identity or the other (Hong, *et al.*, 2000), these authors were able to show the corresponding psychological consequences in person construction or in causal thinking.

Studies reported in the present paper draw on the concept of cultural identity which is based on traditional scripts and contrasted by their non-traditional reversals, independently of actors' ethnicity.

### Culture and Existential Anxiety

According to Zygmunt Bauman, a sociologist and philosopher of culture, the essence of cultural systems consists of providing a meaningful response to the existential problem of Death (Bauman, 1991, 1999).<sup>1</sup> Thus, culture becomes a collective response to our uniquely human awareness of individual mortality. From this perspective, of key concern becomes the answer to what happens to us after we die, and not the adaptation fit between environment, genes, and memes. Consequently, culture does not serve to make life easier, but to make sense of it and to justify our short-lived passage vis a vis eternity. The answers to this fundamental question differ widely, but Bauman reduces them to three big diachronic stages: Traditional - Modern - Postmodern.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to present a detailed account of Bauman's triad. Suffice to say that Traditionalism is embedded in religious transcendence of which prototypical is the Medieval period in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Modernism comes with Enlightenment, when the worldview based on religious revelation was undermined by the growing cult of reason, science, and earthly progress. Finally, Postmodernism is the beacon of a new cultural era, currently unfolding in some sectors of Western societies. Here, with the deconstruction of former worldviews and resulting relativism, we are presumably denied, for the first time in history, of any self-assuring answers how to cope with mortality anxiety.

In psychology, terror management theory (TMT) makes similar assumptions about human awareness of death and the role of culture as a buffer against existential anxiety (Rosenblatt, *et al.*, 1989; Greenberg, *et al.*, 1990). Over the period of fifteen years much experimental evidence has been accumulated showing that with inducement of mortality salience, people become defenders of their cultural worldviews.

The idea of culture types or stages is not elaborated in TMT. Yet, following Bauman, we may speculate that the effects of mortality salience should be stronger in more traditional cultures and also among individuals scoring high in traditionalist beliefs. Contrary to this, postmodernist worldviews should be least threatened by the inducement of death anxiety.

Two studies are reported to test these predictions. The first is a Polish - Swedish intercultural experiment on gender role behaviors. The second

investigates the appreciation of own and foreign cultural artifacts before and after the dramatic events of September 11, 2001.

### **Study I. Social vs. Cultural Identity and Mortality Salience: A Polish – Swedish Comparison**

Sweden ranks first as a "feminine" culture (Hofstede, 2001), which we also interpret as unimorphist and egalitarian in gender roles. Polish culture is more traditional in this respect, but has been also characterized by elevated status enjoyed by women in their daily interactions with men (Boski, *et al.*, 1999). Themes dominant in traditional roles are 1) courtesy and technical competence on the male side; and 2) home/family-centered interpersonal activities on the female side. Flexible role reversal, where the male can be busy while the female is relaxed at home, and where the female appears technically efficacious, is a creation of a non-traditional culture.

We were interested to what extent social identity (in-group vs. out-group relationship between actors and observers) and cultural identity (traditional vs. ~ traditional scripts), would affect the degree of gender roles appreciation. Assuming higher level of approval for *in-group* scripts, we also predicted equal levels of preference for the two types of scripts among Swedish participants, and higher evaluation for traditional scripts among Poles.

Borrowing from Bauman's and terror management theory, we were also expecting that evaluations of non-traditional cultural scripts under mortality salience should suffer most among Poles.

#### **Participants**

The study was conducted at Warsaw School of Social Psychology where 83 Polish students volunteered; and at University of Lund, where 42 Swedish students took part.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Cultural Scripts**

The experimental material consisted of four episodes of gender role interactions, video-recorded among the Swedish minority in Finland (Vaasa).<sup>4</sup> The setting for video-recordings was typical for Scandinavian indoors and outdoors life, though no specific country symbols were present.

Actors were young to middle aged, European Swedish-Finns. Verbal interactions between the actors were not recorded. Instead, soft background music served as sound track. Each episode had two versions: one was traditional (T) and the other non-traditional (~T).

