

**ATTRAVERSATE LE FRONTIERE/BORDER CROSSED:
PROCESSES OF CULTURAL ALTERNATION IN THE MARKETPLACE**

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*Long did I lie in the dust of Egypt, silent and
unaware of the seasons.
Then the sun gave me birth, and I rose and walked
Upon the banks of the Nile,
singing with the days and dreaming with the nights.
And now the sun treads upon me with a thousand
feet that I may lie again in the dust of Egypt.
But behold a marvel and a riddle!
The very sun that gathered me cannot scatter me.
Still erect am I, and sure of foot do I walk upon the
Bank of the Nile.*

*

Remembrance is a form of meeting.

*

*Forgetfulness is a form of freedom
(Gilbran Kahil Gibran - Sand and Foam, 1926)*

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1. CULTURE IN THE SINGULAR: THE LINK CULTURE-CONSUMPTION

1.1 The dyad culture-consumption: the culturally constituted world

We live in a culturally constituted world, where “Consumer goods have a significance that goes beyond their utilitarian character and commercial value. This significance rests largely in their ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; Sahlins, 1976)” (McCracken, 1986: 71).

On one hand, such a statement acknowledges the *capability of products of being carriers of cultural meanings*. On the other, it enforces the idea that *the link between culture and consumption is a central tenet in consumer behavior studies*.

Going back to the first implication, one fundamental contribution in this direction was offered by Mary Douglas (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979), who identified the consumption sphere as a world apart from the market, dominated by the fight for the definition and the shaping of culture. Reality itself can be framed as “a world of goods”, where products are not only effective tools for human life, but also for the emersion and stabilization of cultural categories. In different words, at the same time goods meet a double requirement: they have a functional usage, necessary to provide individuals with physical survival, and a socio-relational destination, being guidelines to social interactions (Midgley, 1983). According to Douglas, despite the composite nature of goods, the essential function of consumption is left in its capability of providing meaning. Goods are then a human device useful to think, being treated as an expression of non-verbal communication, both at the individual and at the social level.

Another eminent scholar; Jean Baudrillard (1968), instead of using the metaphor of goods as a way of “thinking”, privileged the idea of a system of products that act as a “language”, a way of “speaking”. What he called a “spoken system” of objects. Within Baudrillard’s framework, in detail, a theoretical distinction between a functional and a relational dimension of products is still maintained. If it is doubtless that objects possess an objective level of structuration, which is labeled “technological level”, it is at the same time certain that they cannot be reduced to their functional sphere. Products cannot be perceived as stars in the sky, which can guide in stable ways social scholars’ observations,

as stars may guide astronomers' explorations. The rationality of objects conflicts with the irrationality of needs, and the technological system is always embedded within a cultural system. Therefore, the objective "denomination" of objects has to be combined with a subjective "connotation" of meanings. Furthermore, between the technological and the practical dimensions, it is praxis that exerts a kind of control on technology. A major implication is that, in postmodern social settings, consumption itself has to be defined in a completely new way. Consumption is no longer the satisfaction of needs, being such a definition based on a passive vision of consumers, who rely on goods in order to be satisfied. On the contrary, consumption deals with an active capability of consumers, who directly interact both with the objects and the society as a whole. Therefore, the brand new trait of contemporary societies is not detected in the abundance of goods, but in the systematic processes of manipulation of meanings. An object, then, in order to be a consumption item, has to become a sign. And the constellation of consumption objects is the consumer's language to tell his/her own story, both to him/herself and to the others. Consumption becomes a personal narrative, which takes place both on a private stage and in a public theatre.

As a whole, the notion of artifacts has crossed several different disciplines, including anthropology (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; Geertz, 1973), sociology (Bijker & Pinch, 1987; Bourdieu, 1980; Crane, 1994), psychology (Cole, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978), and consumer behavior itself (Holbrook & Grayson, 1986; Metha & Belk, 1991; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988; 1991). Referring to artifacts, Mantovani (1998) makes no definite distinction between physical and ideal artifacts. He defines them as projects that have come true, and acknowledges their nature of mediating tools. All these physical and ideal artifacts take part in a common dance, through which human beings are able to "control their behavior from outside" (Vygotsky, quoted by Mantovani, 1998: 123)¹. At the same time, Mantovani states the control of artifacts on human behaviors is not complete, being individuals endorsed of an autonomous capability of making a creative use of artifacts.

The creative use of artifacts, and the strictly related centrality of consumer goods in the achievement of "a good life", is acknowledged by another cultural psychologist, Inghilleri. In a recent contribution (2003), Inghilleri points out a distinction between "terminal" and "creative" materialism. In the two situations, goods and objects are critical

¹ The quotation appears in Italian in the original text. The translation is made by the author of the current work.

elements of rich social settings, but if terminal materialism relies on the identification of artifacts as the final goal of human life, creative materialism takes to an instrumental use of goods as a privileged way to happiness. In particular, this author depicts five conditions facilitating the achievement of a materialism infused of sense:

1. *self-determination*. Consumer's perception of freedom is vital to the achievement of a creative use of artifacts (consumption objects, in our case), leading to the so-called "flow-experience" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1982; Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). Flow experience is an optimal state of being, typically generated by a challenging context in which the individual perceives a balanced relationship between his/her resources and the environmental requests. Such an experience, is fundamental for the construction of an autotelic personality, that is, a personality able of self determination (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathinde, 1993);
2. *Individualism versus collectivism self-positioning*. A second step towards the capability of making a creative use of artifacts in materialistic societies is to take a position between the two alternatives of being individually pushed or collectively oriented (Hofstede, 1980). Differently from Hofstede's original formulation, whose focus was on national cultures, in this case attention is devoted to the individual dimension, which may be affected by the national one but still keeps a proper distinctiveness;
3. *reliance on mentors*. Mentors act as influencers of consumers' processes of meaning attribution to objects, providing them with a kind of psychical order and a coherent system of significance. By the way, the role of mentors can be played by familiars, friends, but also by historical figures, fantasy characters, and so forth;
4. *action*. The consumer's ability of making an instrumental and creative use of artifacts is not only, and not mainly, an intellectual activity. On the contrary, flow experience and its enforcing effect on consumers' capability of using products in a positive way are action-based. The perception of making things, and operating on the external environment, is a key step to happiness in a materialistic society;

5. *game*. Action, which in this case is strictly meant as the consumption and disposition of goods, can be combined to a feeling of funniness and game. The possibility of playing while consuming seems to increase positive feelings and the perception of self-integration in the external reality.

Recalling McCracken's quotation, a second and even more general implication can be perceived in the *centrality of the dyad culture-consumption*. In different words, McCracken helps enlightening the centrality of culture in the understanding of purchase, consumption, and disposition processes, where culture is used as a synonym of ethnicity, race, nationality, even though in the following discussion a more precise definition of culture is going to be provided. Such a claim is widely diffused in social sciences. For example, within a sociological field of study, Holt supports the idea that consumption patterns are still highly related to social categories, including ethnicity (1997). At the same time, relying on Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and taste, in his 1998 contribution states the need for a combination of that model with other social categories, like race.

On the basis of her empirical findings in the pioneering research project on Jewish consumption patterns, Hirschman comes to the conclusion that ethnicity "should perhaps be viewed as a variable having large potential influence on marketing and consumption" (Hirschman, 1981: 109). Furthermore, the relevance of ethnicity in the evaluation of product attributes is also supported by the empirical findings of Lee and Ro Um (1992), who investigated Korean Americans consumption behaviors in the light of their acculturation processes. Analogous conclusions about the impact of ethnicity on consumption patterns of English-French Canadians are reached by Kim, Laroche, & Joy (1990), who conclude that "ethnicity indicated significant multivariate results for food and personal items" (1990: 845).

Venkatesh (1995: 28-29) openly admits the importance of studying consumption patterns in the light of cultural realities. In his words "(...) I am left with no choice but to consider all consumer behaviors as primarily sociocultural phenomena that must, therefore, be discussed in sociocultural terms. There is confusion in our field (consumer behavior or, more generally, marketing) that results from observing behavior at the individual level and subsequently regarding the phenomenon itself as individualistic. (...) There is ample evidence to show that all individual identities are derived from interactions within a

sociocultural environment (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; McCracken, 1988; Sahlins, 1976). (...) Of course, we collect data from many individual Smiths and Singhs, but our ultimate aim is to say something meaningful about the collectivities to which they belong. Individuals are products of their culture and their social groupings; therefore, they are conditioned by their sociocultural environment to act in certain manners (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; McCracken, 1988)".

After this short introduction to the issue of culture and consumption, the following discussion proceeds along these main theoretical steps:

1. *chapter 1.* This chapter starts with a general premise and a brief motivation of the interest for dyad culture-consumption. In detail, the hearth of this preliminary chapter is devoted to the analysis of the way individuals appropriate cultural stimuli, and metabolize them in terms of individual and social identity. Culture is therefore proposed "in the singular", as at first stage it is used as a general construct having a nature of "black box". In different words, at this stage I do not question the contents, functions, and variations within culture, but I simply look for the connections between culture and individual identity, as the central motivation for the link culture-consumption. In fact, the way culture impacts on consumption choices is mediated through individual identity, which is going to be defined and structured in cultural terms;
2. *chapter 2.* Once culture has been related to individual identity, through the so-called processes of psychological selection and of identity framing, it needs a more in-depth exploration. At this level, the black box of culture has to be forced and enlightened. In particular, cultures "in the plural" should evoke both the presence of almost infinite variations of cultures, and the possibility of acknowledging multiple cultural identities within individual consumers. As a matter of fact, I think that multiple cultural identities, in postmodern times, occur within any individual. Nevertheless, this research is going to investigate the presence of multiple cultural identities within immigrant consumers, who therefore experience a cultural clash moving from the culture (country) of origin to a host culture (country). Immigrant consumers, in my opinion, do not significantly differ from autochthonous ones, because both of them dispose of a

set of multiple cultural identities. At the same time, however, immigrant consumers facilitate the task of researching on multiple cultural identities, due to their experience of life. The second chapter, then, is devoted to the exploration of the assimilation processes leading to a peculiar form of social integration called “cultural alternation” (Inghilleri, 2004), which represents the main object of observation of the field analysis;

3. *chapter 3.* After exploring, both in generic and analytical terms, the cultural construct and its salience to the construction of individual identities, a literature review on ethnic studies in consumer behavior is offered. The disciplinary contributions on which this research mostly relies include consumer studies in ethnic marketing, and cultural and transcultural psychology. Many researches have already been done on the connection between ethnicity, in the sense of culture, and consumption. Nevertheless, these studies still present some shortcomings, both under a theoretical and a methodological point of view. On the theoretical side, for example, still too much attention has been given to the processes of assimilation and acculturation, which seem to suggest a win-lose logic of cultures merging. The exploration of the cultural alternation paradigm on the contrary relies on a win-win logic of cultural mergers, and helps the construction of multicultural identities and societies. Under the methodological point of view, then, ethnic studies have been principally based on the cross-cultural approach, which, far from being surpassed, has been showing several shortcomings. A complementary framework is going to be presented, which I label “cultural crossing approach”;
4. *chapter 4.* On the basis of literature limitations and consistently with the “baby” cultural crossing approach, the field work design is then presented. The empirical analysis, whose design openly addresses the milestone contribution of Lisa Peñaloza (1994; 2000), is based on ethnographic interviews conducted in the dwellings and shops of Egyptian immigrants in Milan (Italy). A general justification for the selection of this ethnic group will be provided, and the specific goals, research steps, and methods of data collection and interpretation will be explained;

5. *chapters 5 and 6.* Finally, empirical findings will be presented, and showed in the shape of an empirical model of cultural alternation of Egyptian consumers in the marketplace. A discussion in terms of managerial implications, and of new criteria for customer segmentation, is going to close the discussion.

1.2 The rationales for cultural studies in consumer behavior

A final point it may sensible to address refers to the motivations of interest for cultural studies in the consumer behavior discipline. Why has culture become such a key issue in the consumer behavior agenda? Any answer to that question can be neither easily given, nor considered to be exhaustive. Nevertheless, I think that at least three major motivations can be offered:

1. *culture is still a missing concept in consumer behavior studies.* Under a purely theoretical and epistemological point of view, culture is far from being a fully explored and unequivocal concept. The same definition of culture, as it is going to be better discussed later on (§ 2.2.1), is fragmented and often conflicting. Therefore, given the theoretical gap research has to fulfill, a preliminary motivation rests on the “epistemological” level, being culture a still promising area of investigation;
2. *structural changes in markets, and in social settings as a whole.* Some major transformations of modern societies - multiculturalism, fusion, migration flows, shadowing of boundaries, localization, etc. - take the cultural dimension to the interest of consumer researchers. Culture, in fact, seems to be central in many of these structural transformations. As a result, a second motivation of interest can be labeled “historical”;
3. *managerial implications and business opportunities.* Given the structural transformation of social settings, a careful detection of culture “at work”, that is, of the way culture affects consumers and marketers’ patterns of behavior, is profitable. If artifacts are depositories of meanings (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979), and if the system of consumption acts is the spoken language of individuals in postmodern societies (Baudrillard, 1968), then culture represents the key to force the entry into

the room of business success. Concluding, the third and last motivation for a careful exploration of culture in consumer behavior is basically "economic".

A brief discussion of the theoretical, historical, and economic rationales of cultural studies is offered in the followings.

1.2.1 The rationales for cultural studies: the epistemological motivation

Starting from the epistemological level, cultural studies possess a striking potential in terms of theoretical innovation and managerial implications. This salient potentiality is a consequence of the quite virgin nature of this field of research, not in terms of number of studies, but in terms of what has been detected right now. Using a metaphor that has been typically applied to culture, it could also be said that *cultural studies resemble an iceberg*, whose peak fluttering over the sea of knowledge has been extensively described, but whose hidden mass still waits for a more careful detection.

A first reason why cultural studies are still a "wonderland" to researchers relates to their *object of study*. Culture, in fact, is not an easily observable and definable construct. The complexity of its elaboration, in speculative terms, and of operationalization, in methodological sense, derives from its *shadowed boundaries* and its *frequently unconscious nature*. On the side of defining cultural borders, culture is so diffused in any dimension of social life that some authors (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995) came to the conclusion that, instead of positively stating what culture is, it is only possible to define culture in a subtractive way. Therefore, culture becomes anything but nature. "Culture, which originally signified all that was not nature, that is, all that was humanly constructed, became separated into its components as modernity progressed" (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 247-248). By definition, such a wide area of research shows a potential extraordinary fertility.

On the other hand, the isolation of cultural borders is not the only factor of complexity dealing with culture. In fact, its frequently subconscious nature completes the picture, being culture typically described as water to the fish (Askegaard & Kjeldgaard, 2002). "A fish only discovers its need for water when it is no longer in it. Our own culture is like water to the fish. It sustains us. We believe and breathe through it" (Trompenaars, 1993). Therefore, despite the huge amount of studies that have crossed managerial literature, not

only in the marketing field but also in the organizational one, it is not surprising that culture can still be considered as a complex and even paradoxical concept (Schein, 1996), up to the point that the same author titles his 1996 contribution as "Culture: the Missing Concept in Organizational Studies".

A further reason why cultural studies are not fully exploited can be related to the claims of a prominent scholar in this arena, Geert Hofstede. In fact, according to him (Hofstede et al., 1990), culture - or, even better, cultures (Sackmann, 1992; Mantovani, 1998; Weick, 1995; Mead, 1934), has been one of the numerous *managerial fads*. Therefore, despite the maintenance of a kind of official status within managerial literature and practice, culture has passed through waves of interest, finding in recent years a sort of new youth, also due to structural changes occurred in postmodern societies.

Finally, cultural studies are a promising area of analysis also thanks to *frequent miscomprehensions within the scientific community*. According to Arnould & Thompson (2005), there are at least three strongly rooted mistakes affecting Consumer Culture Theory:

1. *cultural studies are seen as limited in terms of external validity*, because they are perceived as focalizing on a local knowledge (Geertz, 1983). What is missed is that cultural studies are not interested in studying *the* context, but in studying consumption patterns *in* the context. It basically represents a question of methodological setting, because cultural researchers substitute the laboratory with the field;
2. *cultural studies are definitely associated to qualitative methods*. In addition to that, despite a frequent use of qualitative methods as a result of the peculiar units of analysis and goals, it has to be said that cultural studies are open to any method that suitably fits their needs;
3. *lack of managerial implications*. A final critical remark on cultural studies is often based on the presumed weakness in terms of managerial implications, which has been disconfirmed in recent years (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

1.2.2 The rationales for cultural studies: the historical motivation

The second rationale for an exploration of culture in consumption processes can be named "historical", and it can be related to the major structural changes occurred in postmodern marketplaces and societies. The following discussion does not claim to be exhaustive, but keeps an exemplificative aim, probably showing just the peak of the mountain. One first dramatic change relates to migration processes. In the last decades, migration flows have been more and more motivated on the basis of economic, educational, and job differentials ("pull" factors; Cohen, 1997; Clifford, 1994), which emerge from a comparison between economically developed countries and those countries underdeveloped or in a state of transient economy. Therefore, the typically addressed "expulsive" origin of migration ("push" factors), still present in very isolated cases or circumstances (wars, genocides, etc.), has shadowed, and movements of individuals are increasingly free, under the spur of finding greater opportunities of life abroad. Recalling Peñaloza's ethnographic study on Mexican Americans, (1994: 46) "Trabajando bastante es agradable porque uno alcanza lo que uno desea [Working so hard is agreeable because one achieves what one desires]". The free movement of individuals transforms migration from an emergency dynamic to a structural one, reshaping the DNA of societies and challenging the same sense of belonging. A much more autotelic definition of individual lives, and of consumer experiences, is one of the rising implications of this transformation.

Just to give an idea of the dimension of this epochal transformation, in 2000 the stock of migrants all over the world reached the peak of 175 millions, but estimates of the International Organization for Migrations give a stock of 230 millions by 2050 (World Migration report 2003, quoted in Caritas, 2004). According to Andreasen (1990), this transformation has become more evident in an already multicultural society like the US. This author, in fact, points out that the composition of American society is no longer related to the Blacks only, the "diverse" ethnic group by definition. Nowadays, the US experience an enormous presence of other ethnic groups, Asians and Hispanics leading the list. The same occurs in Europe, where the number of immigrants has reached the striking dimension of 20.5 millions of individuals in the European Union alone (Caritas, 2004), with outstanding cases like Germany, France, Italy and UK. As a consequence, the international

structure of marketplaces is reproduced also within national boundaries and becomes a new distinctive trait of the same domestic markets.

The progressive enlargement of the European Union boundaries represents a further epochal shift. This transformation is linked to the progressive construction of a supranational European community, which can be juxtaposed to the US federation of States. In fact, since 1992 the European Common Market has been reshaping the economic patterns of behavior, both of producers and consumers, and the sense of belonging of European citizens. These socioeconomic transformations allow Andreasen (1990) to state some emergent future streams of research, including: the need for a better understanding of acculturation (cultural interpretation) on both sides (groups penetrating and being penetrated, that is, immigrants and host society); the measurement of acculturation and of its depth (depth of exposure, depth of penetration, etc.); the evaluation of the difference made by the possibility of “going to a culture” (i.e., media exposition) or in “having a culture coming to you” (i.e., migration flows); individual differences in acculturation processes (personality traits, chance, situational factors, previous direct/vicarious experience, etc.); the areas of quicker/slower acculturation (i.e., new product adoption); the social class entrance when migration processes occur (do migrant enter the new culture at the same social class level as in their former society?).

Multiculturalism and globalization are frequently quoted aspects of everyday current debate (Klein, 2001; Ritzer, 1983; 2000). Migration flows and the shadowing of national boundaries, as it is happening to European countries, facilitate the emergence of multicultural societies. Nevertheless, it is sensible to point out that no social context may be considered per se multicultural by God's appointment. I mean that the pure presence of different ethnic groups does not make a society multicultural. On the contrary, political intervention and social dynamics are appointed for the responsibility of transforming an ethnically heterogeneous community into a multicultural one.

Consistently with Appadurai's findings (1990), Peñaloza (1999, 2000, 2003) supports the idea that contemporary markets are both internally and internationally characterized by multiculturalism. “The rising and communications interdependence of the world means that nations, however unified internally, must nonetheless operate in an increasingly

multicultural global environment. Ironically, a world that is coming together pop culturally and commercially is a world whose discrete subnational ethnic and religious and racial parts are also far more in evidence (Barber, 1996: 11). Such a multicultural nature of postmodern societies is also acknowledged by Laroche et al. (1998), who openly admits the shift from monocultures to multiple cultures.

A final structural transformation that I would like to address, also given the goals of the current study, is a phenomenon closely related to globalization, that is, *localism*. In fact, the renewal of localisms can be interpreted as the counter-side of globalization. The local dimension, being jeopardized by the convergence of trends in social life and in consumption, obtains a refreshed awareness and gets an increasing power. Tinson, Nancarrow, & Nancarrow (2004), for example, admit that the interest for the dyad culture - consumption is sustained both empirically, on the basis of the increasing migration flows, and theoretically, as "The global resurgence in ethnic identity and pride suggests that as superficial aspects of behavior converge, people tend to cling more to their own sense of cultural identity" (Costa & Bamossy, 1995). Globalization, in fact, has induced a counterforce that can be labeled "localism" (Ritzer, 1983; 2000), and that has enforced the need for authenticity (Cova, 2003) and cultural identity (Visconti, 2004). "Globalization pushes towards a return to past and localism, instead of supporting a hope of a progressive universalism"² (Cova, 2003: 80). Such a Renaissance of the local dimension has for example taken to the formulation of new marketing paradigms, such as the foundation of a Mediterranean marketing (Cova, 2004; Visconti, 2005).

At the same time, McCracken (1990) openly remarks that these local identities call for a material sphere through which they may be expressed and acted. As a result, the acknowledged connection between culture, self-identity and behaviors requires the existence of consumer goods through which cultural identity can be expressed and reinforced, both at an individual (intra-psychical) and at a social (interactional) level. "Without consumer goods certain acts of self-definition and collective definition in this culture would be impossible" (McCracken, 1990).

² The quotation appears in Italian in the original text. The translation is made by the author of the current work.

1.2.3 The rationales for cultural studies: the managerial motivation

Finally, culture is a key construct in consumer behavior also for its *potential managerial implications*. Arnould & Thompson (2005) refer that a typical criticism to Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) is its presumed irrelevance in terms of managerial suggestions. "This criticism is explicitly premised on the assumption that the rational choice paradigm and a corresponding focus on purchase behavior would remain core managerial interests. However, subsequent developments - most particularly the rise of customer relation management, lifestyle and multicultural marketing, and the proliferation of so-called identity brands (Holt 2003) - have rendered consumer meanings as a central managerial concern and hence ethnographic methods have become commonplace in applied market research (Frank 1997; Osbourne 2002)" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005: 10)³.

A chorus of supporters of cultural studies in consumer behavior (Costa & Bamossy, 1995; Venkatesh, 1995; McCracken, 1988) can be easily opposed to that diffused criticism. According to Porter Gore (1998), the ethnic market may become the norm. In fact, the US demographic situation provides marketers with emerging opportunities in the so-called "ethnic markets". In detail, these opportunities include: the increase of minorities, up to the point that by 2050 minorities will represent the rule; the relevance of the Afro-American, Asian-American, and Hispano-American communities; the urban concentration of these minorities in the largest US metropolises, facilitating the task of reaching these markets; the relatively virgin nature of ethnic markets as a radically different state of the yet saturated mainstream consumers; the lack of trust present within the minorities, creating a race among competitors in order to win this trust (high opportunities of loyalty and of effective word-of-mouth).

At the same time, the possibility of making ethnic markets the rule implies the need for coherent marketing actions, which may include: an effort on retail strategies, both to approach ethnic communities in the home market and to internationalize the company's distribution; the possibility of covering customer communication with different languages (e.g. call-center, media, etc.); the possibility of hiring a multicultural labor force, in order to represent minorities within the company.

³ This paper is forthcoming, and therefore the indication of page quotation simply refers to the single document, double spaced, actually available.

Over the possibility of covering issues like market culture (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) and market formation (Peñaloza, 2000), probably the major managerial implication of cultural studies in new market dynamics refers to *market segmentation*. Within multicultural contexts, in fact, ethnicity and cultural identity may be powerful criteria for market segmentation, and the consequent detection of new critical target groups. This approach has been generically labeled “ethnic marketing” (Sengès, 2003), “multicultural marketing” (Costa & Bamossy, 1995), “ethnoconsumerism” (Venkatesh, 1995), “marketing of ethnicity” (Halter, 2000), or “intercultural marketing” (Napolitano, 2002), just to quote a few. Peñaloza (2003: 3), on that point, enlightens that if, on the one hand, society can more easily discriminate and segregate immigrant individuals, on the other hand market is more free, because “the dollar is colorblind; that is, all consumers are treated similarly” by marketers. In fact, “For those groups large enough and with enough spending power, the market responds with specially tailored campaigns”. Consistently with that, the same author, in her 1999 contribution points out that contemporary markets are characterized by two apparently contradicting traits: globalization and ethnic differentiation. This creates new opportunities to marketers, who can separate “people by distinguishing them on the basis of their sociodemographic characteristics and other consumption patterns. It unifies them by assembling people with similar characteristics, ideas, and behaviors; providing products, services, media, and social spaces that reinforce cultural identities; and promoting the consumption of cultural market artifacts. Interactions between cultures and markets are accelerated in the global economy” (Peñaloza, 1999: 84).

1.3 Why culture affects consumption: identity as cultural identity

1.3.1 Culture: from environmental influencer to identity constituent

Previous discussion has introduced the dyad culture - consumption, and has reached the conclusion that it represents a central tenet in consumer studies, for theoretical, historical, and managerial reasons. Nevertheless, in the current research the connection between culture and behavior has been unexplored so far. Why is culture so central in human life, and in particular in the consumption sphere? Does it mean that individual (consumer) behavior is influenced by cultural stimuli, or is this relationship stronger than that? Traditional consumer behavior studies tend to privilege the idea that culture belongs to

environmental factors affecting consumer behavior. "The consumer is also affected by environmental variables - culture, social class, face-to-face groups, and situational determinants. Culture refers to widely shared norms and patterns of behavior of a large group of people." (Assael, 1987: 15). And even more, "The broadest environmental factor affecting consumer behavior is culture." (Assael, 1987: 297). "It is generally stated that culture provides us with a style of behavior, a way of communication, some knowledge, beliefs and especially some norms that have to be respected and values with which we identify. It encourages us to adopt particular behaviors, limiting our possibility of undertaking different conducts." (d'Astous et al., 2002: 250)⁴. In a closely similar way, Solomon et al. (2002) describe culture as the frame in which consumer behaviors take place and find sense, and give place emphasis on the dimension of material culture and rituals (McCracken 1986). As a result, their main goal is to understand "how the culture in which we live creates the meaning of everyday products and how these meanings move through a society to consumers" (Solomon et al., 2002: 441). In all these cases, culture is perceived as an environmental factor, which creates and describes the context in which consumers decide, buy, consume, possess, and dispose of goods and services.

Psychology - with major regard to social psychology and its latest evolution, the stream of the so-called (trans)cultural psychology (Cole, 1996; Harré et al, 1985; Inghilleri, 1994; Mantovani, 1998) - posits a stronger connection between culture and human behavior, which can obviously be contextualized also to the pure sphere of consumption. In particular, what cultural psychology assumes is that individual identity is culturally constituted (Linton, 1945). Such a statement is all but marginal. Culture, in fact, is not only an influencing factor of human conducts, but it represents a constituent of the individual's identity. Therefore, the role of culture turns out to be largely extended and is promoted to an ontological standing: individuals, and social groups, are made of their culture; they do not simply use culture. This Copernican revolution in cultural studies, moving from a renewed ontological level, invests the epistemological and methodological dimensions too, which require new theoretical bases and ad hoc methods for a more interpretative analysis of culture.

^{4 4} The quotation appears in French in the original text. The translation is made by the author of the current work.

Even though this shift occurred within the psychological realm, this revolutionary assumption has been adopted and translated into managerial terms by a group of consumer scholars (Costa & Bamossy, 1995; Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; Peñaloza, 1989; Venkatesh, 1995). Being the individual culturally structured, and being consumption a relevant but restricted dimension of human life, the connection between culture and consumption is then more understandable in its generative importance. In fact, consumers are “cultural beings” (Applbaum & Jørdt, 1996; McCracken, 1986), because, before consumers, they are individuals. And “people *are* their culture”, as it has been effectively expressed by Belk (1988), quoted in Peñaloza (1994: 48).

A final metaphor can help fix the idea. Culture has been frequently described as “water” (Askegaard & Kjeldgaard, 2002; Trompenaars, 1993). Should culture be a simple environmental influencer, it may be depicted like the rain, which affects human conducts in episodic terms: if it rains, you take an umbrella. On the contrary, if culture is accepted as a stable trait of individuals’ identity, it comes to be the water structuring human beings, and transformed into blood, flesh, and bones. Consumers think, see, touch, shop, consume, and digest through culture, being their culturally constituted “body” involved in all these practices.

After assessing the structural nature of culture, two more questions require attention:

- 1 *how external culture is appropriated by individuals*. Recalling our metaphor, we need to know how the glass of water is filled, taken to our mouth, and drunk. Out of the metaphor, the process of psychological selection individuals use to appropriate culture and to transform it into internal culture needs to be better described;
- 2 *how individual identity can be framed*. Once water has been ingested, the process of metabolism and absorption into bones, blood, and flesh calls for investigation. Defining identity in cultural terms, in fact, is not a trivial question. A preliminary framework is going to be provided, even though our research is going to focus on specific forms of identity reconstruction, called “alternation patterns” (LaFramboise et al., 1993; Inghilleri, 2004), which will be analyzed in greater detail in the followings (§ 2.3.1, 2.3.2).

1.3.2 Human psychological selection

A detailed description of the psychological processes of cultural selection is not the heart of this study. At the same time, a brief discussion seems to be sensible and potentially fruitful, because culture is frequently confused with the sole sphere of external culture (extrasomatic culture). As a result, the so-called intrasomatic culture (internal culture) is a frequently missed construct in cultural studies. Given that our interest is mainly devoted to that peculiar connotation of culture, because it seems to be a Hegelian synthesis between the social environment and the individual, a general introduction is needed.

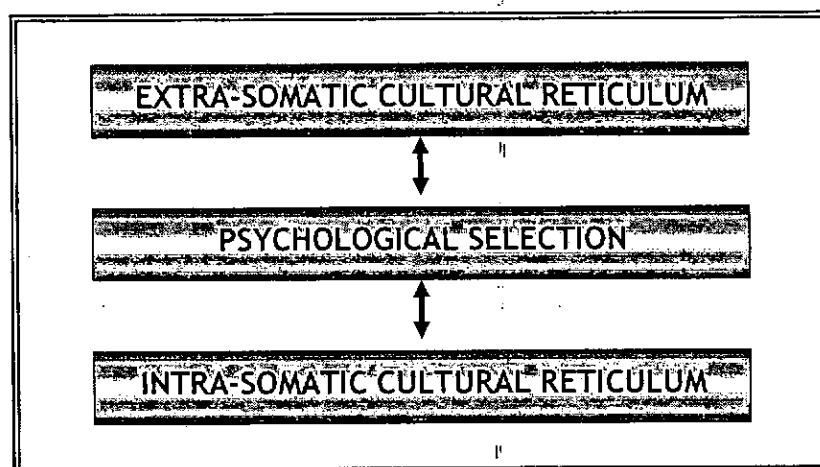
According to psychology, *human behavior has a double origin*. On one hand, individuals act under the influence of their genes, which represent the “first inherited system” containing the biological history of the person (Massimini, Inghilleri, Delle Fave, 1996). Genetics represents a sort of trans-generational luggage, which, far from being immutable, typically represents a relatively steady base that can be modified over extended lengths of time. The second driver of human behavior is, then, represented by the social and natural environment, which constitutes the “secondary inherited system”. The environment affects human conducts both with reference to physical factors (climatic conditions, natural characteristics, interactions with other living beings, etc.) and to social factors, where extrasomatic culture lives and interpersonal dynamics take place. Within psychological literature, these environmental forces are also synthetically called the “ecological system”. This distinction between genetics, individual mediation, and environment has been formally defined by Sameroff (1989), who openly describes individual adaptation to the context as the resultant of three components:

- 1 *genotype*: the biological base of human race, shared among individuals;
- 2 *phenotype*: the individual characteristics, which acknowledge the sphere of the individual distinctiveness and variation;
- 3 *ecotype*: the environmental dimension, socially and culturally mediated.

As a result, within this frame *human development*, which is given by the combination of cognitive development (including psychomotor development, perception, thinking, and

language) and socio-affective development (involving personality, affective development, and social behavior), occurs through the interaction between genetics and environmental forces, mediated by the individual. Nevertheless, the relevance of these two drivers, the ecological and the genetic ones, cannot be stated in general terms (Moscardino & Axia, 2001). In different words, it is impossible to state whether one of the two has always a dominating impact on human development and behaviors. Theoretical positions, in fact, differ in terms of the role attributed to environmental, social, and cultural variables on one hand (ecological component), and biological factors (genetic component), on the other. The more recent psychological positions are closer to a holistic and extensive explanation of human development and behaviors, taking into account both the dimensions. Moreover, recent studies try to establish the role of genetics and ecology case by case, attributing weights to the different areas of human development. Just to provide some examples, on one extreme it is possible to locate some human developmental processes that are mainly - but not only - explained through ecological variables, including: psychomotor development (Super, 1976), adult personality (Super & Harkness, 1997; Whiting & Whiting, 1975), and emotions (Izard, 1977; Ekman, 1972; Ekman & Oster, 1979; Schaffer, 1996). On the opposite extreme, it is possible to put those human developmental processes principally based on genetic factors, such as: the perceptive system (Bornstein, 1980) and cognitive development (Piaget, 1936). Nevertheless, no explanation based on a single explanatory variable can be valued as exhaustive.

Figure 3 - The process of elaboration of external culture into internal culture



A formalization of this discourse, where biological, ecological and individual variables are not only listed, but structurally connected between themselves, is offered by Massimini et al. (1996). This model describes the process of human psychological selection, which takes place at the level of the central nervous system, where genetic and cultural factors are no longer distinguishable. The individual level, during the psychological selection mechanisms, becomes the “only place of confluence” between genetics and culture.

Formally speaking, the human phenotypical behavior (CF) has been collapsed into a formula, which is labeled “equation of extensive adaptation”:

$$CF = f(g, ic, n) + f(an, mc, n) + i(g, ic, mc)$$

where:

- $f(g, ic, n)$ represents the individual, who is interpreted as the resultant of genetics (g) and intrasomatic culture (ic). The relevance played, in a given context, by genetic information and intrasomatic culture is expressed by their weights (n). This relevance is defined as “penetrance”, and can represent the proportion of individuals of a particular genotype that express its phenotypic effect in a given environment (Merriam-Webster Dictionary);
- $f(an, mc, n)$ represents the environment (ecological dimension), composed by physical ties (an) and material culture (mc). Material culture represents extrasomatic culture and is partially represented through artifacts (Cloak, 1975). Also in this case, n represents the penetrance rate of physical ties and material culture in defining the environment;
- $i(g, ic, mc)$ stands for the inertia factors (i), which can relate to genetics (g), intrasomatic culture (ic), and extrasomatic culture (mc). Inertia can be defined as resistance to change, and - generally speaking - shows higher rates with reference to genetics, whereas the other two factors may experience quicker changes.

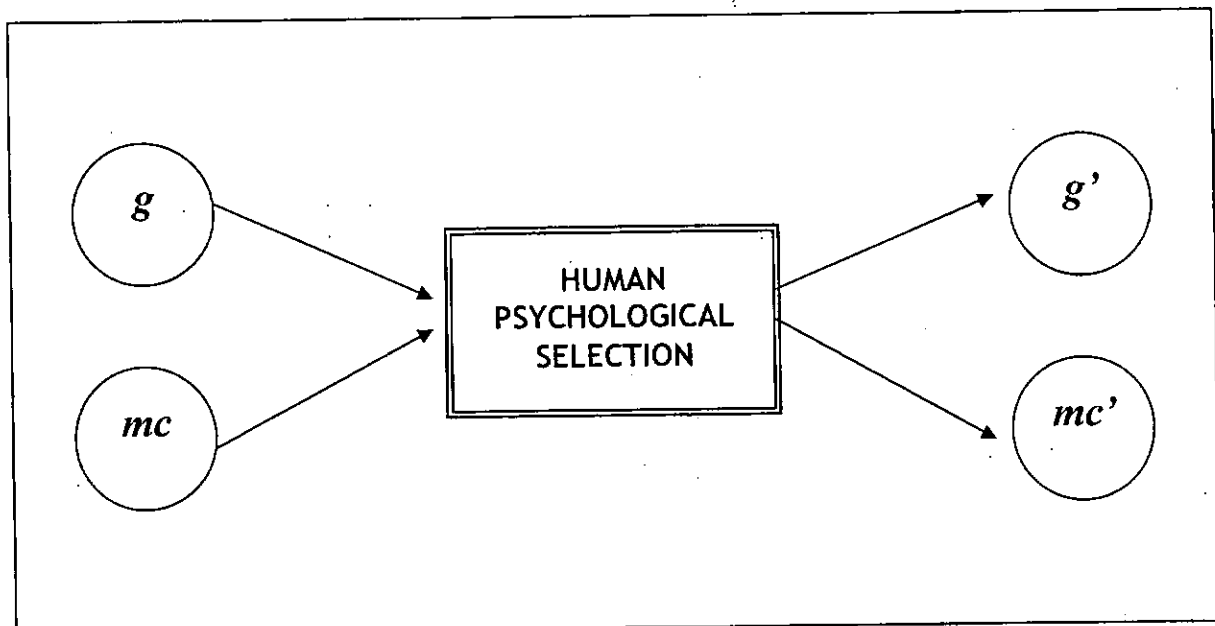
This equation is a helpful device to keep in mind that:

- 1 *individual behaviors are both affected by genetics and by environmental factors, which include natural and cultural factors, where the distinction*

between these two dimensions is definable in the way Firat & Venkatesh proposed (1995);

- 2 *culture appears at a double level.* Culture, in order to be effective on humans' identity construction and to be impactful on their behaviors, has to be internalized. In different words, it has to move from the external dimension (mc) to the internal one (ic). Through this path culture becomes a structural constituent of individual identity;
- 3 *the individual represents the Hegelian level of synthesis.* As it has already been stated, individuals are the only place of confluence between genetics and culture;
- 4 *the role played by individuals is both absorptive and generative.* Human development requires the absorption of genetic and environmental information, which are then elaborated and integrated by the individual. Through this process of elaboration, the individual creatively forces the inertia of genetics and culture, and therefore induces changes in them (fig. 4).

Figure 4 - Absorptive and generative function of human psychological selection



1.3.3 Framing individual identity: the individual and relational levels

Once the mechanisms of cultural, natural, and genetic appropriation and elaboration have been briefly described, it is then necessary to reflect on the framing of individual identity. After the previous discussion, it should be sufficiently clear that *identity is suspended upon two stages*:

- 1 *a social and relational level.* Identity cannot be defined as an isolated construct. Under a logical point of view, the definition of self (identity) requires the identification of an alterity, to be juxtaposed and contrasted. Under a developmental point of view, identity itself is constructed on the basis of social and interpersonal relationships;
- 2 *an individual level.* Identity is also something that, by definition, strictly refers to the individual, who engages in a never-ending process of selection and change.

Under a relational point of view, Harré et al. (1985) enlighten *the centrality of collective and social interactions in the structuring of the mind*. The human mind, and consequently human actions, cannot be explained on the pure base of an individualistic approach, calling for a socialized and constructivist integration of the framework. As a result, individualistic psychology, based on the pioneering work of Sigmund Freud, and the socialized approach, grounded on Mead's theoretical system (1934), are always partial, and ask for an integrated and more comprehensive perspective. This integrated psychological perspective will therefore rest on the principle of the "double control of action", individual and social. In particular, among those social processes of interactions, one can be signaled for its central relevance: conversation. It is important to acknowledge both the linguistic and the symbolic (Baudrillard, 1968) sides of conversation, which are vital in understating how mental structures are shaped.

Within Harré's three-leveled hierarchy of control on psychological processes, social interactions represent the third and highest level. In detail, the three mechanisms of control of human actions proposed by Harré et al. (1985) include:

1. *level one, behavioral routines.* At the lowest level, human actions can be ruled by automatic and unconscious micro-processes, through which our plans and actions are executed (seeing, speaking, moving, etc.). Behavioral routines are the realm of psychomotor stimuli, and have been largely researched by cognitive psychology. Their analysis can explain “how” we do things (act);
2. *level two, conscious awareness.* At the intermediate level, human actions are ruled by the conscious mind, which - by articulating, synthesizing and aggregating stimuli - is able to attribute meanings, elaborate thoughts and promote action. The conscious mind has been explored by ethogeny (Harré & Secord, 1972), which is focused on the sole actions that people can retrospectively justify. Said in different words, the ethogenic method is applied in order to detect the conscious and intentional motivation of human actions, not the automatic and mechanical processes. The conscious mind is the world of the Augustinian “*liberum arbitrium*”, and can explain “what” we do, that is, what are the decisions that support our actions;
3. *level three, socialization, affectivity, morality, and motivation.* It represents the upper level of control, through which human actions are ruled in a frequently unconscious way. The third level is the expression of the “emotional self” and of the “relational/socialized self”, which are always culturally specific. It represents the realm of exploration for the new psychology of action, and it can explain the “why” of actions (in depth motivation).

This three-partite structuration of hierarchical controls over human psychological processes recalls the already quoted framework proposed by Sameroff (1989), who adopted a threefold model in order to describe the individual’s adaptation to the context (§ 1.2.2). Sameroff’s genotype, phenotype and ecotype resemble, in fact, the three hierarchical dimensions: behavioral routines are close to genotypes, individual awareness is close to phenotypes, and socialization reminds ecotypes.

Harré et al.’s contribution goes beyond the pure definition of these mechanisms of control. In fact, in their theoretical system, which goes under the denomination of “psychology of action” (1985), a model framing the way individuals construct their own identity through an elaboration of social interactions is also proposed. Adopting the metaphor of conversation, these authors suggest that through social discourse each person

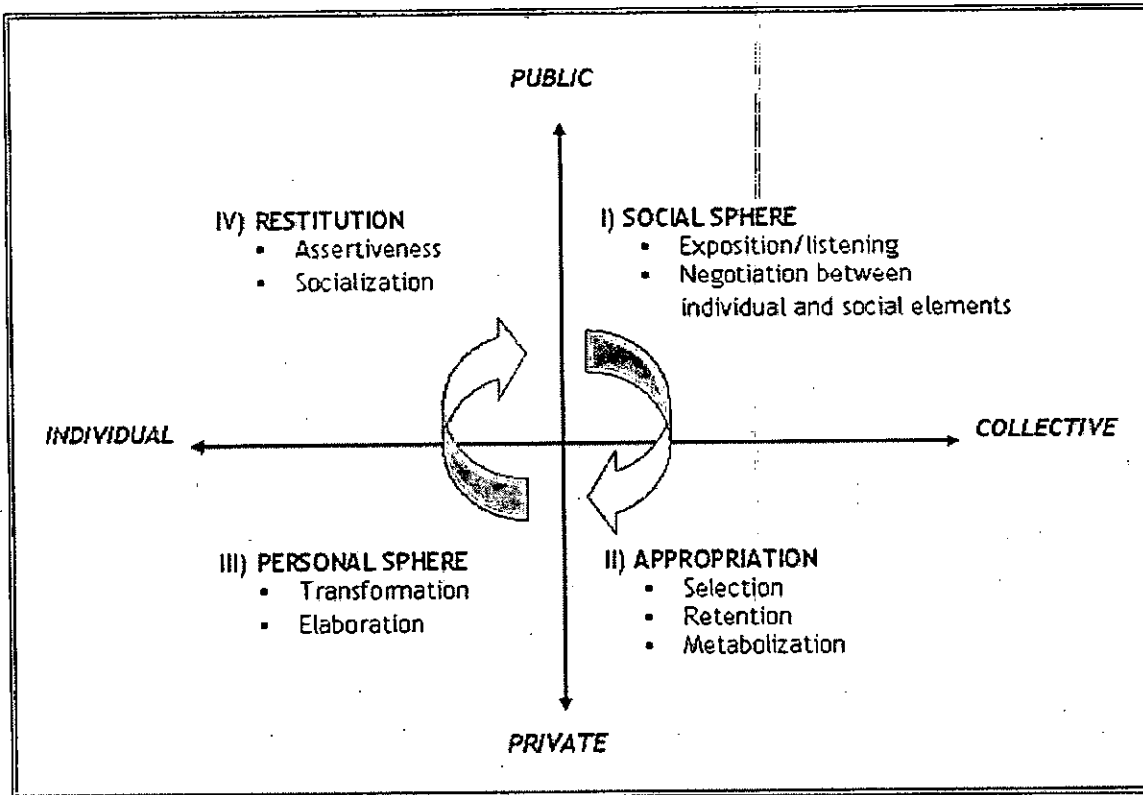
can offer some elements to the collectivity (restitution) and may get elements from society (appropriation), in a perennial exchange. In detail, the psychological space for conversation can be framed adopting two distinct vectors:

1. *manifestation*. On one hand, it is possible to mark the difference between situations in which a person keeps for himself/herself his/her emotions, mental states and processes (private) or shares them with others (public). In a synthetic way, the manifestation level addresses the sphere of restitution;
2. *achievement*. On the other hand, the psychological space of conversation can refer to the possibility of achieving certain psychological processes on the sole base of individual resources (individual) or through a social participation (collective). In this case, achievement relates to the appropriation level.