(i) **Parents nurturing their baby**. In the T-version of the nurturing episode, the mother was holding the infant and preparing a family meal, while the male partner sat at the dinner table and did some computer repairs. With the ~T version, it was the father who did the same parenting and cooking job, while his female partner sat at the table and read a magazine.

(ii) **Friends' home visit**. During T-preparations for friends' visit, it was the hostess who did the cooking, while her male partner greeted the guests at the door and led to the living room where the three chatted while waiting for the meal to be served. These roles of the hosts were reversed in the ~T version.

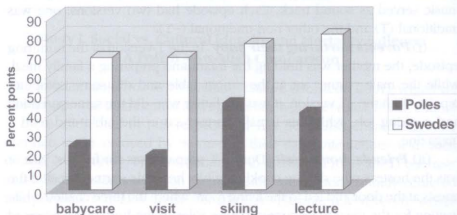
(iii) **Getting ready for skiing**. In the T-version of the skiing episode, a young female was struggling with her ski-boots. A male partner approached her, kneeled down, and helped her bind the boots; a moment later he led the clumsy adept as she could not walk well. The roles were reversed in the ~T situation: the male showed a similar incompetence and received assistance from his female partner.

(iv) **Student-instructor helping**. A male instructor had problems using the overhead projector in a lecture hall. He was helped by a male student in the T version of this episode; or by a female student, in the ~T condition.

Four episodes, with two versions each, resulted in eight scripts. Of them, four research tapes were created, each containing two traditional and two non-traditional versions of separate episodes. The combination of T / ~T versions and their order of presentation were rotated to a Latin square design.<sup>5</sup> Participants were randomly allocated to one of these conditions.

**Mortality salience**. Before the video-episodes were shown, half of our participants went through the procedure of mortality salience (Rosenblatt, *et al.*, 1990). They were asked to imagine their death and to write down the answers to two questions: (a) "What will happen to you as you physically die?"; and (b) "What are the emotions that the thought of your own death arouses in you?"

Fig. 1: Episode identification by country of origin



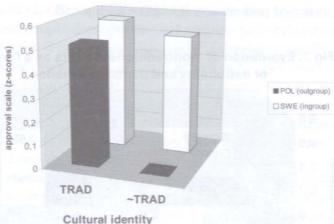
Measures of dependent variables were: identification of video-recording by country (*In which country was - in your opinion - the episode video recorded?*); episode typicality assessment (*How typical would this behavior be in your socio-cultural environment?*); evaluation of and preferences for observed gender role behaviors (*To what degree do you approve or do not approve the way this person carries her/his role?*; *How comfortable would you feel if you behaved like the person of your gender in this episode*; etc.). Seven-point scales were used to measure typicality and evaluation.

## Results

Figure 1 presents findings on episode identification by subjects' nationality. For most Swedes, country identifications of the recordings were correct as *made in Sweden*. A much smaller proportion of Polish participants located (erroneously) the recorded episodes in Poland. The between-country differences for each episode are highly significant;  $F$  tests with  $df = 1/123$  are: 30.93; 41.92; 12.19; 22.09, respectively, all significant,  $p < .001$ . These results can be justifiably interpreted as conditions for activating social identity: In-group for Swedes and Out-group for Poles.

Results concerning our main research problem: comparing social and cultural identity can be seen in Figure 2.

**Fig.2: Approval rates of traditional and non-traditional scripts by in-groups (Swedes) and out-groups (Poles)**



Here, participants of both countries were cast in a mixed design with traditional and ~traditional scripts as aggregated (two of each category) repeated measures. The ingroup/outgroup effect was significant,  $F(1, 117) = 5.55, p < .05$ , thus showing that Swedes gave overall higher approval rates than Poles. Also significant is the effect of cultural identity,  $F(1,117) = 8.06, p < .01$ : traditional scripts are rated higher than non-traditional episodes. Finally, both main effects are qualified by their interaction,  $F(1,117) = 5.16, p < .05$ .