The combination of these two vectors gives origin to four different quadrants, which are briefly described in the followings (fig. 5):

1. *social sphere*. The combination collective-public defines the social sphere, where individual psychological processes are shared with others and achieved through them. Recalling the frame of "evolutionary psychology", where Vygotsky (1978) is still its best known exponent, this is the typical state of the child who is originally socialized;
2. *appropriation*. The combination collective-private denotes the state of psychological selection and appropriation of some elements present in the collective discourse, which are retained and metabolized at an individual (private) level;
3. *personal sphere*. The combination private-individual identifies the pure personal sphere. Once the elements, which have been selected in the public conversation, are transformed, it is possible to acknowledge a personal contribution (individual);
4. *restitution*. The combination individual-public represents the restitution area, which is characterized by the socialization of some individual elements. Evolutionary psychology typically suggests that the process operates along the sequence social sphere - appropriation - personal sphere - restitution, and then back to social sphere.

Figure 5 - A model of framing identity through continuous social conversation



Source: Elaboration on Harré et al. 1985

Also within the *anthropological realm*, the framing of identity, through a stable process of negotiation between the self and the others, is a central tenet. Anthropologists acknowledge the relevance of genetics, but attribute a prominence to culture, whose impact seems to be even stronger than in the majority of psychological studies, with the main exceptions of those scholars belonging to social psychology (Harré et al, 1985), cultural psychology (Bruner, 1990; Cole, 1995; Mantovani, 1998; Schweder, 1990), and transcultural psychology (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992; Inghilleri, 1994).

On individual identity, an impressive image showing the connection genetics-culture is offered by the prominent Italian anthropologist Francesco Remotti, who defines human beings as “biologically lacking animals” (1996). This author, in fact, enters the dispute between genetics and culture, which has been going on between the so-called “essentialist” and “constructivist” approaches. After defining the essentialist frame as the school where identity is “built on stone”, in the sense that it is immutable thanks to its genetic pre-definition, he proposes a constructivist approach, which on the contrary

enforces the role of social stimuli, acknowledging the discontinuous, undetermined, and potential nature of identity. By the way, the constructivist school (Gergen, 1994) has increased its relevance over time, and has theorized the human "biological incompleteness" (Geertz, 1973; Mitchell, 1988). Out of the metaphor, this means that human beings cannot rely only on their biological resources in order to survive, being culture a fundamental resource to them. In different words, the human brain is not only the determinant of human culture, but also its product. Therefore, despite the dramatic relevance of the biological dimension, the constructivist approach adds the cultural dimension, which is proposed as a non renounceable component of social and individual identity.

As a result, also within the anthropological realm identity is framed on a cultural base. In detail, some relevant conclusions reached by anthropologists can be summarized as follows:

- *identity is culturally determined.* The assumption that human identity is culturally completed and constructed leads to the conclusion that it is not possible to speak of identity without speaking of cultural identity. Identity is a construct with the stable predicate of culture;
- *thoughts and emotions have a social nature.* Also within anthropology, a relational model of identity construction is enforced, in which the "figure" (the individual) cannot be understood without its "background" (social relations);
- *cultural particularism.* Given the human biological incompleteness, each individual has to be integrated through hic et nunc social interactions. In this way, the individual can no longer be seen as the depositor of universal laws (Adam Smith, Freud, Descartes and Kant), but only of relational texts having a limited and contextual relevance;
- *the irresistible identity* (Remotti, 1996). Given the structural incompleteness of biological identity, human beings live an irresistible temptation for the processes of identity construction, which can be interpreted as a process of identity fulfillment.

Once the relational side of identity construction has been acknowledged, on the basis of contributions both from psychology and anthropology, *the individual dimension asks for a*

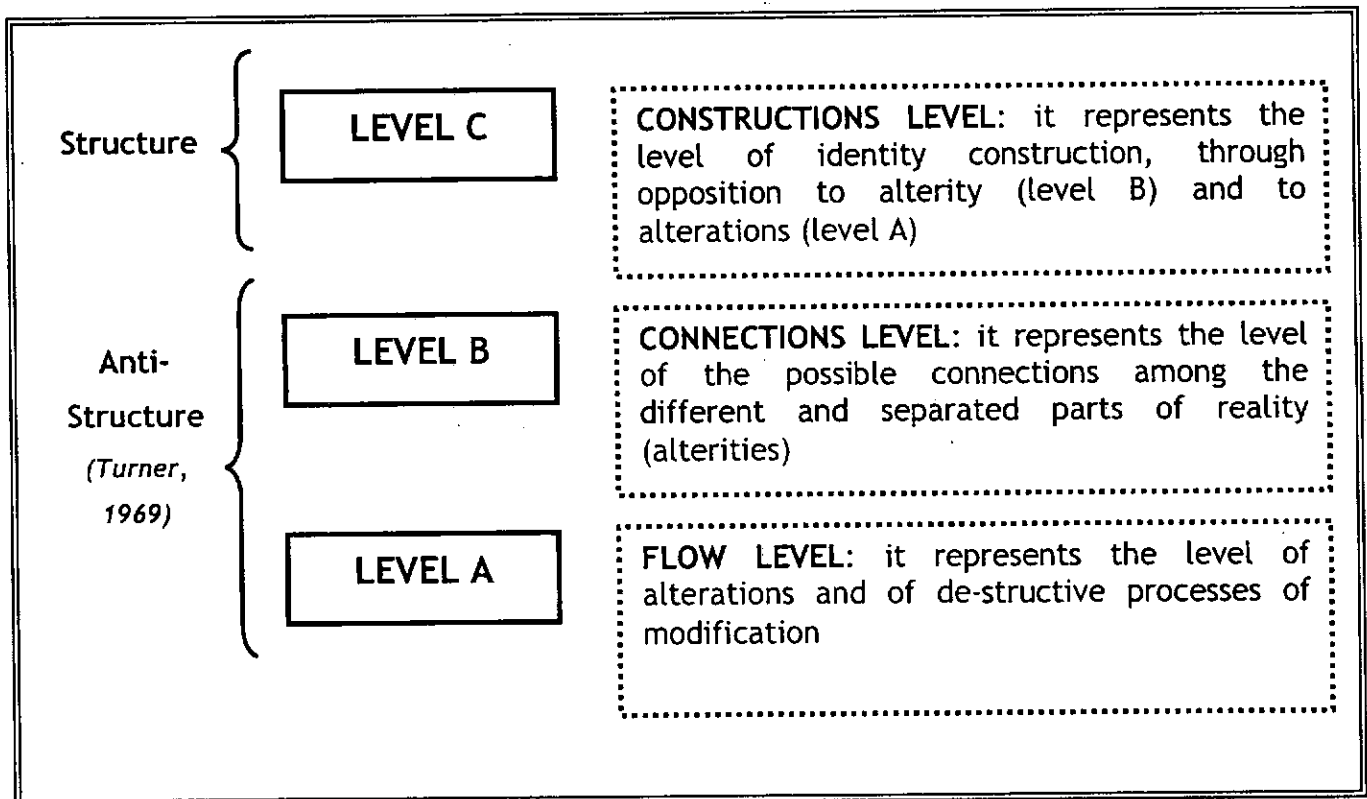
deeper exploration. According to Remotti (1996), a model of identity framing can be built after having answered to the following questions:

- 1 *is identity based on "generalization" or on "distinctiveness"?* Generalization assumes that identity is built on commonalities and homogeneities, and this evokes processes of assimilation and of sewing. On the contrary, distinctiveness refers to a path of identity construction based on differences and heterogeneities, and leads to processes of separation and cutting;
- 2 *is identity related to "structure" or is it linked to "flow"?* Structure evokes the idea of stability, permanence, and elements that can be saved from the erosion and fluttering of time, whereas flow enlightens the idea of mutation, change, and elements that are time-related;
- 3 *is identity a construct that can be analyzed through an "essentialist" perspective or is it understandable in a "constructivist" framework?* As already discussed, the Aristotelian approach (essentialist frame) assumes that identity pre-exists and is granted by the ontological organization of reality. Therefore, identity can be discovered as something hidden, but already existing. On the other hand, the constructivist approach, linked to mathematicians as Waisman and psychologists like Harré, hypothesizes that identity is invented and socially constructed. In that second case, there is no ontological structure that can be detected, and each group/individual is free to construct its/his/her own identity. At the same time, however, this constructive freedom does not degenerate into anarchy, as the construction process is oriented and constrained by "cultural guides".

Taking for granted the adoption of a constructivist logic, individuals have to build their own identity on relatively stable traits. At the same time, the selection, elaboration, and retention of these relatively stable traits take place under the continuous challenges of disruption and change, and under the permanent necessity of defining the self in a perennial juxtaposition with alterity (fig. 7). Therefore, identity is built through an activity of continuous negotiation between the willingness of classification, separation and cutting, and the opposite search for integration, connections and resewing. In addition, it is meaningful to point out that the categorization and classification process is culturally specific. At the same time, identity essentially deals with stable constituencies (elements),

which challenge the constant transformation of the world. This does not mean that identity is stable and permanent, only that it is built fighting against the eternal transformation of things. In fact, identity turns out to be the selection of a limited number of connections among the whole set of possible connections. Formally speaking, Remotti (1996) proposes to distinguish among three different levels, whose interaction explains the main identity dynamics and typical traits (fig. 7). To summarize, “Deciding identity is therefore a violence against the cobwebs of connections; but it is also an attempt, sometimes a heroic (and irresistible) attempt, to get rid of the inexorable flow and mutation” (Remotti, 1996: 10)⁵. Put in the words of Lévi-Strauss (1984: 29-30) “Each true creation implies a certain deafness to the call of other values, up to the point of their refusal or even negation”⁶.

Figure 7 - Model of individual identity construction



Source: Elaboration on Remotti (1996)

⁵ The quotation appears in Italian in the original text. The translation is made by the author of the current work.

⁶ The quotation appears in Italian in the original text. The translation is made by the author of the current work.

This brief and partial discussion has taken to the acceptance of a cultural structure of subjective identity; and has supplied a framing model, through which identity comes out of a continuous conversation in which the individual acts as a catalyzer of genetic, natural, social interactions and information. Before moving to the next step, some conclusions are vital. In detail, the definition of identity that is retained in this research is not an objective and post-positivistic one. On the contrary, *I share a constructivist and postmodern idea of individual and group identity* (Brown, 1993; 1995; Firat & Shultz II, 1997; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). In particular, this takes to the acceptance of a fragmented and somehow fictitious nature of identity. These two points requires a more detailed exploration, being a fundamental premise to the research design and results interpretation.

1.3.4 Framing individual identity: the multiple self

Starting from the *fragmentation of identity*, this tenet has a long tradition, grounded in philosophy. In detail, the idea that an ontological identity may be defined in a non-unitary form belongs to David Hume, who criticized the unity of God, opening the way to a fragmented idea of the self. Some centuries later, the fragmented self has become an issue relevant to psychologists. In fact, the centrality of the individual in psychology has led to a kind of obsession for the unity and distinctiveness of the “Self”. Over time, psychologists have frequently assumed that a multiple self can be read as a synonym of a pathological self or, by contrast, that it may be a sound expression of personality. Only more recently, “an increasing number of psychologists have started to admit the intrinsic nature of the self (identity): relational, multiple, and discontinuous” (Liotti, 1994: 137-138)⁷. Then, the pathological versus physiological nature of the fragmented self basically depends on the preliminary assumptions, which can make reference to an organic and dysfunctional separation of the mind, as in the case of the “split-brain” (Springer & Deutsch, 1981), or to a symbolic complex structure of personality (Elster, 1995). In different words, the frame of fragmented self, more frequently known as “multiple self”, can be adopted in a double and rival perspective:

1. *ontological and objective interpretation*. In this case, the multiple self would be asked to have an ontological relevance, looking for an objective and substantial

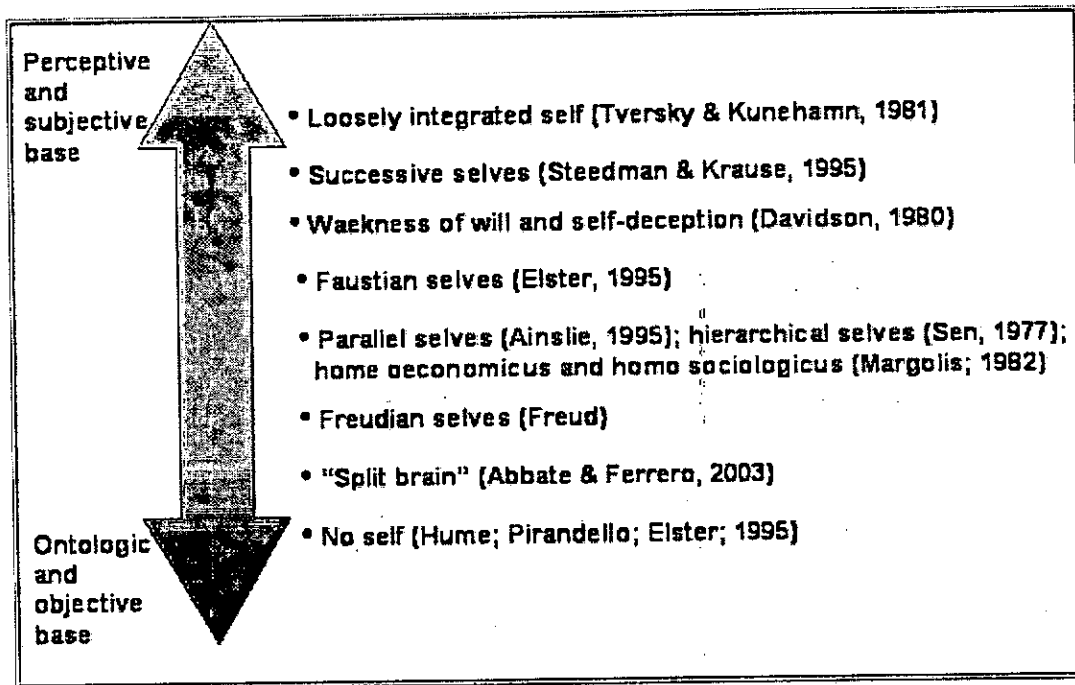
⁷ The quotation appears in Italian in the original text. The translation is made by the author of the current work.

partition of the self into different, autonomous, and distinguishable sub-systems. Some neuro-physiological theories, for example, claim to have detected an ontological base for a multiple self structure focusing on different brain hemispheres. What they call a “split brain” as a source for a “split mind” (Springer & Deutsch, 1981);

2. *perceptual, subjective, and metaphorical interpretation.* Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, the multiple self is simply used in a perceptual and subjective sense. In this light, it can be interpreted as the feeling of a non-unitary individual identity. This perception can be admitted by the same individual or it can be attributed by society, under the pressure of cultural and social changes. In that case, it means that the multiple self can be essentially applied as a useful metaphor, but nothing more than this. No ontological substance is given to the construct of multiple self. The fragmented self, then, is nothing more than a collection of “multiple masks” each individual may wear overtime. In fact, if identity is the result of a process of construction, as argued before, it may be interpreted as a set of masks each individual or group create and then wear. The metaphor of identity as a mask is particularly fitting, as the mask is a quite universal artifact (Comba, 1996). But then, how many masks should we expect to observe for each group or individual? And what is the connection between masks and lifetime? Under this point of view, it seems that multiple identities are perhaps consistent within both a diachronic and a synchronic frame. The diachronic perspective assumes that identity changes over time, and so masks are renewed, whereas the synchronic vision acknowledges that, at the same time, a person or group can have different identities according to various roles and states.

The variety of approaches and theoretical positions on the issue of “multiple self” is striking. A brief review of some major contributions in psychology is offered in table 1. Even though a detailed analysis of this literature goes beyond the goals of the study, *three criteria, which may be suitable in order to appreciate differences among theoretical positions, are offered:*

Figure 6 - A positioning of different theoretical contributions on "multiple self"



Source: personal elaboration on Elster (1995)

1. *the "partition principle"*. How can the different selves be separated and made distinguishable? Several alternatives are admitted, including: psychoanalytical foundations, physical bases, evolutionary roots (time-related), and so forth. Regardless of the principle adopted, the majority of these approaches reach a dichotomous and somehow conflicting configuration of the multiple self: homo oeconomicus versus homo sociologicus (Margolis, 1982); right versus left hemisphere (Abbate & Ferrero, 2003); real world versus daydreaming (Ainslie, 1995); the deceiver versus the deceived self, (Elster, 1983), etc. Two valuable exceptions are the Freudian framework (Freud's three-partite frame: id, ego, superego), and the "no-self" theory, which theorizes the existence of an infinite number of selves (Elster, 1995), up to the point that a sort of ineffable self is reached. Consistently with that, the Italian novelist Pirandello labeled one of his most famous poems "Uno, nessuno, centomila" (One, No One, and One Hundred Thousand), and showed the pulverization of identity through an almost infinite multiplication of roles everyone has to fit in in everyday life;
2. *the modes of interaction between/among the different selves*. How do different selves relate to one another? Literature review offers again various answers,

including the possibility of parallelism (Ainslie, 1995), hierarchy (Sen, 1977), negotiation among the selves (Freud, 1938; economic and social selves; split brain); and illusion/deception (self deception theory; Faustian selves);

3. *the nature of the multiple self construct*. Has the multiple self an ontological substance, or is it a useful metaphor to describe complex personalities? This principle has already been discussed, and its application is proposed in figure 6, which shows a positioning of different theoretical contributions on the basis of the ontological/perceptive assumption. Furthermore, within a postmodern frame, this question does not maintain great sense, as reality is what people think that reality is. If individuals live as if they were multifaceted, this is enough to admit the multiple self construct.

Table 1 - Main psychological contributions on "multiple self"

<p>1. THE LOOSELY INTEGRATED SELF</p> <p>The basic assumption is that <i>multiple self is only illusionary</i>, as the apparent fragmentation can be explained in terms of lack of coordination and integration. Such a lack of coordination, fully explored by the so-called "Mental Model Theory" (Johnson-Laird, 1983; Legrenzi & Giroto, 1996), can be originated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Costs/efforts reduction processes. Individuals or organizations may not behave in a perfectly rational and optimizing way (Johnson-Laird, 1983; Legrenzi & Giroto, 1996). For example, habits and sub-routines can be used instead of a central processing of information (Schumpeter, 1961). ▪ Framing distortions. The way individuals frame information and problems may be a source of illusion and lack of coordination of information. The illusion of a multiple self can also be explained on the basis of this misleading framing. In different words, phenomena having the same content, but different frames can induce different beliefs/actions, not as a result of multiple selves but of mental illusions (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981) ▪ Cognitive dissonance. According to Festinger (1957), streams of information that contradict previous information and beliefs generate a state of cognitive dissonance, which, in the perspective of the multiple self construct, may be perceived as a fragmentation of the self.
<p>2. THE SUCCESSIVE SELVES</p> <p>Relying on this approach, the <i>multiplicity of selves can be framed in a longitudinal perspective</i>. Time is therefore a key variable impacting on the fragmentation of the self for different reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attitude towards time. People can perceive different selves with reference to the way they distribute their preferences over different moments/phases in their life-cycle. ▪ Nested system of memories and anticipation. Again, self fragmentation can also rely on the nexus among past, present and future times. Memory for example can provide continued satisfaction, and anticipation can make us feel future pleasures (Steedman & Krause, 1995) ▪ Transformation and changes. If over time successive selves are originated by a conversion, leading to a mutual repudiation between pre and post-conversion selves, it is

possible to admit the multiplicity of selves.

3. THE WEAKNESS OF WILL OR SELF-DECEPTION

This approach somehow resembles the one of the loosely integrated self. Within this frame, however, it is possible to overcome the mere illusion and to perceive a multiple self structure based on opposite wishes that habit the individual. In particular, these opposite wishes can be related to:

- Weakness of will. The opposing selves engage a "fight". Whenever the self that the person himself/herself judges to be more decisive loses out, the winning self is selected out of a "weakness of will" process (Davidson, 1980).
- Self-deception. The self-deception principle (Elster, 1983) applies to situations in which rival wishes originate two rival beliefs, which in turn give rise to a multiple-self perception. These two rival beliefs (deceiver and deceived) are caused by an illusion trap (deceiving).

4. THE FAUSTIAN SELVES

In this case, opposing desires lead to behavioral inconsistencies, which can be framed as a multiple self structure. Typically, these behavioral inconsistencies do not depend on a stable change in the individual preferences. At the same time, it is not possible to state what self is more "authentic" or ethically valuable (Frankfurt, 1971). The traditional behavioral inconsistencies originated by these conflicting desires are:

- Intransitive choices. A first traditional behavioral inconsistency occurs whenever a subject prefers A to B, B to C, and C to A.
- Choice reversal. A further typical behavioral inconsistency is experienced if A is chosen over B, and then B over A. The paradox occurs when A and B are alternatively chosen.

5. THE PARALLEL SELVES

The "parallel selves" approach stems from a horizontal division of the self, leading to the coexistence of several first-order preferences, each of which evaluates the available options from a peculiar perspective (morality, sympathy, self-interest, etc.). A peculiar and widely studied form of parallel selves is the one originating from daydreaming and narration. Daydreaming, with its collection of "might-have been" and "should-have-happened", can create a parallelism of selves and induce some "vicarious satisfaction" (Ainslie, 1995).

6. THE HIERARCHICAL SELVES

Differently from the "parallel selves" approach, the "hierarchical selves" perspective represents a vertical division of the self, implying a ranking of preferences (Sen, 1977). The hierarchy of preferences may be extended to a ranking of selves, situation in which a self entertains higher order intentions about other selves (Elster, 1995).

7. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SELVES

The possibility of recognizing within each individual the presence of a "homo oeconomicus" and of a "homo sociologicus" is close to the hierarchical frame, because also in this case the economic and the social men are hierarchically ordered. The main difference is due to the instability of this hierarchy, as the economic man can get rid of the social man in some moments/contexts and lose in others. Besides, this approach more fully acknowledges the negotiation and mediation process between the different selves. More in detail, the two men are metaphors for:

- Homo oeconomicus. It refers to the self-oriented individual component, which strives for personal hedonic satisfaction. The economic man therefore perceives the others as tools for his goals, or as obstacles to these goals.
- Homo sociologicus. It is a metaphor for the social and ethical oriented component of each individual, which strives for the external approval of his behaviors.

Margolis (1982) has adapted this concepts, and distinguished S-Smith (the selfish self) from G-Smith (the group oriented self).

8. THE FREUDIAN SELVES

The Freudian theory represents a milestone, not only for psychology. At least, it is possible to

recall a couple of major contributions to the issue of self:

- Unconsciousness. Freud has distinguished among different levels of contact with the “self”: consciousness, pre-consciousness, and unconsciousness. These levels may be interpreted as different territories where the self lives. At the same time, “consciousness” is a construct different from “awareness”, as the former is inner-directed whereas the latter is definable as a perception of external objects.
- Id, ego, and superego. Within the Freudian frame, human choices and behaviors are explained on the basis of the interaction among “Id” (representing the bundle of impulses), “Ego” (identifiable with the person *stricto sensu*), and “Superego” (expressing the interiorization of the parental authority and therefore operating as a self-control system). These fundamental assumptions give rise to the idea that the individual is composed of different agents, supporting the idea of a multiple self.

9. THE SPLIT BRAIN

This represents the neuro-physiological approach to the self, rooted in the origination of different selves (split minds) on the basis of brain hemispheres (split brain). Typically, the selves (hemispheres) detected and studied include (Abbate & Ferrero, 2003):

- The right hemisphere. It controls visual and spatial processes, and it is characterized by a holistic and simultaneous processing of information. The right hemisphere controls non-verbal, analogical, a-temporal, intuitive functions, and it is the realm of non-rational processes (emotions).
- The left hemisphere. It controls verbal processes, and it is characterized by analytical and sequential processing of information. The left hemisphere controls verbal, computational, temporal, symbolic functions, and it is the realm of rational processes.

Despite this distinction and specialization of the two hemispheres, experiments seem to sustain the hypothesis that the hemispheres have different cognitive systems, but no independent normative systems. No evidence, in fact, is still available on that side, and at the current stage it is therefore more probable to state that the two hemispheres act under the supervision of a shared normative system.

10. NO SELF

Some extreme positions, both in philosophy (Hume) and literature (Pirandello), take the multiplication of selves to a paradox, which consists in the self pulverization. The no-self framework consequently suffers from the impossibility of defining the self or theorizing about it. The self is something ineffable. A form of the self pulverization can be detected within the Buddhist philosophy, where the human being is interpreted as a simultaneous resultant of different mental and physical elements (dharma), which eliminate the possibility of having any enduring self. Study and meditation are proposed as a way to overcome the illusion of an enduring and unique self (Kolm, 1982; Parfit, 1984).

Source: elaboration on Elster (1995)

The idea of the Cartesian unified subject has therefore been overcome in philosophy, anthropology, psychology, and also in marketing studies. On the side of managerial literature, Mead (1934) first introduced the construct of the “parliament of selves”. Later on, Ochs and Capps (1996) theorized that this “self-world” is dynamic, sometimes repressed and alienated, and that it includes actual but also potential selves. Finally, postmodern marketing has emphasized hyperreality and the fragmentation of reality (Brown, 1995; Firat, Dholakia, & Venkatesh, 1993; Podestà & Addis, 2004), and has acknowledged the idea

that, through consumption, marketing researchers may detect the presence of multifaceted consumers. "Indeed, to postmodern observer, fragmentations abound in everyday life experiences. They dominate the media, the most important and omnipresent mode of exposure to our universe in contemporary society. (...) The fragmentation in everyday life experiences and the loss of commitment to any single way of being result in "bricolage" markets, that is, consumers who do not present a united, centred self and, therefore, set of preferences, but instead a jigsaw collage of multiple representations of selves and preferences even when approaching the same product category." (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 190-191). In addition, it is sensible to notice that, within a postmodern framework, the boundaries between subjectivity (metaphor and perceptions) and objectivity (ontology and reality) of the multiple self are removed, mostly because the objectivity hypothesis no longer holds. Hyperreality is in fact more real than real (Baudrillard, 1983; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995).

Such a Copernican shift in marketing literature has occurred under the pressure of various socio-cultural transformations dominating economically developed countries. Uncertainty (Boggia, 1991), the search for reversible and modular choices, the overcoming of traditional limits (new technologies, self-fecundation, etc.), the spreading of narcissistic syndromes linked to an omnipotence feeling, all call for a fragmented and multiple vision of the self. Nevertheless, such a multiplication of selves can be perceived as a double-edged sword. On one side, in fact, a multiple self structure can be interpreted, both theoretically and existentially, as an enrichment of the individual, being a multiplication of chances and of possible interactions (set of masks; Remotti, 1996). At the same time, the multiple self can theoretically and existentially be lived as a loss of integration and continuity, a break of consistency and stability, generating stress, loss of identity, and inability in detecting and accepting limits. Given these two extremes of a possible continuum, it is easily arguable that each individual's interpretation of this multifaceted identity will rely both on individual resources (capability and willingness of shifting among different selves; Ruggeri & Tansella, 1999; WHO, 1991) and on social structures (social openness to change and diversity; development or absence of social institutions having a repressive function on individual freedom, etc.). A contextualized model of identity reconstruction in the case of Egyptian immigrants will be presented in the following discussion (§§ 2.4, 5.1) and it is going to take into account both the individual set of resources (education, years of

residency in the host country, disposable income, social ties, job position, etc.) and the social conditions in which the process of cultural identity reconstruction emerges (felt discrimination, normative conditions, economic opportunities, etc.).

Concluding, this research rests on the assumption that individuals, and consumers in detail, may present a multifaceted identity, where the multiple self is definable as “the idea that the individual person may be seen as - or actually is - a set of sub-individuals, relatively autonomous selves” (Elster, 1985: 1). In the followings (§ 2.1), the multiple self construct will be recalled and applied to the processes of cultural contamination, which can be the resultant of the meeting between different cultures, ethnicities, and individuals. Therefore, the peculiar form of multiple self that is going to be adopted for that work is *the vision of a self composed by multiple cultural identities*. This construct will be presented in the peculiar case of migrants, with specific attention to the Egyptian community in Italy.

1.3.5 Framing individual identity: fictitious identity

A final and brief consideration on identity framing refers to its fictitious nature. According to Remotti (1996), *identity is two times fictitious*. First of all, *identity is generated by a process of construction* (Harré et al., 1985). As it has been discussed, the essentialist approach no longer holds, and a more pertinent framework, the constructivist one (Gergen, 1994), has to take its place. In detail, the social and individual construction of identity is justified by the “incompleteness hypothesis”, which recognizes the human biological limitations and the consequent dependence on cultural forms. Therefore, identity turns out to be a fictitious construct given its constructivist origin, which openly admits its birth from a process of never-ending social discourse.

At the same time, acknowledging the relational dimension in identity formation takes into account the dynamics between the self and alterity. Furthermore, the continuous interaction identity-alterity has been frequently shaped as a battle. The winner “eats” the loser (esophagy), and in this way the loser (alterity) becomes part of the winner. Over time, this contaminations are so frequent that the boundaries between identity and alterity are more and more uncertain, shadowed. This leads to the so-called paradox of alterity, which stems from the awareness that the need of conflicting with alterity (eating the loser)

in order to defend identity opens the way to a progressive overlapping with alterity itself. The battle, engaged in order to mark the boundaries, conversely takes to a shadowing of these boundaries. The risk, then, is to reach the autism of identity (Remotti, 1996), which is originated by a conflicting relationship with alterity. If identity is interpreted as something stable, essential, crystallized, pure, and universal, it is then necessary to overcome identity, so that a more open self can be expressed. This requires the celebration of freedom and precariousness, the admission of the fictional nature of identity, the acceptance of its multiple and fragmented soul.

To the constructivist/constitutive fiction of identity, it is then possible to add a "secondary fiction". Identity is not only constructed to get rid of the human biological lacks, but - once it has been constructed - *further fictitious processes are adopted in order to deny the constructional fiction*. The denial of the fiction takes to the fictitious idea that identity is stable, unitary, ontologically determined, and universalistic (secondary fiction). Consequently, identity is two times fictitious because it is socially constructed (constructionist fiction), and built on the denial of its constructionist nature (secondary fiction).

Empirical findings of this research project support these double hypotheses. The constructivist logic, for example, clearly emerges from the fact that migrants progressively know a culture through the relationships they have with individuals of that culture: what I call the "medium of acculturation". In different words, culture is unknowable per se, in a pure, abstract, and universal way. On the contrary, it is always met through contextualized and unique social relations that, on one hand, make cultural transfer partial and context-specific, but, on the other, permit this cultural transfer and endow culture of meanings and praxes. This requires to finally renounce to a Platonic idea of culture, living in the world on perfect ideas, and pushes towards the acceptance of a culture made by concrete people, having concrete, imperfect existences.

The second level of fiction, then, is again supported by research findings. In some cases, in fact, the process of cultural identity reconstruction is partially or mostly subconscious, where the level of consciousness, as opposed to the level of awareness, has been defined by Freud as an inner-directed process. Again, the lack of consciousness may be explained

both on an individual base (limitations in personal resources and in capabilities of abstraction and metaphorization), and on a contextual base, if this lack is the resultant of external pressures of assimilation or adhesion to a social discourse enforced by stereotypes.

2. CULTURES IN THE PLURAL: MULTIPLE CULTURAL IDENTITIES

2.1 From multiple self to multiple cultural identities

Given that the research goal is to gain a further understanding of the effects of culture(s) on individual identity and consumer behaviors, it is then necessary to frame this variable as far as possible. In fact, during the previous discussion culture has been treated as a black box, without any investigation on its functions, contents, and variations. Therefore, during the second chapter, this box is going to be opened, and peculiar research goals are going to emerge in a clearer form. In particular, this project will *focus on migrants' processes of cultural identity reconstruction*, in the form of cultural alternation, and on the impact of multiple cultural identities on purchase, consumption, and disposition of food. The attention to Egyptian migrants, in particular, will provide the unique chance of stressing the cultural variable, the idea being that migrants experience a cultural clash between their previous culture (the one appraised in the country of origin) and the new one (the one encountered in the host country). This cultural shock increases the opportunity of transforming a subconscious dimension - culture, in fact, has been defined as "water to the fish" (Trompenaars, 1993) - into a more conscious one, being the migration process equivalent to an experience of water deprivation. Such a superior consciousness may be dramatically relevant in the phase of data collection, as it increases the amount of information that can be raised through ethnographic interviews. In fact, a kind of "experiment" design can be adopted. The cultural shock associated to migration will be the external experimental stimulus useful in order to analyze the effects of the inquired variable (culture) on the sphere of individual identity reconstruction and of its impact on consumption practices. At the same time, the host country can be interpreted as a laboratory setting, being an almost virgin and, in this sense, neutral context to the migrant.

In the previous paragraphs, individual identity has been described as a multifaceted construct (§ 1.3.4). At the same time, with reference to identity, the structural and constitutive nature of culture has been acknowledged: individual identity is always culturally structured (§ 1.3.1). As in a sort of Aristotelian syllogism, from these two tenets it is possible to induce that individuals are characterized by multiple cultural identities. A

peculiar expression of multiple cultural identities is going to be better framed through the paradigm of cultural alternation (§ 2.3.2). At that stage, I simply try to grasp the meaning of complex structures of identity through the use of a metaphor. By the way, analogies are grounded in common sense, and can be applied in order to get a twofold understanding. At a first stage, analogies can be applied in order to detect the “scheme” that links together the different part of the enquired phenomenon. For example, Darwin used the analogy of domestic selection in order to detect the scheme of natural selection (1859). Further, Goffman proposed to use the theatrical analogy to explain how the self is presented in everyday life (1959). At a second and deeper stage, analogies are also relevant in order to identify the “source of the scheme”, that is, its determinants (Harré et al., 1985). A final circumstantiation is necessary. Analogies can be useful to point out not only similarities between the analogical term and the enquired phenomenon (positive analogies), but also differences (negative analogies) or the aspects that have not already been compared among them (un-influential analogies). The researcher’s major concern will then be the identification of the analogy that better fits the object of enquiry.

Relying and elaborating on Goffman (1959), it is possible to acknowledge the dynamic nature of personality, the plurality of cultural selves (Elster, 1995), and the social interactions in the construction of cultural identities through the theatrical metaphor. When the consumer - in that case an Egyptian consumer in Italy - is framed as an “actor”, alternation opens the way to a multiplicity of cultural identities this consumer may “play”. Different cultural identities are different “roles” the actor/consumer may cover in the drama. Products are then the different “masks” a consumer adopts to interpret the (self) attributed roles. As in each play, the performer acts in front of an “audience”, which can be read as the consumer’s ethnic community, the host society, reference groups in general, or the actor himself/herself in the situation of inner-directed consumptions (Assael, 1987; Maslow, 1954). Furthermore, the shift from one role (one cultural identity) to another one can be explained on the basis of the “script” and the “stage presentation”. Out of the metaphor, script and stage presentation stand for the explanatory variables of alternation. Finally, the “recitative style” is the individual way different actors play the same role. In a market situation, it depicts the different ways immigrant consumers may alternate in consumption behaviors. In other words, recitative styles represent different alternation

outcomes. Therefore, this research project, being interested in the whole drama, shows a greater focalization on scripts and stage presentations (determinants of alternation), and on recitative styles (different forms of alternation).

A final remark is needed. The decision of investigating through products (masks) the different cultural identities (roles) of a given subject (actor) is not only due to managerial reasons. In fact, cultural identities are hardly observable in a direct way, due to the limitations created by their *unconsciousness and ineffability*. The cultural dimension is by definition at least partially unconscious, because fishes do not perceive water unless they miss it (Askegaard & Kjeldgaard, 2002). It is therefore necessary to find a way to overcome the limitations of unconsciousness, which cannot be met by direct questions of any kind of in depth interviews. At the same time, should culture even be an explicit and conscious construct, this study would still have to cope with the problem of ineffability. In fact, given that this research focuses on migrant consumers, the traumatic nature of migration has to be admitted. But, then, if migration can be framed as a trauma, as many (trans)cultural psychologists recognize (Coppo, 2003; Inghilleri, 2004; Nathan, 2001), this trauma is definable as an “interruption in a narration”, meaning that trauma is typically inenarrable (Cardinal, 1975). If migrants are the inquired population in the research design and if they all share this traumatic and ineffable experience, it is logically impossible to carry out data-mining only through direct questions. Therefore, observation seems to be a more effective method in order to detect the reactions to cultural shocks, and consumption looks like a privileged field of observation. Consumer behaviors represent then the Trojan horse to force the walls of unconsciousness and ineffability.

Furthermore, within a postmodern view, “the urge to consume is a characteristic symptom, perhaps *the* characteristic symptom, of the postmodern condition” (Brown, 1993: 19). From the Cartesian tenet “Cogito ergo sum”, our society is shifting towards the “*I shop therefore I am*” pattern (Halter, 2000). The centrality of consumption in order to build and communicate individual identities is nowadays a milestone that asks for further understanding. A possible explanation of the consumer’s hunger can be found within the Lacanian theoretical system. Lacan analyzed the construction of the consumer self, building his theory on the concept of “lack”. This status of deprivation, which originates desires and cannot be saturated, is called “object a”, and is identified with the “loss of the other

half". Being man or woman, each individual steadily experiences a state of lack, and this deprivation explains his/her consumptions, that is; the amassment of goods. I propose to apply to migrants, as a privileged observatory of "culture at work", the Lacanian construct of lack. Through the migration experience, in fact, and the parallel "trauma" effect, each migrant acquires the consciousness of a lack: he/she is no more a "native", as migration and the exposition to new cultures determine a sort of contamination, nor he/she can perceive himself/herself as an autochthon. This principle of "double absence" has also been postulated by a prominent sociologist, Sayed (1999). This lack may be a useful device for the analysis of consumptions in relation to the reconstruction patterns of cultural identities. At the same time, postmodernism and its application to marketing studies have long sustained the idea of consumption as a meaning provider and the vision of goods as useful devices in order to convey messages (Levy, 1981; McCracken, 1988). Further, Agnew (1986) and Firat & Venkatesh (1995) have metaphorically identified the market as a "theatre", and consumption as a "representation"; where the consumer - the "actor" - is no longer a mere "cognitive subject", being a "communicative subject" who uses spectacularization and hyperreality (Baudrillard, 1983) as his/her ideal "stage". In that light, consumption, and goods as the reification of consumption, can meet a double need:

- *functional need*. Goods are tools used in order to solve a consumer's problem, underlying the functional dimension of consumption;
- *symbolic need*. Goods are "words" of a language (significations), depicting the social and cultural dimension of consumption (Barthes, 1972). Since Heidegger's philosophical system (1959), language is defined not only as a communication device, but also as an extension of the "being". The language of consumption can be therefore seen as a tool of communication and construction of the consumer's multiple cultural identities.

2.2 Defining the key constructs

Ethnic identity, acculturation, assimilation, cultural identity are all meaningful constructs when more than one ethnic group is represented. Therefore, these constructs are all relational in nature (Roosens, 1989).

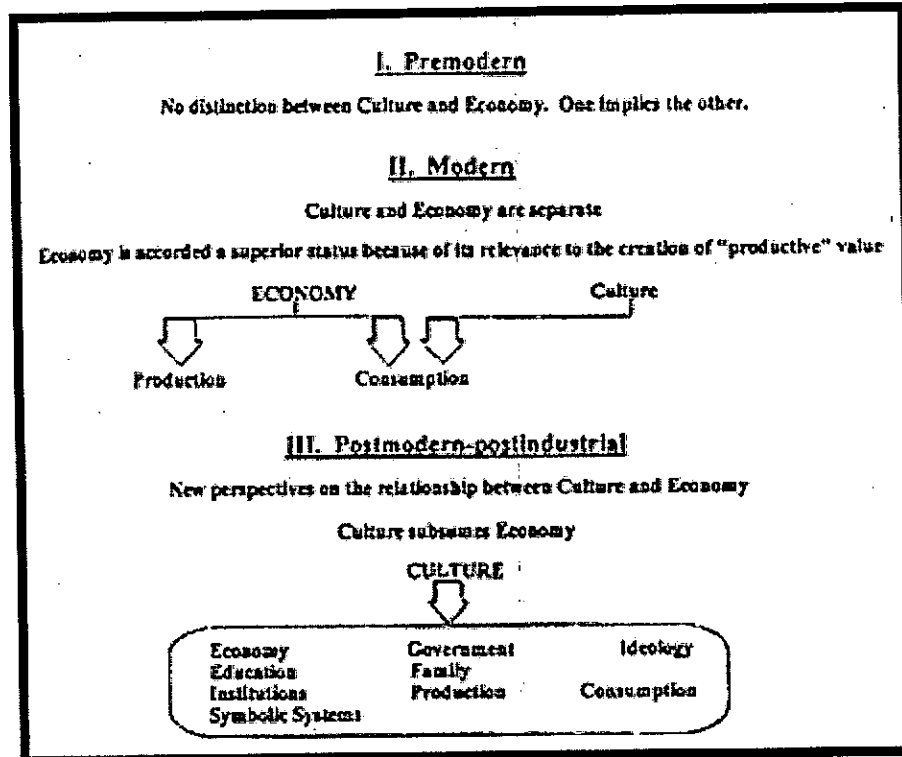
2.2.1 Culture or cultures?

“Culture - the shared meanings, practices, and symbols that constitute the human world - does not present itself neutrally or with one voice. It is always multivocal and overdetermined, and both the observer and the observed are always enmeshed in it: that is our situation”. (Rabinow & Sullivan, 1987: 7, quoted in Peñaloza, 1999: 86). *The multivocality of culture* seems to be the best starting point to introduce this issue. In fact, instead of using the singular form - culture -, it is more sensible to adopt the plural - cultures. The multiplication of cultures can be observed at different levels: different ethnic groups and nations are typically assumed to have distinguishable cultures; within national or ethnic boundaries, then, it is possible to acknowledge the presence of subcultures, which enforces the multiplication of that construct; finally, at an individual and intrasubjective level, it appears again an identity frame characterized by multiple cultural identities. Culture and fragmentation seem therefore to be the two sides of the same coin.

The multiple nature of culture is combined to further characteristics, such as *pervasiveness, foundational nature, relational dimension, individual appropriation and personal elaboration*. “In anthropology, culture is operationalized as a construct at once pervasive, compelling, and elusive, from which a person’s sense of reality, identity, and being emerge (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Rabinow and Sullivan, 1987). As a social phenomenon, culture is characterized by the conflation of individual processes, including personal expression of self-identity and affiliation with a larger group (Roosens, 1995), with disavowals from other groups in the form of group relations and boundary activities (Barth, 1969; Jenkins, 1997). Despite its foundational qualities, however, culture is not deterministic, because people maintain an agency and integrity apart from, but related to, their culture. Balancing individual and collective aspects of culture is relevant (...).”(Peñaloza, 1999: 86). Most of these characteristics have already been fully described when identity framing has been discussed. It seems enough to enlighten the complexity of the construct, the inevitable impact it exerts both on single individuals and on social groups, the possibility of personal elaboration, which reduces the possibility of treating culture as if it were a stable and completely shared or homogenous construct. This

homogeneity assumption has been one of the fundamental tenets of cross-cultural studies, as it is going to be discussed and criticized in the followings (3.3.1).

Figure 8 - The role of culture in different social contexts

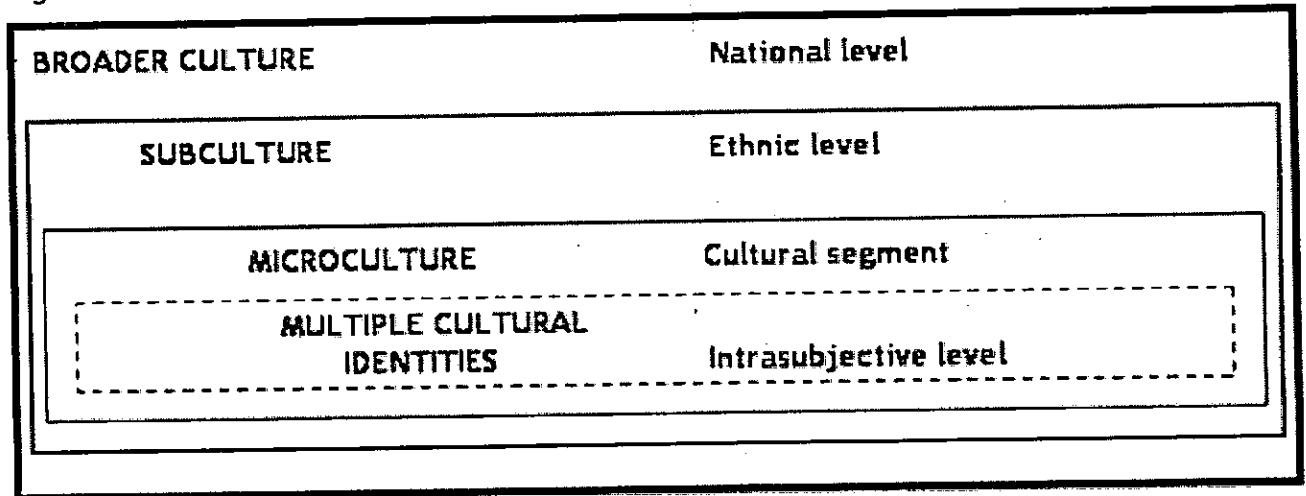


Source: Venkatesh (1995)

Peñaloza's claim also acknowledges the importance of the relationship that culture has with time. As in the case of identity construction (Remotti, 1996), culture is made of relatively stable traits, which can and actually do change over time. This peculiar and somehow balanced nature of culture leads to say that culture is the resultant of "invariants with variation". Furthermore, not only the contents of culture(s) are subject to transformation, but also its relevance in social contexts has suffered severe modifications, passing from premodern times to modern, and then to postmodern ones. In fact, the modernist perspective, traditionally guided by Marx's mainstream theory of capitalism, assumed a distinction between culture and economy, attributing a primary role to economy thanks to its capability of generating productive value. On the contrary, in the postmodern era culture is interpreted as the overall container within which all other systems - economy included - are embedded, organized, and interconnected (Venkatesh, 1995; Firat & Venkatesh, 1994). Figure 8 summarizes the transformation of the role of culture in these

successive social periods. Last but not least, it is not by chance that, related to time, I explicitly avoid the use of the word “evolution”, because, consistently with postmodernism (Brown, 1993; 1995; Firat et al., 1995; Podestà & Addis, 2004) and anthropological warnings (Remotti, 1996), I discard any evolutionary vision of culture, which may sustain ethnocentrism and domination of certain cultural groups over others.

Figure 9 - Cultural levels



Source: elaboration and integration on Ogden, Ogden, & Schau (2004)

After a synthesis of the main characteristics of culture, a definition of the main cultural levels is required, as a pre-condition to the refining of my research goal. According to Ogden, Ogden, & Schau (2004), it is possible to distinguish among three different cultural levels:

1. *broader culture*. It is typically denoted as the national level, and represent the most general definition of culture;
2. *subculture*. It refers to the ethnic subgroup within national boundaries, and is the level typically acknowledged by ethnic studies;
3. *microculture*. It represents cultural segments within subcultural (ethnic) groups. According to Ogden at al., this level is the less explored and understood.

At the same time, the scheme proposed seems to lack of a fourth and fundamental level (fig. 9), being represented by the *individual one*. As it has already been suggested, the first three levels (broader culture, subcultures, microcultures) define what was labeled “extrasomatic culture” (Massimini, Inghilleri, Delle Fave, 1996), whereas the fourth level

enlightens the intrasomatic dimension of culture. This research is going to emphasize the individual level, as a locus of collection and personal elaboration of the previous ones. In fact, any exclusive accent on the three levels acknowledged by Ogden et al. would induce generalizations and conceal the distinctiveness of the human being. This is unacceptable under an ontological, epistemological, ethical, and practical point of view.

A major issue that still remains to be discussed is the one related to the way culture can be defined. Far from being univocally defined, culture runs the risk of being a "missing concept" in managerial studies (Schein, 1996), because its use is so frequent, conflicting, and shadowed to induce a real abuse. I personally do not think that a further definition of culture would add much to the theoretical debate. It may simply increase the confusion and multivocality that threatens culture. Therefore, I limit the discussion to a systematization of these "voices" (sometimes, even rumors), which converges into the formalization of four different approaches to the definition of culture: functional, content-based, residual, and expressionist (Visconti, 2005).

1. *functional and constructivist definition of culture.* "Contemporary cultural theory describes the subjective dimension of culture as taken-for-granted, intersubjectively shared interpretative frameworks (e.g., metaphors, narratives, images, prototypes, and semantic structures) that serve four complementary functions: they represent the world, create and sustain cultural entities (such as consumption objects and activities), orient one to do certain things, and evoke certain feelings (D'Andrade, 1984). Furthermore, according to McCracken (1986), it is possible to point out two main functions of culture: culture is interpretable as a lens, through which the world is seen; and culture acts as a blueprint, pointing out culture's function of orienting behaviors and of explaining how the world is fashioned. A functional definition of culture is also proposed and fully detailed by the Italian cultural psychologist Mantovani (1998). Consistently with McCracken, Mantovani presents a first function he calls "mediation", which has to be intended as the individual habilitation to the perceiving of the knowable world. External reality can only be known through culture (Cole & Engeström, 1993), which assumes the same role as the stick a blind person uses to perceive reality (Bateson, 1972). At the same time, culture plays a second function, closely related to McCracken's idea of "blueprint". It is the function

of “behavior orientation”, because culture is a set of norms and rules that gives suggestions in order to plan action. What is missed in McCracken’s functional definition of culture is the “sensemaking function”. Once the external world has been perceived through the stick, and typically before the activation of behaviors, individuals have to make sense of what have been perceived. Their sensemaking process is not only an act of “reading” the text, but also a proactive behavior of “authoring” (Weick, 1995), that is, an act of writing the text as it is argued in a constructivist framework;

2. *content-based definition*. This definitional approach probably represents the most popular way of defining culture. It essentially consists in defining culture in terms of its constituents, instead of the functions it plays. Again, McCracken (1986) also provides a content-based definition, when he states that culture derives from the combination of: cultural categories, which are defined as the “conceptual grid of a culturally constituted world” (73), “representing the basic distinctions that a culture uses to divide up the phenomenal world” (72); and cultural principles, which serve as the principles of categorization. In fact they can be defined as the “organizing ideas by which the segmentation is performed. Cultural principles are the charter assumptions that allow all cultural phenomena to be distinguished, ranked, and interrelated” (73). In other words, they represent the “how” and “why” of cultural categories, that is, why and how certain categories result from a certain culture. These values are substantiated through material object too. Ten years later, Applbaum & Jordt (1996) come to the conclusion that McCracken’s distinction between cultural principles (act of classifying) and categories (results of this classification) can be collapsed into the sole idea of cultural categories, as McCracken himself admits that principles and categories are simultaneous. “We prefer to fuse the two, linking the cultural category concept to the cognitive psychological concept of schema” (Applbaum & Jordt, 1996: 206). A part this relatively unusual way of defining cultural contents, the typical content-based definition of culture states that it is “the shared meanings, practices, and symbols that constitute the human world” (Rabinow & Sullivan, 1987: 7). With closer reference to the marketing sphere and to consumption behaviors, Wallendorf & Reilly (1983: 292) quote a traditional definition of culture, which rests on Fairchild’s

work (1970). Therefore, "the term 'culture' is usually taken to mean a set of socially acquired behavior patterns common to members of a particular society or ongoing, large-scale human group.";

3. *residual*. This approach acknowledges that culture is a too vast and pervasive construct to be defined in affirmative and positive way. At the same time, it admits that culture lives in every human being and in any artifact produced by humans. Therefore, culture can be easily defined as anything that does not have a natural origin. Firat & Venkatesh (1995) attribute the origin of this residual approach to a pre-modern time: "Culture, which originally signified all that was not nature, that is, that was humanly constructed, came separated into its components as modernity progressed" (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 247-248). Nevertheless, after having passed through decades of content-based definitions, it seems more sensible to go back to this residual logic and to rely on a functional approach;
4. *expressionist*. In this case, culture is defined in terms of the way it is manifested, that is, through its epiphany. "Culture is a way of life shared by a group of people (Swidler 1986). As such, it is manifested in actions, behavioral styles and ways of expressions (Berry, 1980; Padilla, 1980)." (Lee & Ro Um, 1992: 429). Consistently with that, Clark (1990) relies on Herskovits' (1948) work, and suggests operationalizing culture through five distinct dimensions: material culture (technologies, artifacts, economic structure), social institutions (social organization, education system, political structure), belief systems, aesthetic system (arts, folklore, music, drama, dance, etc.), and language.

Concluding, Wallendorf & Reilly (1983) recognize that the traditional content-based definition of culture can be misleading, because it enforces the idea of culture as constant over time. On the contrary, culture is adaptive, in the way it constantly reacts and modifies to stimulations. To enlighten the adaptive and dynamic nature of culture, they suggest to refer to "cultural styles" more than to traditions or culture. "Thus, the term *cultural style* is used to refer to the content of culture as well as its subjective values orientations and standards. In addition, cultural style appropriately implies that the behavior patterns of individuals are the result of individual choice" (Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983: 292). The main implications of such a definition are twofold: on one hand, the dynamic nature of culture is legitimated; on the other, the subjective dimension is evoked, which is linked to the

processes through which external culture (extrasomatic culture) is transformed into internal culture (intrasomatic culture).

A final remark, which creates a logical connection with the following paragraph, refers to the frequent use of culture as a synonym of ethnicity (Ogden et al., 2004). Even though this coincidence may occur only at the subculture level (fig. 8), this research is actually interested in exploring the ethnic dimension and the individual one. Therefore, in the followings the term “culture” will not be used to address the national dimension or microcultures, which have been frequently explored in studies devoted to the so-called “marketplace cultures” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Consistently with that, the peculiar domain of cultural studies to which this work principally refers is the one of ethnic studies in marketing, since Hirschman (1981) onwards.

2.2.2 Ethnicity, race or nationality?

Despite Max Weber’s prediction (1968) on the decline of ethnicity in modern societies, given their presumed higher reliance on rational forms of human organization, *ethnicity has become a distinctive construct and has accumulated an increasing relevance in marketing scholars’ agenda*. Ethnicity, in fact, can be considered as an “in” topic of research and conversation (Song, 2003), being contemporary societies more and more characterized by multiethnic groups. This point can be strikingly supported if it is noticed that the US 1980 census already signaled that 83% of Americans had at least one ethnic diverse ancestry. These socio-demographic and cultural changes, which are reshaping the postmodern world, may then explain why ethnicity adds some “spices” to postindustrial existence (Waters, 1990). Over time, it has been typically adopted to describe behaviors of minority groups - typically called “ethnics” - which show a greater or lesser degree of social marginality. In converse, ethnicity has seldom been used with reference to Whites/WASP, because, if not a quantitative majority, they still keep a dominant position also within non-White societies (Venkatesh, 1995). At the same time, it is necessary to point out that ethnicity does not necessarily relate to migration flows, because it makes references to ancestries, and therefore can be framed as a trans-generational construct.

As a result of its popularity and of the increasing interest for ethnicity and ethnic studies in consumer behavior, the “lack of discipline that has been followed in defining ethnicity (i.e., surname, country of origin, paternal ancestry, self-identification, language spoken at home) has led to inconsistent and contradictory findings which hinder theory building. The discrepancy in definitions is problematic also in that it implies differing assumptions about the nature of ethnicity” (Zmud & Arce, 1992: 443). The definitional, methodological, and theoretical inconsistencies in literature are therefore similar to those already addressed on culture. For the same reasons expressed in the previous paragraph, it seems more sensible to frame different *definitional approaches to ethnicity*, instead of presenting a detailed list of definitions, or, even worse, instead of providing a further and probably useless definition. Consistently with Venkatesh (1995), theoretical contributions in that field suggest that ethnicity has been differently defined, being these various explanations reducible to two main approaches:

1. *content-based and objective definitions*. In this case, which may be considered to be the historical, traditional, but also surpassed way of defining ethnicity, ethnicity is treated as a collective term, used as a synthetic construct for numerous other identifiers, such as religion, race, language group, genetic traits, phenotypes, nationality, and so forth. Just as an example, Nash (1989) states that ethnicity is a construct made up of different blocks, including body (biological dimension), language, shared history and origins, religion, and nationality. Similarly, Jary & Jary (1995), confirm that ethnicity has been defined as “a shared racial, linguistic, or national identity of a social group”. According to Ogden et al. (2004), ethnicity and ethnic identities are two separate and conceptually different concepts. In fact, ethnicity can be defined as an objective construct and refers to a “group with common national or religious backgrounds”. (Ogden et al., 2004). It therefore relies on “broad ethnic categorizations ... based on similarities in language, country of origin, or phenotypical distinctions (skin color, hair color and consistency, etc.)”. Analogously, Kim, Laroche, & Joy (1990) suggest that this way of addressing the problem is an ex-ante and objective way to look at ethnicity;
2. *relational, juxtapositional, and subjective definitions*. In that case, ethnicity is no longer an aggregation of other identifiers; but it is a mechanism of “identity building”, through which any individual is able both to self-identify him/herself with

the members of a certain ethnic group and to be socially identified with them. In different words, from case to case, different identifiers can be used in order to trace the boundaries of ethnic groups (Barth, 1969), where such boundaries are the simultaneous resultant of a subjective process of self-inclusion and of a social (objective) process of categorization. Put in Venkatesh's words (1995: 33) "the basis of ethnicity is self-identification of the members mediated by the perceptions of the others", where this process occurs on the basis of two couples of principles: "the inclusionary-exclusionary principle and the difference-identity principle. By excluding, one establishes differences. By including, one establishes identity. Both are, therefore, closely related. The inclusionary-exclusionary principle states that a group tries to include only people who display preapproved characteristics and exclude the others". Case by case, the identifiers applied to perform this inclusion/exclusion principle vary. For example, ethnic boundaries of Blacks rely on phenotypes (typically, skin color and hair), whereas Whites are categorized in terms of phenotypes (skin color), religion (Christian), and nationality (Europe and US). Similarly, Hispanics are grouped in terms of language (Spanish) and nationality (Central and South America), and Jews in terms of religion (Hebraism). The distinctive trait of this second definitional approach is therefore represented by the subjective choice of the kind and the meaning of ethnic belonging. Consistently with that, Deshpande et al. (1986) align along Max Weber's multidimensional definition of ethnicity, by saying that it is "a sense of common descent extending beyond kinship, political solidarity vis-à-vis other groups, common customs, language, religion, values, morality, and etiquette" (Deshpande et al.: 214). Still on that point, Ogden et al. (2004: 2) mark the difference between ethnicity (objective dimension) and ethnic identity, which is an ex-post and subjective construct, describing a "person's commitment and strength of association to a particular group". Furthermore, this demarcation between an objective and a subjective distinction of ethnicity was already theorized by Deshpande et al. in 1986, when they suggested that ethnicity may be operationalized both as the racial group of belonging (objective dimension) and the self-identification with that racial group (subjective dimension). Later on, Laroche et al. (1998) shared the distinction between an objective and a subjective way to look at ethnicity. In particular, they marked the

difference between “ethnic origin”, which represents an objective construct based on the supposed shared values, attitudes and behaviors in a given nation/ethnic group, and “ethnic identity”, which represents a subjective and psychological construct indicating “the retention or loss of attitudes, values and behaviors of the culture of origin” (Laroche et al., 1998: 130).

Table 2 - Review of definitional positions of ethnicity

AUTHORS	OBJECTIVE ETHNICITY	SUBJECTIVE ETHNICITY
Barth (1969)	Ethnicity as the resultant of a social process of categorization	Ethnicity as the resultant of a process of self-inclusion
Fitzgerald (1974); Zmud & Acre (1992)	Ethnicity as cultural identity	Ethnicity as social identity
Deshpande, Hoyer, & Donthu (1986)	Racial group	Intensity of ethnic affiliation
Stayman & Deshpande (1989)		Felt ethnicity; situational ethnicity
Kim, Laroche, & Joy (1990)	Ex ante and objective ethnicity	Ex post and subjective ethnicity
Venkatesh (1995)	Content-based definition: ethnicity as a collective term	Relational and juxtapositional definition: ethnicity as an identity builder mechanism
Jary & Jary (1995)	Ethnicity as shared racial, linguistic, or national identity of a social group	
Laroche, Kim, Tomiuk (1998)	Ethnic origin	Ethnic identity
Ogden, Ogden, & Schau (2004)	Ethnicity	Ethnic identity

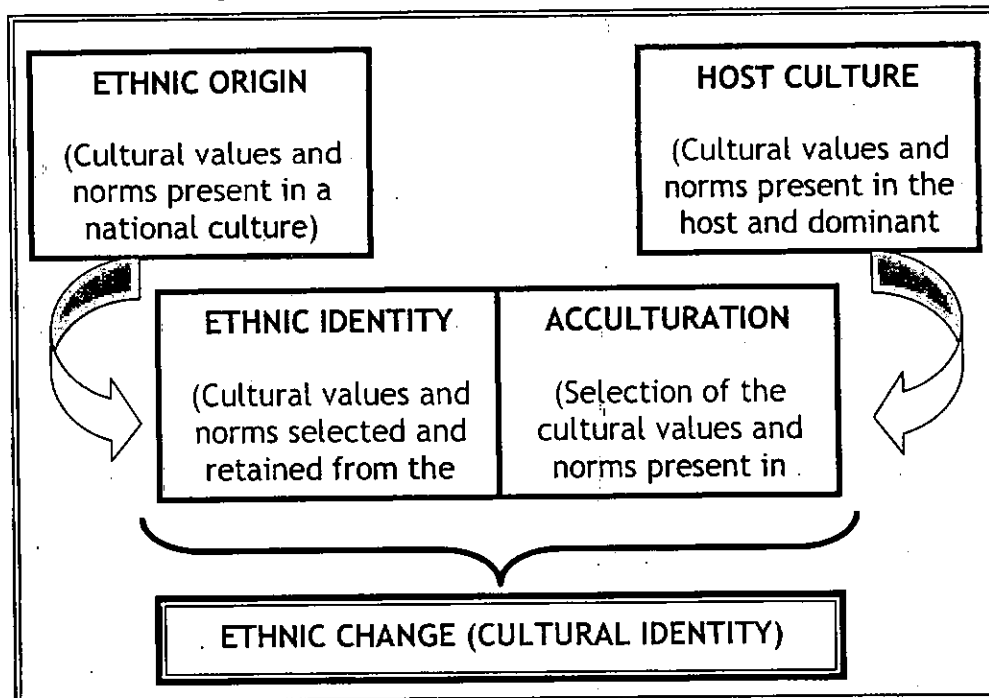
The comparison between these two distinct definitional approaches to ethnicity leads to a couple of conclusions. A first remark refers to the *stability dimension*. In fact, if ethnicity is approached in an objective form, then it can be framed as a constant, and thus acknowledged as a status variable. On the contrary, the subjectivity and transformability of human decisions (self-determination) enlightens that ethnic identity has a nature of process variable, and better reflects its connection with the acculturation dynamics. In fact, ethnic identity is structurally a dynamic and mutable construct, achieved rather than simply given (Phinney, 1990: 500), whereas ethnic origin is stable and attributed by origin.

In a partially overlapping but different way, Zmud & Arce (1992) recall anthropological studies and suggest distinguishing between stable traits (cultural identity) and varying properties (social identity) of ethnicity (Fitzgerald, 1974). On that basis, Zmud & Arce propose to acknowledge the difference between cultural identity, which is defined as the stable component of ethnicity used as a “unifying ‘identity’ thread as people strive toward consistency from one situation to another (Zmud & Arce, 1992: 444), and social identity, which is the transitory part of ethnicity. In a way, cultural identity can be interpreted as closer to an objective dimension, as it is stable and invariant, whereas social identity is much more subjective in nature, being constantly evolving and changing. Furthermore, cultural identity looks closer to the construct of ethnic origin, as it is taken for granted and inherited, whereas social identity is closer to the construct of ethnic change, being the subjective elaboration of ethnicity and cultural stimuli. In their model and consistently with the framework proposed by Stayman & Deshpande (1989), they call social identity as “felt ethnicity”, which “is defined as a transitory psychological state of individuals that is manifested in different ways in different situations. It is distinguished from the idea of ethnicity as a stable, sociological trait that is manifested the same way all times. The theoretical rationale underlying this idea of dynamic ethnicity is that (...) ethnicity is not just who one is, but how one feels in different situations” (Zmud & Arce, 1992: 443). Finally, the risk of reification of ethnicity is also acknowledged by Song (2003: 11), when stating that “the reification of ethnicity results from the belief that ethnic groups are somehow endowed with a given set of cultural values and practices - rather than conceiving of ethnicity as something which is continually in process, negotiated, renewed, and subject to a variety of social, economic, and political forces.”

A second implication that comes out expresses the need of a unifying level of ethnicity, something that may be labeled “*meta-ethnicity*”. In fact, if ethnicity may be both addressed from the outside, through social processes of interaction typically based on phenotypical or ancestry criteria, and from the inside, through a personal process of self identification, a comprehensive construct may be given. Deshpande et al. (1986), for example, concluded that a possible way to combine advantages and shortcomings of these two approaches was to give a more integrated measure of ethnicity where both dimensions could be included. This new conceptual framework was called “intensity of ethnic

affiliation”, and was measured both through the “racial group of appurtenance” and the “sense of belonging” to that group, captured in a five-points Likert scale. Analogously, Laroche, Kim, & Tomiuk (1998) introduced the concept of “ethnic change”, as the combination of ethnic identity, which is an inherited attribute (in that sense, objective), and acculturation, which is a personal process carried out through human life (fig. 10).