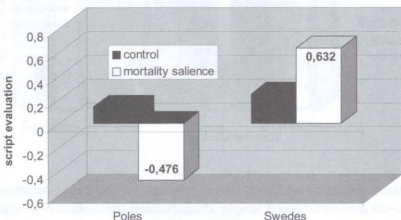
Foreign looking and non-traditional scripts are least preferred by Polish participants; and responsible for two significant simple effects: with traditional scripts among Poles and non-traditional scripts among Swedes. It appears that either of the two aspects of identity alone is sufficient to keep the script approval relatively high, and it is only the conjunction of out-group and non-traditional conditions which leads to a significant drop in approval rates.

**Mortality salience.** Assuming that the mortality salience manipulation would be short lived, data for the first half of each video sequence only (one episode being traditional and the other non-traditional) were used in testing the hypothesis of existential anxiety.<sup>6</sup> As stated earlier, our expectation was that the effects of experimental manipulation should be more pronounced in non-traditional conditions and with Polish participants.



As Fig. 3 demonstrates, after induction of death anxiety, Poles responded to non-traditional scripts with lowered preferences whereas Swedes responded with increased preferences,  $F(1,124) = 4.93, p < .05$ .

**Fig.3: Evaluation of nontraditional scripts as a function of nationality and mortality salience**



No significant effect was observed for traditional scripts. These findings confirm the previous results that it requires a double condition of distance (social out-group and cultural reversal) to differentiate people's evaluative responses. This time, mortality salience led only Poles to react in a predicted way against cultural input which was odd to them. For Swedes, the meaning of "non traditional gender role scripts" may have been different: well accepted in cultural practice. Indeed, it was found not less typical in their daily experience than that of traditional occurrences. This tells us also that the sense of "novelty" or "non-traditionality" is culture relative, pressing people towards dramatically different responses under threatening circumstances.

### **Study 2: Social Representations of Multicultural Warsaw: Before and After September 11 2001**

Since the previously described study was purely experimental, we wanted to replicate its results in every day life contexts. Following the

guidelines of Cole (1996), we believe that cultural artifacts are the tools and objects ideal for studying such phenomena as identity. By attending church of a particular denomination, going to a theater, or eating at an ethnic restaurant, people demonstrate (and acquire) their cultural knowledge, competence and preference. This line of reasoning is equally applicable to practicing one's culture of origin as well as to openness (or lack thereof) to other cultures. In our next study we wanted to compare the cultural identity of ethnic Varsovians with their representations of other cultures in the city. Our goal was to test if the SIT-based hypothesis of in-group favoritism - out-group discrimination was valid in this context, or if it gave way to a non-competitive multicultural orientation.

When we started the project in the spring of 2001, it was difficult to imagine a real life situation which could bear some degree of resemblance to experimental manipulation of mortality salience. On September 11, history brought us a series of tragic events whose drama was had no parallel to other atrocities that the media feed us. The images of airplanes hitting WTC towers, of the blast, of towers burning and collapsing minutes later - were repeatedly shown on TV screens and in magazines. Those images were vivid and people were reporting them as deeply affecting their lives by illustrating (among other things) the menace of sudden death and tragic fragility of human existence.

We hypothesized, therefore, that in consequence of chronic availability of September 11 events in people's minds, the appreciation of foreign culture artifacts would be lowered.

### **Subjects**

The subjects were 350 Polish residents of Warsaw (representative for age, education, and locality of residence). The sample was almost evenly split before September 11, 2001 (May-June) and after that date (October-November).

### **Research Materials**

The research materials consisted of pictures of various cultural institutions in Warsaw. In that sample there were pictures of four temples: a Roman-Catholic church (Polish), an Orthodox church (of Russian origin), a Synagogue (Hebrew) and a Mosque (Muslim). Four other pictures represented restaurants: "*Blikle*" (Polish), "*Van Bingb*" (Vietnamese), "*Lagos*"

(Nigerian), and "Tripoli" (Arabic). We also had pictures showing a Polish drama theater and of a Jewish theater; pictures of ethnically-mixed elementary school classrooms; and finally pictures of Chinatown in NYC and Arabic Street of Marseille, shown as possibilities of ethnic districts of Warsaw in the future.

Participants were requested to recognize the objects presented on the pictures and asked whether they visited them. Attitudinal questions measured how they felt about the presence of these institutions in Warsaw. We took also measures of Humanism - Materialism (Boski, 2002b); and of Traditionalism - Modernism - Postmodernism. The latter scales were constructed after Bauman's theory by Borowiak (2003). Sample items of the three scales are as follows: (a) Traditionalism scale: *Faith provides sense to life; Go astray those people who try to uproot the truths of the faith*; (b) Modernism scale: *Only these ideas which are rationally justified deserve to be accepted*; and (c) Postmodernism scale: *Truth does not exist: There is nothing but opinions of various individuals*.

## Results

The findings of this study can be split in two sections. The first provides answers to the question of culture identity vs. orientation to other cultures: in-group bias or multicultural appreciation. The second section gives another test to Bauman's and terror management theories.

### ***In-group bias or multicultural orientation among Varsovians?***

Social representations of in-group vs. out-group cultural artifacts bring evidence supporting three conclusions:

(i) ***Differences between the means***. There is a strong tendency for own culture preference both among sacred (temples) and profane (restaurants) objects. For temples, their mean cultural representations (syndromes of knowledge, attendance and evaluation) show a descending order,  $F(3, 151) = 114,33$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0,697$ , roughly corresponding with the distance from the country's dominant religion: Catholic church > Orthodox church > Mosque = Synagogue. A similar tendency was revealed for theatres,  $F(1, 152) = 118,94$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0,439$ , Polish > Jewish; and for restaurants, whereas Polish establishment was treated more favorably than Vietnamese, Arab and Nigerian.

(ii) ***Correlations***. When the problem of culture representations: own vs. other, is approached through correlational analyses, the emerging pic-

ture is quite different. Correlations between Polish sacred or profane objects and their foreign counterparts are at zero level (mean  $r = -.034$ ). Thus, the degree to which Varsovians appreciate their own heritage churches, restaurants, and theatres is independent from representations they have of foreign cultural institutions. The latter ones form, on the other hand, a broad syndrome of "foreign cultures' representation," i.e. all evaluations of Arab, Jewish, Vietnamese and African cultural objects show high positive intercorrelations (mean  $r = .457$ ; the  $Z$  test of difference between these two mean correlations is highly significant,  $Z = 4.57$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

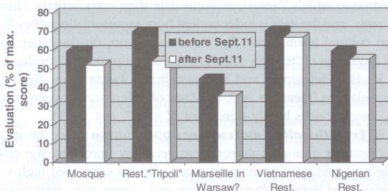
(iii) **Traditionalism and culture appreciation.** Since the appreciation of own vs. foreign cultures were generally unrelated, the research sample was split into those participants who (a) expressed high vs. low appreciation of Polish cultural heritage; and - separately - into those who held (b) favorable vs. unfavorable representations of other cultures. We compared mentality variables between individuals forming these clusters. Traditionalism was significantly higher among those Varsovians who formed a cluster of Polish culture appreciation than among those who remained relatively indifferent of their heritage  $F(1,149) = 11.08$ ,  $p < .01$ ; traditionalism was much lower among those people who enjoyed presence of foreign cultures in the landscape of the capital,  $F(1,149) = 12.55$ ,  $p < .001$ .

An important conclusion can be drawn from the above interaction of traditionalism and own/other culture appreciation. If in-group bias in relation to cultural heritage is understood in relational terms: "*The more one favors his/her own culture, the more the person discriminates against foreign cultures,*" then the generalizability of this statement must be qualified. It is applicable to people who score high in traditionalism as a cultural worldview.

**Mortality salience of September 11 events: A dent in multicultural orientation.** What happened to cultural identity and to representations of other cultures following the events of September 11? If any changes occurred, could they be interpreted by the mechanism of mortality salience?

Figure 4 compares social representations of three Muslim objects: (i) Mosque in Warsaw; (ii) Arab ethnic restaurant "Tripoli"; and (iii) "Marseille in Warsaw." The other two are Vietnamese and Nigerian restaurants. Results are clear and systematic: evaluation scores for all three objects were significantly higher before September 11 2001, than after that date. The

Fig.4 Ethnic Establishments in Warsaw  
before and after September 11



respective  $F$  tests are: Mosque,  $F(1, 350) = 12,47$ ; *Tripoli Restaurant*,  $F(1, 350) = 38,24$ ; *Marseille-in-Warsaw*,  $F(1, 350) = 13,12$  (all  $F$ s significant at  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, Vietnamese and Nigerian restaurant-clubs suffered similar losses too, which indicates a generalized mechanism detrimental to a multicultural orientation, rather than a specific reprisal focused on Arab community held responsible for the atrocities.