Figure 10 - Ethnic change as the resultant of ethnic origin and acculturation



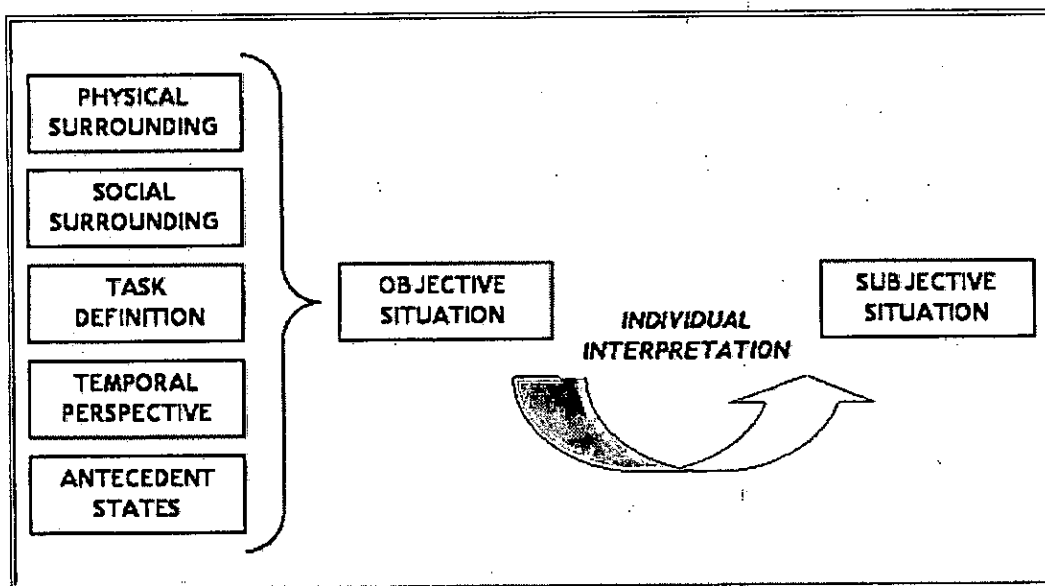
Source: elaboration on Laroche, Kim, & Tomiuk (1998)

After discussing the centrality of ethnicity in consumer studies, and presenting different definitional approaches, one major question still asks for understating. Is ethnicity always at work, or should we argue that the role of ethnicity, as an explanatory variable of human behaviors at large and consumption practices in detail, changes according to environmental conditions? This question has been raised and developed within ethnic studies, applying the principles of situational research (Belk, 1974a: 1974b; 1975; Bonner, 1985; Lutz & Kakkar, 1975; 1976) to the ethnicity construct. The tenet that results from this elaboration is known as “*situational ethnicity*”. Fur sure, Stayman & Deshpande (1989) can be considered as the fathers of situational ethnicity. Relying on anthropology (Okamura, 1981) and sociology, situational ethnicity points out that ethnic identification and behaviors cannot be framed as stable traits of the individual, but as a “transitory psychological state manifested in

different ways in different situations” (1989: 361). Therefore, “situational ethnicity is premised on the observation that particular contexts may determine which of a person’s communal identities or loyalties are appropriate at a point in time” (Paden, quoted in Okamura, 1981: 452). Nevertheless, acknowledging the relevance of situations is not enough. In fact, situations may, in turn, be defined in two complementary but logically distinct forms (fig. 11):

1. *objective side of situations*. Relying on Belk (1975), a situation results from the combination of five components, including the “physical surroundings” (geographic location, home vs outside, ...), the “social surroundings” (presence vs absence of others, typologies of others, rate of ethnic diversity in the social surroundings, ...), the “temporal perspective” (time of day), the “task definition” (activity that has to be performed in terms of information search and/or behavior), and the “antecedent states” (moods or conditions preceding choice);
2. *subjective side of situations*. At the same, as pointed out by Kakkar & Lutz (1981), a situation is the way a consumer perceives, interprets and responds to the five objective dimensions that compose a situation.

Figure 11 - Objective and subjective situations

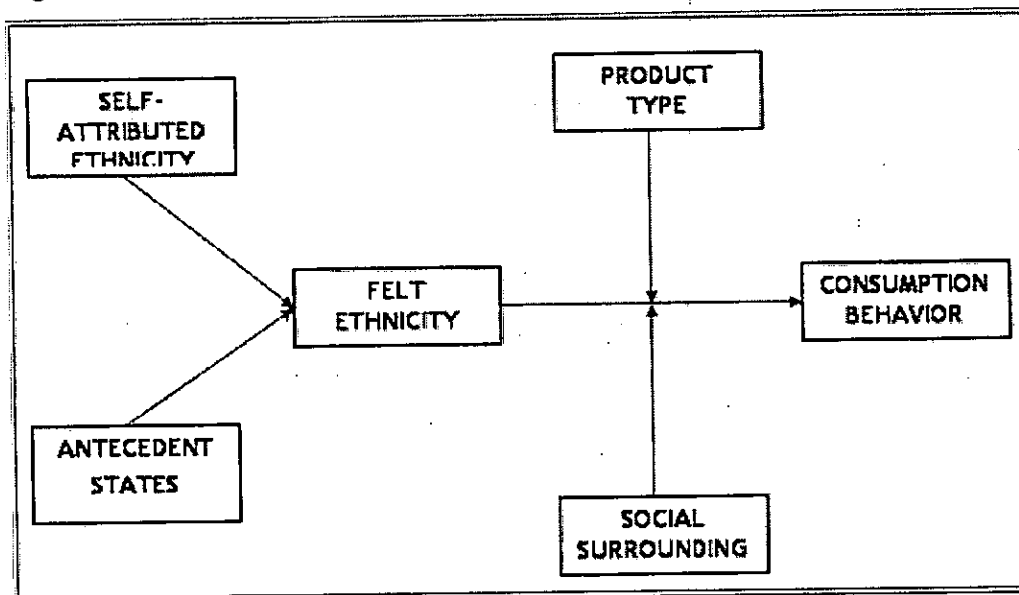


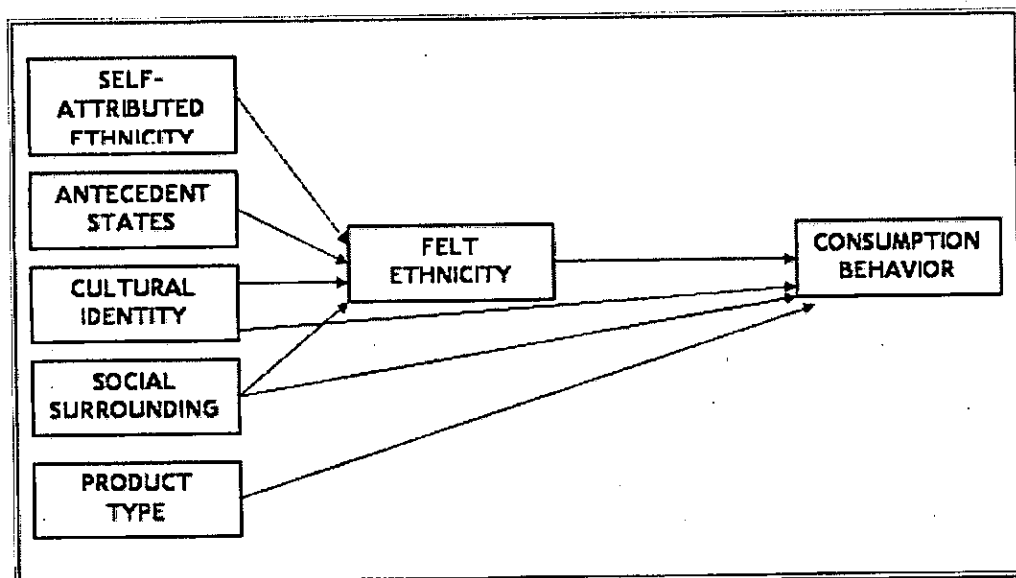
Source: elaboration on Belk (1975)

The distinction between a subjective and an objective dimension in the framing of situations is critical. In fact, Stayman and Deshpande elaborate their model of ethnicity and

consumption on the idea that what affects consumption patterns has to be researched within the psychological, internal, and subjective sphere of the consumer. Thereafter, their model assumes that consumption behavior is determined by felt ethnicity, as a combination of self-designated ethnicity (the ethnic group which an individual identifies with) and antecedent states. This relationship between felt ethnicity and behavior is moderated by product type and social surroundings, which represent expressions of situation types (fig. 12a). Zmud & Acre (1992), relying on this original model and still pursuing a subjective approach to situation and ethnic attachment, attempt an improvement through the introduction of new variables (cultural identity) and the proposal of new connections among these variables. In detail, they test the possibility of: describing felt ethnicity as a function of self-designated ethnicity, antecedent states, social surroundings, and cultural identity; interpreting behaviors as a resultant of felt ethnicity, social surroundings, product type, and cultural identity (fig. 12b). By the way, their empirical findings, based on a sample of Hispano-Americans, give support to the improved version of the model, although little empirical support is obtained on the possibility of interpreting felt ethnicity as a resultant of self-designated ethnicity, antecedent state, cultural identity, and social surroundings. These models, irrespective of their perfectibility, actually give a fundamental contribution to ethnic studies, because they support the idea that ethnicity impacts on consumption patterns under specific situational ties, and that ethnicity and situations impact on consumption dynamics only through their subjective and interpreted form.

Figure 12 a, b - Models of situational ethnicity





Sources: Stayman & Deshpande (1989); Zmud & Acre (1992)

Concluding, if situational and felt dimensions are acknowledged as critical to the understanding of the connection ethnicity-consumption, then *ethnicity measurement* turns out to be even more complicated. Deshpande et al. (1986), in fact, note that, despite the traditionally multidimensional definition of ethnicity, this construct has always been operationalized in very partial ways, using specific dimensions such as surname, country of origin, language spoken at home, or paternal ancestry. Furthermore, on the need of a subjective and multidimensional measurement of ethnicity, Hirschman (1981) observes that it has been typically based on researcher's attribution more than to individual's self-designation. Ethnic studies, in fact, present a complete lack of self-identification measures: "(...) subjects have been assigned to the ethnic group of interest or general population category on the basis of researchers' perceptions of their membership in one or the other group. This may, of course, lead to incorrect assignment. Further exacerbating this problem is the fact that subjects are typically not asked the degree of identification they feel with a particular ethnic group". On that awareness, Hirschman proposes both to ask respondents about their sense of ethnic affiliation (an ante litteram idea of felt ethnicity), and to measure ethnic identification on the basis of a multiple scale, which includes: the self-designated ethnic group of belonging, the intensity of ethnic identification (5 points scale), the self-designated religion of belonging, the intensity of religious identification (5 points scale). In the current study, a fifth dimension has been inserted, measuring the intensity of ethnic identification also with reference to the host culture. Hirschman's concerns and

methodological solutions are shared by Laroche et al. (1998), who call for a multidimensional measurement of ethnicity, even though these authors then propose three partially different indexes of ethnic identification. They include: language spoken with family members, which is empirically confirmed as the best predictor of consumers' ethnic identity; social participation with the minority community; and religion. Therefore, Laroche et al. put greater emphasis both on the linguistic side and on the relational one. These dimensions have been taken into account also in this research project, which benefits from the contributions of all these authors.

After this sort of travel in ethnic studies, ethnicity has to be kept separate from two other frequently used constructs, which are:

1. *national identity*. Ethnicity and nationality do not necessarily overlap. In fact, within a given nation it is possible to observe different ethnic groups, as a result of migration flows, or of historical forces. The case of the US is a classical exemplification of national borders that contain several different ethnicities, which have been alternatively described as a "salad bowl" or a "melting pot". At the same time, the ethnic group, on which this study is focused, gives further support to my statement. Egypt, in fact, unified in its political dimension, collects two main ethnic groups: Muslims, on one side, and Christians, on the other. If the former feel a stronger attachment to an overall Arabian identity, the latter feel deeper roots in the tradition of the pharaohs, and may even consider the Arabian group as the one that has dominated and cancelled the glorious culture of the fathers. Moreover, ethnicity may cross different national borders, as in the case of Arabians, Muslims, Jewish, Blacks, etc. Nevertheless, these two constructs, far from being synonyms, are both frequently used in literature. Peñaloza (1994: 32) admits that "The construct *nation* functions as a receptacle that 'fills the void left in the uprooting of communities and kin' and 'transfers the meaning of home and belonging across those distances and cultural differences that span the imagined community of the nation-people' (Bhabba, 1990: 291)". Clark (1990: 69) recognizes that, under an operational point of view, nationality is an easier construct to deal with, as "In a practical sense, delimitating a cultural group is often impossible. This is not the case when the unit of analysis is the nation. The nation is a political entity and can be defined and

identified precisely in space and time". Furthermore, Tinson, Nacarrow, & Nacarrow (2004) present national identity as an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991), which juxtaposes the idea of "a sense of place" (*ius soli*) to the idea of a "sense of tribe" (*ius sanguinis*). This study selects one nationality (Egyptians), and then explores the dynamics of cultural alternation in two ethnic groups: Muslims (Arabians) and Christians (Copts);

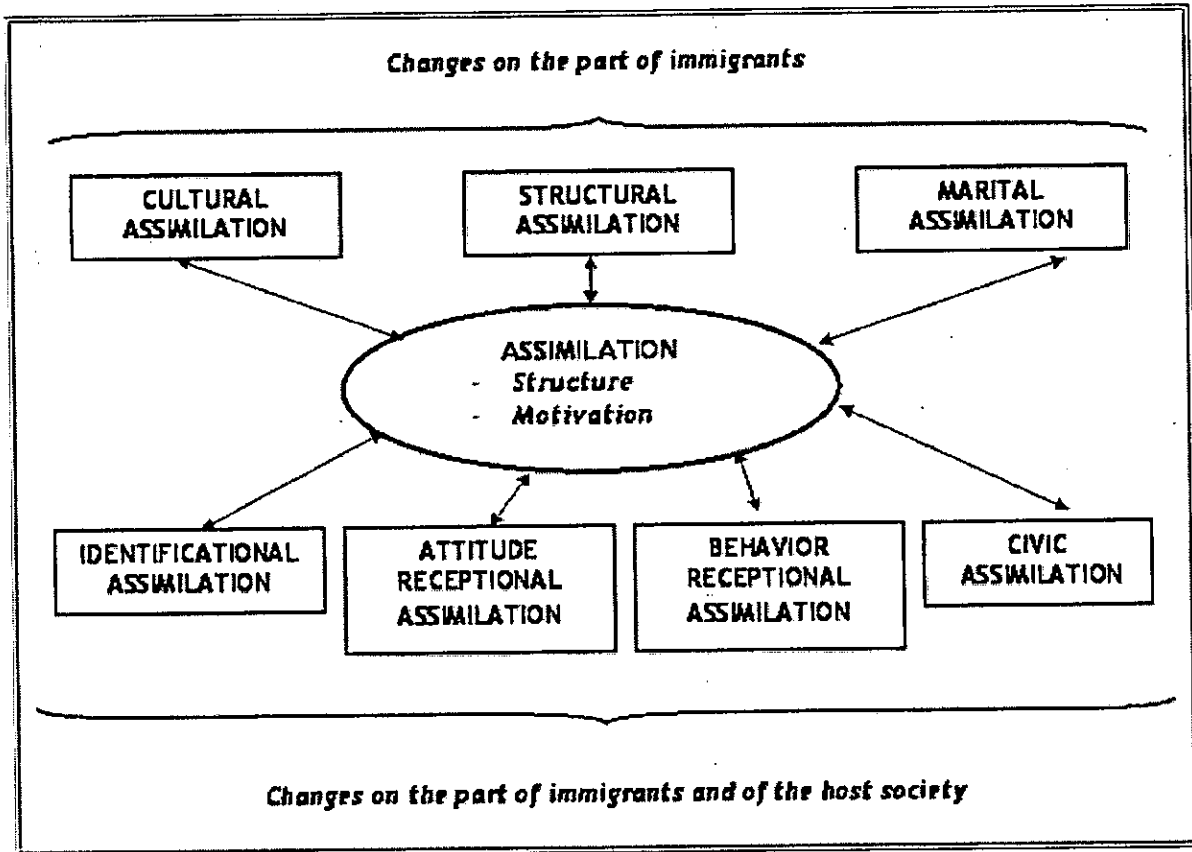
2. *race*. The construct of race "has tended to refer to a biologically (and genetically) distinct subpopulation of a species" (Song: 2003: 9). The pseudo-scientific assumption that human beings can be differentiated into different races, on the basis of distinctive genes, has led to domination by the Whites even when they do not represent the numerical majority. Song remembers that Bulmer (1986) distinguished race and ethnicity in terms of their base - both of them are socially constructed, but race shows a physical base, while ethnicity a cultural one -, whereas Wallman (1978) marked their distinction in terms of the more shadowed and fluttering boundaries of ethnicity. In any case, the genetic foundation of race has long been removed, and therefore race has lost any descriptive power of reality. Race, in fact, still remains as a form of "imagined grouping" (Golberg, 1992, quoted in Song, 2003: 10). This project definitely discards the construct of race, due to its ontological fragility and its social dangerousness.

2.2.3. Acculturation or assimilation?

Acculturation is a process originated by the first-hand contact between two or more groups or individuals having different cultures (Redfield et al., 1936). Such a close contact, therefore, presupposes the existence of at least two parties, and leads to a cultural adaptation through direct cultural transmission, non-cultural dynamics, internal adjustments, or reactive adaptation (Social Science Resource Council, 1954). Nevertheless, despite this open acknowledgment of the *bi-dimensionality of acculturation*, this phenomenon is typically observed on the sole side of immigrants, and of minority groups in general (Ogden et al, 2004). Bi-dimensionality (Berry, 1980; Kim, Laroche, & Joy, 1990), which means that acculturation operates both on the side of minorities and on those of

dominant groups, is therefore frequently dismissed in political and managerial debate (Berry, 1997; Keefe, 1980).

Figure 13 - The two sides of acculturation: immigrants and the host society



Source: elaboration on Wallendorf & Reilly (1983)

Even though the domination of majorities cannot be easily surpassed, Wallendorf & Reilly (1983) openly admit the two dimensions of acculturation (what they call “assimilation”). In detail, these authors assume that this process goes through several steps (fig. 13), where the first three of the list involve changes on the part of the immigrants, whereas the last four are extended to the side of the host society as a whole. In detail, it is possible to distinguish among:

1. *cultural assimilation*. It refers to changes in behavior patterns of the immigrant (language; types, frequencies, and volumes of products);
2. *structural assimilation*. It refers to the immigrant’s participation in occupational categories and primary groups composed mainly by members of the dominant culture;

3. *marital assimilation*. It takes place in case of interethnic marriages;
4. *identificational assimilation*. It comes out of the immigrant's sense of identification with the sole host culture;
5. *attitude receptional assimilation*. It takes place whenever members of the host society dismiss stereotypes and prejudices on immigrants;
6. *behavioral receptional assimilation*. It implies the absence of discriminatory behaviors against immigrants;
7. *civic assimilation*. It consists in the absence of value and power conflicts between host and immigrant groups.

Taking for granted that acculturation analysis should also be extended to the dominant group, a clearer definition of acculturation is then required. In fact, the word "acculturation" is associated to many conflicting and confused interpretations. "Its classic interpretations (Redfield et al., 1936; SSRC, 1954) are all but clear. Since then, the term seems to have taken on a variety of divergent and often confounded meanings" (Laroche, Kim, & Tomiuk, 1998: 130). In particular, what are, if any, the differences among acculturation, ethnic identity, adaptation, or assimilation? The following discussion aims at showing different theoretical positions, and at providing a univocal definition of these constructs to the advantage of the current research project.

Starting from the *notion of acculturation*, this term is "generally taken to indicate acquisition of host culture traits" (Laroche et al., 1998: 129). Consistently with that, Andreasen (1990: 847) defines acculturation, which he labels "cultural interpretation", as "(...) the exposure of members of one culture (or subculture) to another through direct experience and/or indirectly through the media or the experiences of others" More recently, "Acculturation describes the changes in attitudes, values, and/or behaviors of members of one cultural group toward the standard of the other cultural group (O'Guinn, Lee and Faber 1986; Padilla 1980, etc.). It is essentially a process of cultural exchange" (Lee & Ro Um, 1992: 429). Furthermore, these authors suggest a distinction between a form of "direct acculturation", which occurs as a resultant of the physical contact with the host society (length of stay, neighborhood, friends, food, etc.), and a form of "indirect acculturation", which mainly operates through media exposure and usage.

All these definitions have a common base, being the acquisition of new cultural traits through direct or indirect interaction between groups and individuals. This double “soul” of *acculturation*, in addition, is openly pointed out by Berry (1980: 11), who claims that it *occurs at a double level*, “that of the group and that of the individual (cf. Graves’s, 1967).” The distinction between these two levels has long been recognized in transcultural psychology, and has led to the distinction between acculturation, which refers to the social/group level, and “psychological acculturation” (Graves, 1967), which refers to the individual level. The separation between the group and the individual is meaningful because (Berry et al., 1992):

- *acculturation phenomena differ at these two levels.* At the population level, acculturation leads to a reshaping of social structures, of economic systems, and of political life. On the contrary, at an individual level acculturation is reflected in terms of changes in identity, values, attitudes, cognitive styles, personality, language skills, etc. (Berry, 1980);
- *individuals make the difference.* If social acculturation helps finding shared and general changes within social structures, psychological acculturation reminds that not all acculturating individuals take part in this process in the same way and with the same implications. Therefore, this study shows a greater emphasis on the individual dimension of acculturation, even though the social dimension cannot be discarded, being individual identity socially constructed (Harré et al., 1985).