Evaluation of Polish cultural institutions, both church and restaurant, was left intact, and so was the Orthodox Church (culturally close and well embedded in Warsaw's traditions).

### Discussion and Conclusions

Two studies, an experimental and a cultural survey provided converging evidence regarding three problems: (a) Complementarity of cultural and social identities; (b) The role of death anxiety and mortality salience in foreign culture evaluation; (c) Traditionality (as personal and cultural dimension) and openness to diversity.

#### Cultural Identity

Empirical results from our two studies support the claim for broadening the concept of social identity by a cultural component. From the early days of work by Henri Tajfel and his associates (Tajfel, *et al.*, 1971; Bourhis, *et al.*, 1994), SIT dealt with elementary, and thus, acultural forms of WE -

THEY (/~WE) distinctions. These acultural limitations have been recently noticed inside the group of SIT researchers (Brown, 2000).

Our studies bring more empirical evidence to the literature discussed in the introduction. As was documented in the Polish-Swedish study, cultural scripts offer a source of identity, separate from the WE/~WE categorical distinction. For a majority of Polish participants, the recorded episodes were *out-group*, irrespective of their version. Yet, it mattered greatly for their preferences, whether those scripts were traditional or non-traditional. With T versions, Polish evaluations were not different from Swedish; but ~T gender roles were much disliked. All other things being equal, classical *out-group* identification is not a sufficient condition for an object (person, script, artifact, etc.) to be devalued.

The prototypical *in-group bias* occurs in minimal paradigm experiments or in an open competition between *US* and *THEM*, where maximization of output difference becomes the rule of the game (Bourhis, *et al.*, 1994; Salazar, 2002). But not all intergroup relations are founded on such structural conflicts. At times, as our second study suggests, multicultural maximization of joint profits may work. In that study, residents of Warsaw had more favorable representations of Polish cultural heritage in the city than of immigrant or minority contributions. However, we did not find any evidence for the often claimed hostile form of in-group bias: self-favoritism against other-discrimination. As our findings indicate, preferences for these two cultural domains remain independent. It looks as if separate mechanisms were at work for own cultural identity and for other cultures preferences. With the former it may be the sense of attachment and importance for our group maintenance; curiosity and interest in novelty appear as possible mediators of positive, multicultural orientation towards others.

### ***Existential Anxiety and Devaluation of Foreign Cultural Elements***

Although existential anxiety is a permanent element of the human condition, we are reasonably well shielded against its potentially devastating effects through culturally held beliefs and practices. But, because of sudden and brief or prolonged reminders of our fragility, mortality salience can be awakened. It then fortifies our cultural identities and denies foreign ones. This important problem, so eloquently elaborated by Bauman and terror management theorists, has been largely overlooked by culturally-oriented psychologists.

Our two studies demonstrate transient (experimentally activated) and chronic effects of mortality salience. The consequences in both cases are similar: devaluation of non-traditional scripts (Study I) or of foreign cultural artifacts (Study II). No evidence for more favorable view of traditional scripts could be drawn from Study I, nor increased attachment towards own cultural heritage could be proven from Study II. It looks as if the familiar culture could be taken for granted (with or without of death reminders), while people become sensitized to threat from foreign elements. An interesting footnote to our findings can be added in this context: two of the restaurants, whose evaluations dropped in the aftermath of September 11 - *Lagos* and *Tripoli* - suffered severe income losses and closed down in 2002!

Still, one result apparently escapes our interpretation: why, under mortality salience, did Swedes (contrary to Poles) increase their evaluations of non-traditional scripts? Two observations are of relevance at this point. First, T and ~T scripts are of equal status in an egalitarian Swedish society (their ratings of typicality did not differ among our participants in Lund). Thus, the concept of traditionality may not be equivalent in both cultures: While dominant in Poland, it is optional in more flexible gender roles in Sweden. And, when "traditional" becomes "optional", it loses its original meaning. But this line of reasoning leaves the increased liking for ~T scripts when under mortality salience, unexplained.