The definition of acculturation can be even more appreciated through a *direct confrontation with some rival or complementary constructs*. In particular, acculturation has been frequently associated with:

1. *ethnic identity.* Nevertheless, acculturation cannot be considered as a synonym of ethnic identity, which in fact denotes the subjectively retained traits of the culture of origin. In different words, the relationship existing between ethnicity and acculturation is more or less the same occurring between country of origin and host country. The two cultural dimensions (ethnic origin and host culture) find then a confluence into a meta-level, the so-called “ethnic change” (Laroche et al., 1998),

through the already discussed mechanisms of psychological selection (§ 1.3.2) and identity framing (§§ 1.3.3, 1.3.4);

2. *adaptation*. The first explicit association between acculturation and adaptation goes back to Berry's 1980 contribution, titled "Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation". In that context, Berry depicted adaptation as the last of a three-step process of acculturation. In fact, "(...) discussion suggests that there may be a three-phase course to acculturation: contact, conflict, and adaptation. The first phase is necessary, the second is probable, and some form of the third is inevitable" (1980: 11). Therefore, adaptation represents the mature stage of the acculturative process, which takes to the acquisition of some or all the cultural traits of the host culture. Several years later, Lisa Peñaloza (1999: 84) comes to a different conclusion, when framing acculturation as a subset of adaptation: "Acculturation is a general term that encompasses intercultural interaction and adaptation and includes assimilation of a new culture, maintenance of the old culture, and resistance to both new and old cultures. Adaptation is broader than acculturation, in that it refers to responses to outside stimuli, both cultural and noncultural". Both Berry and Peñaloza's definitions do not juxtapose these constructs, which, on the contrary, are seen one as a subset of the other. Nevertheless, the direction of this relationship is reversed in the two contributions;
3. *assimilation*. Last but not least, acculturation and assimilation have been frequently confused as synonyms one of the other (Gordon, 1964). Should they be kept separate or do they have the same meaning? Part of the misunderstanding originated by the contradictory definitions provided in various disciplines. In particular, on one hand we find a definition of assimilation that is almost shared within consumer studies, sociology, and anthropology; on the other, we meet a partially different definition of assimilation within the (trans)cultural psychology stream of research. Starting from the mainstream position, assimilation and acculturation are considered to be close concepts, whose main difference can be detected in the stage of adoption of mainstream values by cultural minorities. In other words, acculturation shows a combination of minority and mainstream cultural patterns, whereas assimilation takes to the full adoption of the mainstream culture and the subsequent renounce to the minority cultural heritage (Rossman, 1994). Assimilation can therefore be

interpreted as the definite and latest stage of acculturation, when the host culture is completely appraised by migrant consumers. In fact, assimilation is depicted as the process of progressive substitution of the norms and values attached to the culture of origin with those belonging to the culture of residence (Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983). Analogously, Peñaloza (1994: 32) openly admits that “the assimilation framework has been predominant in studies of consumer subcultures (see, e.g., O’Guinn and Faber 1996; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983)”. At the same time, she suggests that the difference between the constructs of acculturation and assimilation is essentially a question of degree to which immigrants validate the host culture. The theoretical position proposed by (trans)cultural psychologists (Berry, 1980; Inghilleri, 2004; Massimini et al., 1996) is partially different, because they dismiss the more deterministic and univocal approach formulated by these other disciplines. In fact, assimilation is not seen as the only possible outcome of acculturation, being acculturative outcomes more complex and numerous than that. As this issue is going to be discussed in greater detail in the followings (§§ 2.3.1, 2.3.2), now I simply recall that, within the psychological frame, assimilation is one of the possible exits of acculturation, which is characterized by a voluntary substitution of the culture of origin with the host culture. In order to position my project within this theoretical debate, I personally rely on the psychological definition of assimilation. Therefore, in that light, acculturation is going to be presented as the process variable of cultural merging, whereas assimilation represents one of the final, possible statuses emerging from this process. By no way, is assimilation interpreted as the only possible outcome of acculturation.

After the characterization and definition of acculturation, it is necessary to limit the scope of our analysis. Even though the sphere of consumption cannot be understood without taking into account the totality of the individual, our interest is going to be primarily devoted to the *processes of consumer acculturation*. Acculturation and consumer acculturation, in fact, differ not in terms of logics, but of their scope. According to Redfield, Linton & Herskovits (1936: 149) acculturation is the complex of “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come in continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of

either or both groups". At the same time, consumer acculturation can be defined as a smaller subset of the acculturative processes, with specific regard to the cultural changes in consumption patterns due to socialization and exposition to new cultures (Lee, 1988). In that light, "Consumer acculturation is the term used to describe the acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to engaging in consumer behavior in one culture by members of another culture. This includes how one learns to buy and consume goods as well as how one learns the meanings that we attribute to ourselves and others as consumers of goods..." (Peñaloza, 1989: 110). Consumer acculturation, which may be expressed in several different forms (assimilation, maintenance, resistance, and segregation), is in fact basically reduced to the processes through which immigrants learn "the language and the currency, buying and using products (e.g., food, clothing, transportation, communication, financial services, media), and issues of individual identity and social interaction" (Peñaloza, 1995: 90). Thus, "Participants' consumer acculturation processes did not simply entail learning to buy and use products. They also needed to internalize the logic of the new market system, which they only partially accomplished" (Peñaloza, 1995: 90). Therefore, such a definition of consumer acculturation presents the following characteristics: consumer acculturation is a smaller subset of the individual acculturation general processes, which in fact comprehends the totality of situations of the immigrant's everyday life; consumer acculturation accounts for the individual dimension (learning) and the social one (displaying); consumer acculturation leads both to a behavioral (buying and consuming) and to an interpretative outcome (sensemaking); with reference to immigrants, consumer acculturation is explored within multicultural contexts, even though the framework developed by Peñaloza relies on the simplification of considering only two ethnicities (native and host).

How, then, is it possible to *measure the rate and the nature of consumer acculturation*? On that point, two major approaches can be put forward. On one hand, a "linguistic approach" can be detected, within which acculturation is basically measured through linguistic indexes. Kim, Laroche, & Joy (1990) and O'Guinn & Faber (1985) represent the most prominent exponents of communication-based measures of acculturation. In detail, according to that approach acculturation can be operationalized along two dimensions of communication: interpersonal communication, which reflects the language spoken in

interpersonal relationships (e.g., at work, with friends, at home, etc.), and mass communication, which capture media exposition and usage (e.g., radio, television, magazines, newspapers, etc.). Operationally speaking, Kim et al. (1990) used twelve communication based measures, covering: questionnaire language preference, language with spouse, with child, with relatives, at work, at school, with friends, when shopping, language of TV programs, radio listening, newspapers, and magazines.

A second group of consumer researchers in that field sustain a “multidimensional measurement approach”, which intends to reflect the multidimensionality of acculturation. Lee and Ro Um (1992), for example, propose to operationalize acculturation through a set of 15 variables. Ten of them are used to measure “direct acculturation”, which can be seen as the resultant of the physical contact with the host society, and include: language spoken at home, at work, and among friends; length of stay; frequency of visits to the country of origin; migration project; neighborhood; food preferences; ethnic background of very best friend and second best friend. In addition, the remaining five variables are used to measure “indirect acculturation”, which mainly operates through media exposure and usage, and is therefore captured by: preferred books/magazines; time spent with host country TV programs, radio programs, newspapers, and magazines. Some years later, similarly but more synthetically, Laroche et al. (1998) suggest measuring this construct through a couple of indexes: host culture mass-media exposure, and host culture social interaction and participation. Nevertheless, a milestone contribution to the multidimensional measurement of acculturation still remains the one of Yinger (1985), who argued that acculturation can be detected through the exploration of four dimensions, including: “structural change”, being defined as the degree of integration with the associations and institutions of the host country); “cultural change”, which is the degree of adoption of new values and norms; “psychological change”, that is, transformations in the individual’s self identification with one’s ethnic group); and “biological change”, which turns out into genetic mutations of minorities so that physical differences between immigrants and host population are reduced over time. The current research project admits the multidimensionality of acculturation, and therefore explores this construct both through linguistic, relational, and indirect indexes.

A final but definitely relevant consideration is still missing. *What are, in fact, the shortcomings of the acculturation/assimilation paradigm?* As a first and preliminary remark, it should be said that marketing literature has so far largely relied on broad categorizations of ethnicity, principally focusing on the main ethnic minorities living in the United States (Hispanics, Asians, and Blacks; Hirschman, 1981; Ogden et al., 2004). This tradition has led to an underestimation of the variations that can be detected within subcultures (ethnic subgroups), which can be called "microcultures". Therefore, it looks sensible to develop new streams of research for intracultural differences and their impact on purchase decisions.

Furthermore, the assimilation/acculturation paradigm no longer fits the situation of postmodern societies, because new streams of immigrants are less likely to adopt the mainstream culture than their predecessors (Venkatesh, 1995). This means that immigrants are more and more careful in retaining their cultural identities, with a consequent breakdown of the previously postulated melting pot model. Nowadays, multicultural societies are more diffusely described through the metaphors of "salad bowl", "tossed salad", or "cultural mosaic" (Glazer & Moynihan, 1975; Hegeman, 1991), which evoke the possibility of having a plurality of cultural identities among which an individual may alternate and switch (Song, 2003; Waters, 1990). On similar positions, Peñaloza (1994: 52) suggests that "the assimilation model has been used in ways that have smoothed over options other than assimilation and has rendered unintelligible the increasing heterogeneity of the U.S. market. By attending to similarities and differences within and across national boundaries, this research disrupts totalizations of the U.S. market and interjects in their place a highly differentiated amalgam of consumer cultures that are geographically located and inherently interrelational". Therefore, she concludes saying that "In this sense, the persistence of the assimilation model in studies of consumer behavior may disclose more about researchers' assumptions concerning the nature of cultural interpretation and the important role the immigrant plays in our national ideology than it does about the nature and direction of change in immigrants' consumption patterns" (51).

A further critical position on the assimilation model is enhanced by Laroche, Kim, & Tomiuk (1998), who brilliantly point out that the assimilation framework relies on the assumption that ethnic identity and assimilation are two ends of the same continuum. This has been translated into the adoption of a linear bipolar model (Hirschman, 1981,

Deshpande et al., 1986), which postulates that the acquisition of the host culture traits is concomitant with a loss of ethnic identity (assimilation hypothesis; Keefe & Padilla, 1987; Phinney, 1990). This linearity assumption, which has been named “monotonicity hypothesis” (§ 3.2.1), leads to bipolar scales and the construction of total scores of acculturation rate, which can be seen as measures of ethnic affiliation (Deshpande et al., 1986). Instead of a linear conception of assimilation, Laroche et al. (1998) recognize the multidimensional nature of ethnic identity and assimilation constructs. Adaptation is a bi-level process, being a combination of maintenance/loss of traditional culture and of gain of new cultural traits (Berry, 1980; Dohrenwend & Smith, 1962; Garcia & Lega, 1979). Therefore, cultural mergers analysis does not have to rely on the intensity of ethnic affiliation, but on the different patterns of adaptation that immigrant consumers may have adopted. *From intensity measures to patterns of cultural selection.* This, by the way, represents the next step in our discussion.

2.3 Possible outcomes of cultural clashes

Cultures may meet, and this encounter takes place through individuals and social groups. On the basis of this cultural clash, which has been typically framed in a multiple-phase process (pre-contact, contact, conflict, crisis, and adaptation; Berry & Kim, 1988), groups and individuals are challenged, and have new opportunities of rethinking their identities in creative forms. This transitional and shadowed dimension has been depicted as a dominant trait of postmodern societies, which, for example, have been defined as “fluid” environments (Bauman, 2003). As a result, any definite, monolithic, and stable definition of culture is misleading, both because there is no single definition of culture able to make scholars agree (Segall, 1986), and because social reality is far from being constant, in cultural terms. This awareness took Wallendorf & Reilly (1983) to the creation of a new definition of culture. Instead of using the word “culture”, which may more easily evoke a sense of stability and permanence, it is wiser to use the expression “cultural styles”. Being culture an adaptive construct, in the way it constantly reacts and modifies to stimulations, then “the term *cultural style* is used to refer to the content of culture as well as its subjective values orientations and standards. In addition, cultural style appropriately implies that the behavior patterns of individuals are the result of individual choice” (1983:

292). The implications of this definition are twofold: on one hand, the dynamic nature of culture is legitimated; on the other, the subjective dimension is evoked, which is linked to the processes through which external culture (extra-somatic culture) is transformed into individual culture (intra-somatic culture; Massimini et al., 1996).

This also leads to a new way of framing the issues of cultural identity, ethnicity, and acculturation. As it has already been discussed, in fact, it is preferable to move from an analysis based on the objective/subjective and stable/unstable dichotomies to the extrasomatic/intrasomatic dichotomy. The issue of ethnicity (§ 2.2.2), in fact, has been triggering the problem of combining and contrasting between the individual dimension and the social one. In some studies, this problem has been solved through the proposition of a dichotomy in terms of objective and subjective ethnicity (Deshpande et al., 1986; Hirschman, 1981; Kim, Laroche, & Joy, 1990; Ogden et al., 2004; Stayman & Deshpande, 1989), where objectivity addresses the social dimension and subjectivity refers to the individual sphere, that is, to the way individuals self-identify in ethnic terms. In other cases, a dichotomy based on stability versus dynamicity of ethnic traits has been preferred (Fitzgerald, 1974; Zmud & Acre, 1992). In detail, the stable component of ethnicity has been called “cultural identity”, whereas the variable and transitory one has been depicted as “felt ethnicity” (Stayman & Deshpande, 1989; Zmud & Acre, 1992) or “social identity” (Fitzgerald, 1974). A complementary way to put the question is to mark the distinction between what is external to the individual (extrasomatic culture) and what is metabolized and elaborated by him/her (intrasomatic culture). In that case, both cultures can be partially stable or variable, and the difference between the social and the individual levels is elaborated through the processes of psychological selection, which represent a Hegelian synthesis of these two dimensions. From a juxtaposition society-individual, to a new synthesis in the name of individual appropriation of socio-cultural stimuli.

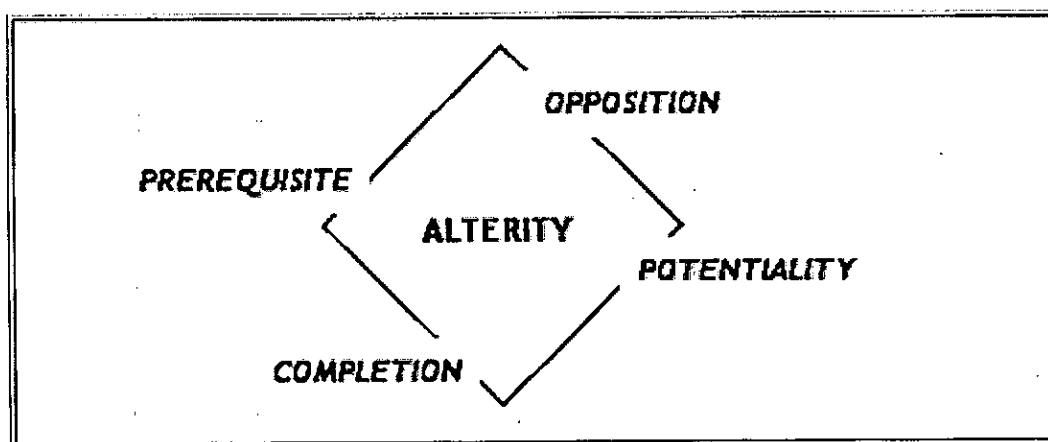
But then, how do these processes of cultural clashes occur? How do individuals metabolize cultural stimuli from the external environment and transform them into relatively stable traits of their multiple cultural identities? What are the main theoretical outcomes of this process? Answers to the first two questions have been attempted in the first part of that work. Nevertheless, outcomes of cultural encounters still ask for

exploration. The following paragraphs aim at providing the reader with a general picture of possible outcomes (§ 2.3.1), and, in particular, with a more detailed understanding of one of these outcomes, called “cultural alternation” (§ 2.3.2).

2.3.1 Acculturation strategies: psycho-social destinies of cultural clashes

Individuals and groups migrate, get exposed to media communication, meet foreigners at work or in the street, buy and consume products coming from different parts of the world. Everyday. Almost everywhere. We all live in the “era of access” (Rifkin, 2001). The outcomes of these continuous, potentially enriching, but still fatiguing, process of cultural encounters are almost infinite, and have been labeled in various forms. Berry et al. (1989) suggest to call these outcomes “acculturation strategies”. By that, these authors address the patterns explaining the different ways an acculturated individual (or group) wishes to enter in contact with the dominating society. Therefore, acculturation strategies can be interpreted through the combination of two streams of literature: cultural changes theory and inter-group relationships models (Berry, et al. 1992). Another prominent Italian transcultural psychologist, Paolo Inghilleri (2004), labels these strategies, in a much more poetic form, “psycho-social destinies”. At the same time, this definition both remembers the interconnected construction of individual identity through social dynamics, and enlightens the sphere of life. Individuals live with their own identity or, even better, individuals live their own identity in any moment of life, the marketplace included.

Figure 14 - Relationship individuality - alterity, as a premise to alternation



Source: elaboration on Remotti (1996)

At least, analyzing acculturation strategies means understanding: acculturation logics; acculturative dimensions; and outcomes (psycho-social destinies). Starting from the level of *acculturation logics*, I refer to the mechanisms through which individuals or groups may address a culturally diverse individual or group. In different words, at this stage approaches to alterity are detected. Remotti (1996) refers of different ways alterity can be encountered (fig. 14). Principally, he distinguishes among four different possibilities, logically positioned along a dimension of increasing openness to alterity:

1. *alterity as opposition*. It represents the classical look to alterity, because alterity is instrumentally used as a term of comparison. This interpretation can easily lead to conflicts;
2. *alterity as potentiality*. Given that alterity represents the set of possible connections that have not been selected in the processes of identity construction, it may be addressed as the sphere of potentialities for individual identities. Besides, if identity is seen as dynamic and changeable, alterity may also represent the sphere of the future potentialities that will feed further processes of identity transformation;
3. *alterity as completion*. In this case, individuals or groups acknowledge the incompleteness of identity, driven by the biological incompleteness of human beings, and are therefore open to look at alterity as the lacking part of their identity;
4. *alterity as prerequisite*. Finally, alterity can be seen as the pre-condition for identity itself. Logically speaking, there would not be any identity, if there were not an alterity to oppose to. The generating function of alterity is then admitted. In other words, it is like saying that the internal needs of identity generate alterity, and vice versa. Identity exists only because alterity is generated. Individuals or groups would therefore die from pure identity.

Briefly summarizing, these different positions towards alterity may underline a double logic. On one hand, identity incompleteness may be accepted as a functional renounce to the infinite number of possibilities that alterity evokes. In that case, it is more probable to observe a renounce to alterity. On the other hand, identity incompleteness can induce a feeling of lack, and individual self-representation may turn out to be unsatisfactory. In that case, therefore, individuals may be more open to alterity because they may interpret alterity as an ideal completion to their identity gap.

On the basis of these different approaches to alterity, three main acculturation logics may emerge (Berry, 1980):

1. *adjustment*. Alterity is admitted, sometimes because it is not possible to escape from it, sometimes given its acknowledged complementarity to individual identity. In any case, the elaboration of alterity will induce to the acquisition of new cultural traits, in a more peripheral or central way according to the rate of willingness already pointed out. In psychological terms, this approach is shapeable as a “moving toward a stimulus” pattern;
2. *reaction*. Alterity is acknowledged, but contrasted. Changes that occur in individuals or groups are instrumental to the possibility of winning a battle against alterity. As in any war, the enemy has to be faced and recognized. This leads to a cognitive appreciation of new cultural traits, which are nevertheless discarded and contrasted. The frame describing this logic is the “moving against a stimulus” pattern;
3. *withdrawal*. Alterity is simply negated and refused. This may be explained on the assumption that the individual or the group are not willing to admit their incompleteness or judge alterity as a dangerous threat to their presumed integrity. In any case, the mechanism of alterity negation takes to a process of “purification” (Douglas, 1970), through which individual or group identity is perceived as the result of a separation from an impure or worse alternative state. As Douglas points out, what is impure is not selected out, but what people decide to select out is impure. In a way, the negation of alterity as something “dirty” is a matter of individual or social ordination. In that case, new cultural traits are rejected and lead to a “moving away from a stimulus” pattern of acculturation.

Next step on the exploration of acculturation strategies refers to the *acculturative dimensions*. In order to understand the different psycho-social destinies acculturation may disclose, it is necessary to distinguish among different spheres of psychological acculturation (Graves, 1967). The main dimensions I wish to discuss are: *cognition, affection, freedom, and stability*.

First of all, the exposure to new cultural stimuli may be elaborated at a *cognitive and/or affective level*. In the first case, cultural stimuli are perceived and retained, but in a rational form. A new culture can be accepted if it seems to be preferable to the prior

one, as it happens in the case of assimilation dynamics (LaFromboise et al., 1993; Inghilleri & Delle Fave, 1996). Cognition and cognitive styles have been the investigated area of acculturation. This leads to the adoption of the normative system shared within the new culture, where the most effective agents of this shift are represented by “the experience of formal, technical education” (Berry, 1980: 19). At the same time, a culture can be metabolized and internalized by a subject also for emotional reasons, which deal with feelings, emotions, symbolic motivations. This is the case of alternation dynamics, which involve the sphere of pleasure, joy, and happiness (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Inghilleri, 2004). A couple of examples, based on our field work, can give a better understating of this point. Asking Egyptian respondents in terms of their food preferences, a great number of them answered that Italian foods are preferable. The motivations of this expressed preference, however, have been very different. In several cases, in fact, Italian foods were welcomed being described as healthier, lighter, quicker to cook, or more easily purchasable thanks to the capillary distribution of Italian points of sale. These motivations are all but emotional. In other circumstances, on the contrary, Italian foods were preferred because they enforced the feeling of being Italian, or simply for their good taste and the pleasure associated to their consumption. In the latter situation, food preferences presented an affective base, which can be contrasted to the cognitive rationales of the first group of respondents. Therefore, different outcomes of psychological acculturation can be appraised along the cognitive-affective dimension.

Another critical determinant of different patterns of acculturation strategies relies on the *rate of freedom* associated to the choice of elaborating new cultural stimuli. Besides, voluntary versus involuntary absorption of a new culture is so relevant to induce a change in the researchers' vocabulary. In social psychology, in fact, voluntary processes of acculturation has been labeled “socialization” dynamics (Berry et al, 1992), whereas anthropologists have named involuntary acculturation processes as paths of “inculturation” (Herskovits, 1948). In the case of socialization individuals are left free to choose if, what, and to which extent they are willing to incorporate a new culture. In the opposite situation of inculturation, individuals perceive the new culture as a threat, which forces them to an undesired absorption. In a closely similar way, Wallendorf & Reilly (1983) point out that acculturation may occur through a double path represented by “motivation” (socialization) and “structure” (inculturation). In the first case, immigrants voluntarily comply with the

behavioral patterns of the host culture, and their values/beliefs change accordingly. In the opposite situation, compliance is forced, and behaviors do not reflect a concomitant change in values and beliefs. The distinctive point of their contribution rests on the fact that these authors associate the rate of freedom both to migration causes (push versus pull factors), and immigration context (centrality/isolation in the host culture, voluntary/involuntary moving, etc.). Pull factors and centrality in the host society should increase the rate of freedom, while push factors and isolation are supposed to produce the reverse effect.

A final dimension that permits to appreciate the different forms of acculturative strategies is represented by the *rate of stability*. In fact, sometimes the absorption of cultural traits may lead to a durable change in individual or group identity, whereas other times these changes may simply be transient. As a matter of fact, stability is positively associated to the involvement of both the cognitive and affective spheres, and to high perceived rates of freedom. Therefore, individuals who voluntarily elaborate a new culture, both at a rational and at an emotional level, should show the highest rates of retention of these stimuli. This claim may be grounded on the findings of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), which, despite a formulation for different theoretical motives, predicts higher rates of retention for those informational stimuli that have passed through a central elaboration process, skipping the peripheral one.