According to the second line of argument, it is quite plausible that a traditionalist worldview is more prevalent among Poles than among Swedes, who belong to the least religious society in today's Europe. Swedes, on the other hand, should be more postmodern than Poles (Borowiak, 2003). Consequently, Swedes would suffer less death anxiety than Poles; and/or - when under its duress - Swedes should find solace by endorsing more novel cultural constructions (rather than by refuting them).

Generally, Terror Management Theory seems to assume traditionalism as the only cultural format; it does not consider modernism and postmodernism, in particular, as alternatives for the experience of existential anxiety and for the mechanisms of coping.

### ***Traditional Cultures and Traditional People***

The term "traditional" assumes three meanings in this work: *traditional culture and identity* (e.g. Polish more than Swedish); *traditional*

*scripts* (e.g. research video materials); and *traditional individuals* (e.g. high scores on scale measure). People with more of a traditional cultural identity reject cultural innovations, especially under mortality salience. Individuals high on traditionalism are the ones who support the predictions of social identity theory: it is them who demonstrate *in-group bias*.

Traditionalism has been under pressure at individual, group, and international levels; it is dysfunctional for adaptation to the fast-changing reality of growing complexity. Yet it may fight back, and that is why it is so important to accommodate and include traditionalism in a multicultural project of the world.

### References

- Bauman, Z. (1991). *Modernity and ambivalence*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bauman, Z. (1999). Mortality and immortality in the post-modern world [Smierternosc i niesmierternosc w ponowoczesnym swiecie – *in Polish*]. In J. Koziellecki (ed.), *Humanistyka przelomu wieków* (pp. 262-286). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie "Zak".
- Bauman, Z. (2002). Identity in the globalizing world. In P. Boski, F. J. R. van de Vijver, & A. M. Chodynicka (Eds.), *New directions in cross-cultural psychology* (pp.27-37). Warsaw: Polish Academy of Sciences.
- Berry, J. W., Segall, M. H., & Kagitçibaşı, Ç., (Eds.). (1997). *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Vol. 3. Social behavior and applications* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Borowiak A. (2003). *Tradycjonalizm – Modernizm i Postmodernizm: Kulturowe ramy cewiatopogl' dów i psychologiczne konsekwencje* [Traditionalism – modernism and postmodernism: Cultural worldviews and their psychological consequences – *in Polish*]. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Instytut Psychologii PAN, Warszawa.
- Bourhis, R. Y., Sachdev, I., & Gagnon, A. (1994). Intergroup research with the Tajfel matrices: Methodological notes. In M.P. Zanna, & J. M. Olson (Eds.), *The psychology of prejudice: The Ontario Symposium* (Vol. 7, pp. 209-232). Hillsdale: LEA.



- Boski, P. (1988). Cross-cultural studies on person perception: Effects on ingroup/outgroup membership and ethnic schemata. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 19*(3), 287-328.
- Boski, P. (2002a). Cultural alternative to comparative social psychology. In P. Boski, F. J. R. van de Vijver, & A. M. Chodyncka (Eds.), *New directions in cross-cultural psychology* (pp.55-69). Warsaw: Polish Academy of Sciences.
- Boski, P. (2002b). Interactions, research and history embedded in Polish culture: Humanism and uncertainty non-avoidance. In W. J. Lonner, D. L. Dinnel, S. A. Hayes, & D. N. Sattler (Eds.), *Online readings in psychology and culture* (Unit 3, Chapter 7). Retrieved from Center for Cross-Cultural Research, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, USA Web site: <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~culture/index-cc.htm>
- Boski, P., Van de Vijver, F. J. R., Hurme, H., & Miluska, J. (1999). Perception and evaluation of Polish cultural femininity in Poland, the United States, Finland, and the Netherlands. *Cross-cultural Research, 33*(2), 131-161.
- Brown, R. (2000). Social identity theory: Past achievements, current problems and future challenges. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 30*, 745-778.
- Greenberg, J., Pyszczynski, T., Solomon, S., Rosenblatt, A., Veeder, M., Kirkland, S., & Lyon, D. (1990). Evidence for terror management theory II: The effects of mortality salience reactions to those who threaten or booster the cultural worldview. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58*, 308-318.
- Hoffman, C., Lau, I., Johnson, D. R. (1986). The linguistic relativity of person cognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*, 1097-1105.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Sage.
- Hong, Y., Morris, M. W., Chiu, C., & Benet-Martinez, V. (2000). Multicultural minds: A dynamic constructivist approach to culture and cognition. *American Psychologist, 55*(7), 709-720.
- Landis, D., Bakir, A., Moore, M., Noguchi, K., William A., & O'Shea, W. A. III (2002). Life in the virtual office: The effect of culture and

- ethnicity on work-group productivity. In P. Boski, F. J. R. van de Vijver, & A. M. Chodyncka (Eds.), *New directions in cross-cultural psychology* (pp.365-382). Warsaw: Polish Academy of Sciences.
- Rosenblatt, A., Greenberg, J., Solomon, S., Pyszczynski, T., & Lyon, D. (1989). Evidence for terror management theory I: The effects of mortality salience on reactions to those who violate or uphold cultural values. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 681-690.
- Salazar, J. M. (2002). Perceived similarity, degree of contact, and opinions regarding the out-group in bi-national relations: Columbia and Venezuela. In P. Boski, F. J. R. van de Vijver, & A. M. Chodyncka (Eds.), *New directions in cross-cultural psychology. Selected papers from the Fifteenth International Congress of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology*(pp. 383-391). Warsaw: Polish Academy of Sciences.
- Sanchez-Burks, J., Nisbett, R. E., & Ybarra, O. (2000). Cultural styles, relational schemas, and prejudice against out-groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(2), 174-189.
- Schwartz, S. H. (1996). Value priorities and behavior: Applying a theory of integrated value systems. In C. Seligman, J. M. Olson, & M. P. Zanna (eds.), *The Ontario symposium: Vol. 8. The psychology of values* (pp.1-24). New Jersey: LEA.
- Smith, P. B., & Bond, M. H. (1998). *Social psychology across cultures* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Prentice Hall Europe.
- Struś, K. (2002). *Tożsamość społeczna i tożsamość kultury rodzaju: Porównania polsko-szwedzkie*[ Social identity and cultural identity of gender roles: Polish - Swedish comparison - in Polish]. Unpublished master's thesis, Warsaw School of Social Psychology.
- Tajfel, H., Flament, C., Billig, M. G., & Bubdy, R. F. (1971). Social categorization and intergroup behaviour. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 1, 149-177.
- Tłaga, E. (2002). *Wpływ leku przed śmiercią na ocenę tradycyjnych i nietradycyjnych skryptów ról płciowych wśród Polaków i Szwedów*

[Mortality salience and evaluation of traditional and non-traditional gender role scripts among Poles and Swedes - *in Polish*]. Unpublished master's thesis, Warsaw School of Social Psychology.

Turner, J. C. (1999). Some current issues in research on social identity and self-categorization theories. In N. Ellemers, R. Spears, & Bertjan Doojsje (Eds.), *Social identity* (pp. 6-34). Oxford: Blackwell.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This approach is markedly different from customary formulations in cultural anthropology and sociobiology, where culture is defined as "*man-made environment*", functional to Life preservation.
- <sup>2</sup> Bauman's analysis applies to the history of European civilization. He does not make any systematic references to other cultures of the world.
- <sup>3</sup> We wish to thank Dr. Roger Sages from University of Lund who made it possible to run the project among his students.
- <sup>4</sup> The scripts for each episodes were prepared by the first author and dr Helena Hurme from Åbo Akademi University at Vaasa, Finland. We wish to thank Helena Hurme and her team at for directing these recordings for research purposes.
- <sup>5</sup> The four sets of tapes were:
  - (i) 1 2\* 3 4\*
  - (ii) 2 3\* 4 1\*
  - (iii) 3\* 4 1\* 2
  - (iv) 4\* 3 2\* 1(where numbers refer to four episodes; and \* = non-traditional scripts)
- <sup>6</sup> In all empirical literature to our knowledge, the task to test TMT hypothesis follows mortality salience manipulation immediately. It has also not been practiced to use a series of experimental tasks.