This introduction, which has been illustrating logics and dimensions of acculturation, was a theoretical precondition to enter the heart of the question: *different outcomes of acculturation*. This topic has been eminently researched by (trans)cultural psychology, the two milestone tenets being Berry's contribution (1980), successively elaborated by Berry et al. (1992), and those of LaFromboise, Hardin, & Gerton (1993). Devereux (1975), Massimini et al. (1996), Inghilleri & Delle Fave (1996), and Inghilleri (2004) then represent further critical elaborations on that issue. As usual, there is no unitary frame to be provided. Nevertheless, I decide to elaborate the proposed classification of psycho-social destinies relying on Berry's (1980) three major questions:

1. Is the original cultural identity retained?
2. Can the relationship to dominant society be assessed as positive?
3. Has the acculturation process been voluntary?

Table 3 - Different acculturation outcomes (psycho-social destinies)

META-OUTCOMES	OUTCOMES	CULTURAL IDENTITY RETENTION	POSITIVE RELATION WITH DOMINANT CULTURE	VOLUNTARY DIMENSION OF ACCULTURATION
INTEGRATION (Berry, 1980; Berry et al., 1992)	ALTERNATION (Inghilleri, 2004; LaFromboise et al., 1993)	YES	YES	YES
	or MULTICULTURALISM (Inghilleri & Delle Fave, 1996; LaFromboise et al., 1993)			
SUBSTITUTION	BICULTURALISM or PLURALISM (Berry, 1980)	YES	YES	NO
	ASSIMILATION (Inghilleri, 2004; Inghilleri & Delle Fave, 1996; LaFromboise et al., 1993)	NO	YES	YES
SEPARATION (Berry et al., 1992) or REJECTION (Berry, 1980)	ACCULTURATION (Inghilleri, 2004; Inghilleri & Delle Fave, 1996; LaFromboise et al., 1993)	NO	YES	NO
	OPPOSING POLARIZATION (Devereux, 1975)	YES	NO	YES
DECULTURATION (Berry, 1980)	SEGREGATION (Berry, 1980)	YES	NO	NO
	MARGINALITY (Berry, 1980)	NO	NO	YES
	ETHNOCIDE (Berry, 1980) or DOUBLE ABSENCE (Sayad, 1999)	NO	NO	NO

Source: personal elaboration and adaptation on Berry (1980)

On the combination of answers to these three questions, eight different acculturation strategies emerge. Table 3 presents a synthetic picture of these outcomes, recalling questions and quoting detailed references that sustain my elaboration. In the followings, a brief description of these eight outcomes is offered:

1. *alternation (multiculturalism)*. This represents the most complex pattern, giving rise to a combination of the old ethnic identity and the new dominant culture. It therefore requires both individual resources and supportive conditions in the social environment. In detail, after exposure to different new cultural stimuli, a person can accept to re-design his/her cultural identity combining new and old cultural traits. Depending on the situation (Stayman & Deshpande, 1989), then, a person will alternate between different cultural identities (Song, 2000; Waters, 1990), accepting to have a more integrated and multifaceted personality. As anticipated, such a pattern can only occur in social contexts that support plurality and respect for diversity. At the same time, it requires individual resources, as it implies a level of complexity and identity flexibility that may be stressful for the majority of people. Alternation has been sometimes confused with "multiculturalism", but the two constructs, still closely intertwined, differ. In fact, cultural alternation refers to the individual level, whereas multiculturalism involves the whole society (LaFromboise et al., 1993; Inghilleri & Delle Fave, 1996). In that sense, multiculturalism may occur only if citizens in a given society have previously developed alternation patterns. In addition, multiculturalism directly involves the same dominant society;
2. *biculturalism (pluralism)*. The distinctive traits of biculturalism involve the elaboration of an individual cultural identity on the basis of two (biculturalism) or more (pluralism) cultures, under the perception of external pressures that reduce, if not eliminate, individual freedom in front of acculturation. Pluralism, therefore, can be framed as a pure acknowledgement of the existence of more than one culture, even if cultural differences are not deeply evaluated and centrally processed (Berry, 1980);
3. *assimilation*. The notion of assimilation (§ 2.2.3) is not used by (trans)cultural psychologists in the way it has been used in consumer studies, or in other disciplines (sociology, anthropology, political studies, etc.). In that case, assimilation represents a voluntary substitution of the native cultural identity with a new one, which is

- perceived as dominant (cognitive level) or more desirable (affective level). The acknowledged freedom may have dramatic impacts in terms of individual quality of life. In fact, despite a general assumption “that an individual will suffer from a sense of alienation and isolation” (LaFromboise et al., 1993: 396), assimilation, if successfully carried out, may also increase individual self-esteem and cultural competence (Inghilleri & Delle Fave, 1996);
4. *acculturation*. Acculturation is an imposed process through which the person is forced to adopt a new culture and removes his/her previous identity. As this cultural transformation is not freely chosen, the major risks to the individual include stress, loss of self-esteem, marginalization, and mental disorders (Coppo, 2003; Inghilleri, 2004). In fact, “the acculturation model implies that the individual, while becoming a competent participant in the majority culture, will always be identified as a member of the minority culture” (LaFromboise et al., 1993: 397). A final explanation is needed. The way the construct “acculturation” is now used completely differs from the use done in other parts of this work, or of cultural and ethnic literature in general. In fact, acculturation typically represents the process of direct contact between two culturally diverse entities (individuals or groups). When referring to acculturation outcomes, acculturation is not only the process but one of the possible outcomes of the process. Maybe this is why Berry (1980) calls the process of acculturation as “cultural adaptation”, in order to avoid possible misunderstandings. In the current work, if not differently specified, the term “acculturation” is applied in its traditional meaning, that is, in its process nature;
 5. *opposing polarization*. This pattern is closely related to pathological answers to cultural stimuli. The individual, in fact, retains his/her prior cultural identity and refuses any contact with the dominant context. Devereux (1975), one of the fathers of modern ethnopsychiatry, has theorized the possibility of sticking to the native culture, using this culture as a defense to new cultural stimuli. This approach eliminates the chance of exchange, but it also “kills” the native culture that stops to be mutable and, in this light, “living”. The crystallization of culture, in fact, is the origin of its death;
 6. *segregation*. Segregation differs from opposing polarization only on the basis of its involuntary origin. In this case, in fact, the individual remains impeached in his/her

ethnic identity because the dominant society openly refuses any contact with him/her. This state of forced marginality, for example, may be observed in the situation of immigrants that are illegal aliens (legal dimension) and socio-economically at the periphery of the society. In this contexts, “group distinctiveness and separation is enforced by the dominant society” (Berry, 1980: 15);

7. *marginality*. This situation is admitted to be more a theoretical hypothesis than a real observable state, because “it is unlikely that any group will voluntary select this variety of acculturation. However, some stabilized forms, such as many marginal groups, are remarkably resistant to change and may continue to exist, at least to some extent, because they are valued by their members” (Berry, 1980: 15);
8. *ethnocide (double absence)*. A final state can consist in a double loss, under the influence of forcing external pressures. Berry quotes the example of ethnocides. In a less bloody form, the eminent sociologist Sayad (1999) theorized the case of many immigrants that, after migration, live an experience of double expulsion. They, in fact, are perceived as out-group both in the host culture and in their culture of origin. In such a case, they experience a “double absence”, and lack any anchoring cultural identity.

These eight outcomes, as proposed by Berry (1980) and Berry et al. (1992), can be grouped into four main couples, which I call meta-outcomes. The coupling principle is based on the dismissal of the “voluntary state” as a classification criterion. Therefore, alternation and biculturalism comprehensively belong to an “integration” frame, assimilation and acculturation to a “substitution” logic, opposing polarization and segregation to a “separation/rejection” dynamic, and marginality and double absence to a “deculturation” pattern.

To conclude, this almost synthetic illustration of different acculturative outcomes, if not successful in offering a complete description of acculturation dynamics, should at least be useful in erasing a frequent erroneous and castrating assumption: the idea that acculturation may lead to a univocal and single end. This concern has also been admitted by consumer scholars. In fact, “the assimilation framework has been predominant in studies of consumer subcultures (see, e.g., O’Guinn and Faber 1996; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983).” Peñaloza (1994: 32). On the contrary, several different patters of acculturation have been

shown also in the marketplace (Peñaloza, 1989): assimilation, which occurs whenever immigrants voluntarily adopt the cultural categories and behaviors of the host society (melting-pot), progressively losing their native identity; integration, which implies the contemporaneous maintenance of the native identity and the creation of a positive relation with the host culture; separation, which takes to the creation of a distance between the two cultures. In the immigrant's case, it may cause the maintenance of the culture of origin, but it can also be accompanied by the rejection of both cultures and the creation of a new hybrid one.

2.3.2 Cultural alternation as the pathway to multiculturalism

The multiplicity of outcomes that may result from dynamics of acculturation as cultural adaptation have been widely acknowledged. Nevertheless, this research aims at providing current debate on ethnicity and consumption with a better understanding of the cultural alternation paradigm, "which posits that an individual is able to gain competence within 2 cultures without losing his or her cultural identity or having to choose one culture over the other" (LaFromboise et al., 1993: 395). This *interest for the alternation pattern over the others* rests on different motives. On one hand, as I am going to show after a further exploration of ethnic studies in consumer behavior (§ 3.2.6), it represents a still under-researched issue, asking for integrating investigations. At the same time, the alternation framework is the one that shows greater analogies to a framing of identity in the logic of a multiple cultural identity, which seems to be the best interpretative lens for postmodern societies (Brown, 1993; 1995; Firat & Shultz II, 1997). Finally it is an intriguing topic, both for its managerial implications - for example, on the side of consumer studies, it may give new insights for targeting, product positioning, communication, etc. - and for its socio-political linkages, being alternation the pre-requisite to a multicultural society (Massimini et al., 1996; Peñaloza, 2003; Venkatesh, 1995).

Despite its high potential (LaFromboise, 1993; Inghilleri & Della Fave, 1996; Inghilleri, 2004), *cultural alternation has not always been interpreted in positive terms*. Park (1928) and Stonequist (1935), for example, associate alternation (biculturalism) with states of marginality. Among the prominent supposed disadvantages, these authors report ambiguity

in the relationships with the two cultural contexts, confounded identity, and lack of norms. On the contrary, later contributions (Goldberg, 1941; Green, 1947) detect in multiculturalism also several opportunities, such as independence, complexity, and flexibility of individual or group identities.

I personally share the idea that cultural alternation, far from being at the disposal of everyone in any context, or far from being easily achievable also by the most resourced individuals, is a promising way to look at alterity, and at cultures in particular. To use DuBois' expression (1961), cultural alternation can be depicted as a "double-consciousness", that is, the simultaneous awareness of possessing but not being fully described in two or more cultures. Being an "alternating subject", in fact, means to belong to more cultures, so that no single culture definitely and completely fulfills individual identity. Advantages due to greater psychological freedom are partially compensated by the stressful situation of living with a complex identity, which can make feel at home everywhere and nowhere, at the same time. As a result, cultural alternation may be described as an apparently (actually?) paradoxical experience of simultaneous in-group - out-group condition. Such a tiring state, therefore, requires special endowments. *What are the resources required to develop in a successful way a culturally alternating identity?* Studies in that field typically address two categories of resources: individual and social.

On the individual side, which is strongly influenced by individual education (Inghilleri & Delle Fave, 1996), required resources are those that lead a person to develop the so-called "cultural competence" state. Obviously, in the case of cultural alternation, such a cultural competence endowment has to be achieved twice, that is, for both cultures between which this person wishes to alternatively shift. In detail, "in order to be culturally competent, an individual would have to (a) possess a string personality identity, (b) have knowledge of and facility with the beliefs and values of the culture, (c) display sensitivity to the affective processes of the culture, (d) communicate clearly in the language of the given cultural group, (e) perform socially sanctioned behavior, (f) maintain active social relations within the cultural group, and (g) negotiate the institutional structures of that culture." (LaFromboise et al., 1993: 396). As the authors intelligently point out, the extension of this list of requirements suggests the complexity and difficulty of achieving a state of cultural alternation. Once achieved, however, individuals can experience the deep sense of

belonging to two (or more) cultures, without negative consequences in terms of their comprehensive identity. Cognitions, affections and behaviors will rely, then, on this extended cultural set.

The second set of resources is context-specific. In fact, in order to feel all the materials and psychological benefits of the two cultures, the way other social actors and institutions behave is crucial (Inghilleri, 2004). In particular, juridical rules, public policies (health-care, education, occupation, etc.), and social discourses (prejudices, xenophobia, etc.) play a key role in the way diverse people, as migrants are, feel free to interpret themselves and the world in which they participate. Consistently with the claim that wants identity as the result of a continuous conversation between individual and society (Harré et al, 1985; Remotti, 1996), cultural alternation can only be achieved through the simultaneous convergence of positive individual and social endowments.

After this exploration of alternation requisites, I wish to discuss the implications of alternation, both under a subjective and a consumer point of view. Starting from *individual implications of cultural alternation*, it has been empirically proved that alternation may lead to states of wellbeing in everyday life. For example, it has been associated to the achievement of "intrinsic motivation" (Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985) or the so-called "flow experience" (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi & Rathinde, 1993). Flow experience, or optimal experience, can be defined as "(...) the best subjective experiences. In this sense, flow provides to clinical psychology a standard of positive psychic functioning, analogous to the standard that psychology provides to pathology in the field of medicine" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988: 13). Inghilleri (1995; 2004) assumes that flow experience is the resultant of perfect equilibrium between order and complexity, and between subjective skills and environmental challenges. In the "flow, therefore, a person perceives a state of joy and pleasure, which derives from his or her perception of controlling external challenges through individual resources. To use Csikszentmihalyi's words (1975), flow experience breaks the individual's chains of boredom and anxiety. This state invests all the individual spheres, as it affects human cognition (attention to the present), affectivity (joy, pleasure, excitement), and motivation (intrinsic).

Under a *consumer-point of view*, it seems that such positive states of experience associated to cultural alternation may disclose great opportunities both to consumers and marketers. First of all, the acknowledgment of consumers' alternating practices in the marketplace is not completely new. According to Bouchet (1995), immigrants frequently "reinvent, fabricating new identities on the basis of bits and pieces of memories borrowed from the former generation, of fantasies induced by the modern media", so that a "creative cocktail making, the ingredients of which are suggested by the diversity of images they confront in a postmodern society" takes place. On a situation and perceptual base (Stayman & Deshpande, 1989; Zmud & Acre, 1992), Laroche, Kim, & Tomiuk (1998: 145) empirically confirm that "consumption is ethnically bound" and, at the same time, suggest that the role of ethnic identity may vary across situations and products. Analogously, Wallendorf & Reilly (1983) have already argued that assimilation may occur in different ways with reference to different products. This means that the impact of cultures, those of origin and the host one, on consumption patterns cannot be generalized, being a predicate of product types, attributes, and situations of consumption. On the same level, Peñaloza (1989: 116) admits that "Previous research indicates that immigrant consumer behavior is not a simple blending of the culture of origin and the culture of immigration, but rather a unique cultural style (Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983)". Therefore, "Immigrant consumer behavior is not the simple assimilation of established patterns of consumption, nor is it an adamant continuation of previous patterns of consumption exhibited in the country of origin". Her extensive investigation on Mexican immigrants in America (1989; 1994; 1995; 2000) supports that statements, the idea that some kind of alternation mechanisms occur in the marketplace.

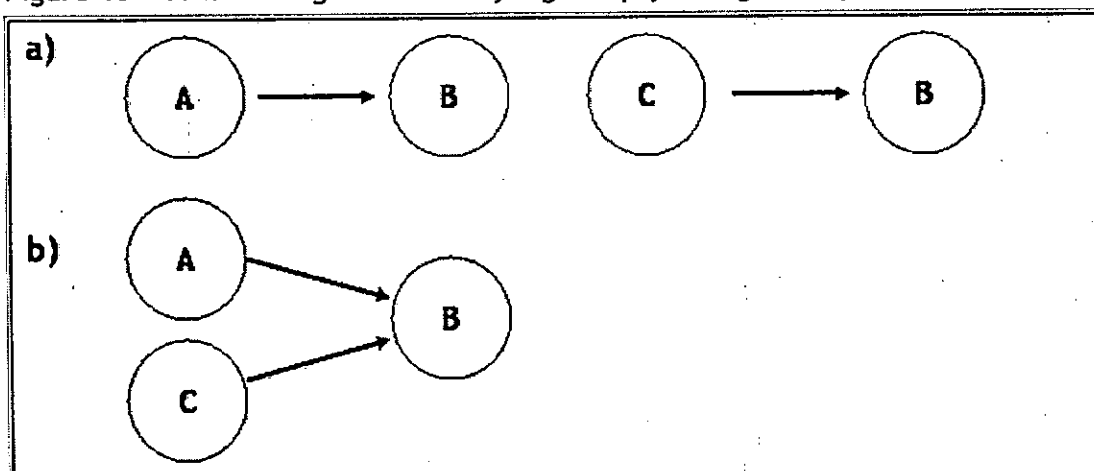
Therefore, *the very question then seems to be not whether individuals alternate among different cultural or ethnic identities, but how they do it and why*. "Then in terms of situational ethnicity, the important research questions should be: how and why people choose a particular ethnic identity from a range of possible choices" (Zmud & Acre, 1992: 447). This question is addressed by the a priori model presented in the next paragraph.

2.4 Proposition of an alternation general model: an a priori model

Despite a search for further empirical confirmation of alternation behaviors in life and consumption (Inghilleri, de Cordova, Castiglioni, 2000), this research principally aims at understanding how and why alternation occurs in the marketplace. As a result, the model that is going to be proposed is an explanatory one, neither purely descriptive nor deterministic and causal (Molteni & Trolio, 2004). Within a socio-psychological field of study, in fact, causal explanations cannot be used, at least not as the unique source of knowledge (Harré et al., 1985), because:

1. *the exclusivity of the causality principle no longer holds.* According to the situation, the same psychological process can be generated by different determinants. This leads to dismiss the idea that a unique cause may explain a given psychological phenomenon (fig. 15 a). Our empirical findings support this assumption. In fact, if the phenomenon to be explained is cultural alternation, it can be interpreted on the basis of different factors, which change from individual to individual. In some cases, for example, alternation is achieved through strong religious ties, whereas in other contexts it is more likely to be the result of strong and genuine curiosity for alterity;
2. *the unicity principle is misleading.* In that situation, psychological phenomena can be generated by multiple causes. Then, the uniqueness of causality has to be removed (fig. 15b). Again, empirical findings support the idea that cultural alternation is induced by a combination of factors, belonging both to the individual and to the environmental spheres, such as personal education, job position, years of residency, linguistic skills, relational ties and affiliation, felt discrimination, etc.

Figure 15 - Constraining the causality logic in psychological explanations



Source: elaboration on Harré et al. (1985)

Once the causal logic in psychological explanations has been dismissed, or at least it has been considered not to be the only and central way to approach this field of research, some implications follow. First, models are going to prefer the analysis of processes to the exploration of outcomes (what comes out of these processes). Furthermore, the temporal and space horizons are extended, through the elaboration of longitudinal models, and the observation of behavioral patterns in their social settings. Finally, consistently with Feyerabend's principle of "anything goes" (1975), and with postmodern eclectic soul (Podestà & Addis, 2004), any disciplinary contribution that may add an understanding to the inquired phenomenon is welcomed.

Relying on previous considerations, this model will be explanatory in nature, and grounded on common sense, enforcing reconciliation between social sciences and practical relevance of theories. In addition, this model looks for explanations referred to mental states, not to cerebral states, because the mere physiological explanations have to be integrated with the individual and the social lectures. At the same time, if causality is no longer the key interpretative logic, Harré et al. (1985) suggest substituting causal links with:

1. *analogies*. Analogies are grounded on common sense, and can be applied in order to get a twofold understanding. At a first stage, analogies help detecting the "scheme" that interconnects the different parts of the inquired phenomenon. Darwin, for example, suggested using the analogy of domestic selection in order to detect the scheme of natural selection (1859). In a different context, Goffman proposed to use the theatrical analogy to explain how the self is presented in everyday life (1959). At a second and deeper stage, analogies are also useful devices to identify the "source of the scheme", that is, its determinants. The use of metaphors is also acknowledged in consumer behavior, where for example consumption patterns have been described alternatively as experiences, integration, or classification (Holt, 1995). A final circumstantiation is necessary. Analogies grasp not only similarities between the analogical term and the inquired phenomenon (positive analogies), but also differences (negative analogies) or the aspects that have not already been compared between them (un-influential analogies). The researcher's major concern will then be the identification of the analogy that better fits the object of enquiry. In this

work, I rely on the theatrical metaphor - consumer as an actor, products as masks, cultural identities as roles in the play, etc. -, but I will also take into account the Odyssey frame to depict different paths of elaboration of the individual travel across the seas of cultures;

2. *structural explanations*. Also in that case, the main purpose is not to define causal links among the parts of an observed phenomenon, but to understand what are the pre-defined relations among them. In order to achieve this goal, structural explanations assume that the relations among the parts ("structure") are the expression of a pre-existing "template". Depending on the inquired phenomenon, structures can be obtained either through a fix and unchangeable combination of the parts ("assembling"), or through a mechanical application of the template ("reproduction"), or even through a modification and incorporation of the template ("transformation"; Lévi-Strauss, 1964). This project should help structure the process of integration in a new society and in its marketplace, and should lead to a transformable template of cultural alternation. In fact, I do not argue, from empirical data, that cultural alternation may be achieved along a single path (in each individual story, in fact, the predominant explanatory variables have shown high rates of distinctiveness and idiosyncrasy), as well as it may assume different expressive forms (dramatic, comic, fantasy, etc.).

Concluding, the model I am going to introduce can be characterized as an explanatory one, heavily based on analogies and metaphors, and finalized to the elaboration of a flexible and transformable template of cultural alternation in society as a whole, and in the marketplace in particular.

2.4.1 Explanatory variables

The *a priori model* described in the followings acknowledges the dismissal of assimilation as the best explanatory frame of cultural adaptation. "After decades in which assimilation was the leading model for the incorporation of diverse populations, cultural pluralism emerged to take its place as the reigning paradigm" (Halter, 2000: 5). Resting on that awareness, I propose to support a new explanatory template of cultural alternation,

which is going to be constructed consistently with Peñaloza's methodological suggestions (1989; 1994; 2000). In a less formalized way, the possibility of contrasting an a priori model to an empirical one had already been advanced in consumer studies (Zmud & Arce, 1992). Nevertheless, advances in this field are still linked to Peñaloza's approach, which was applied to the exploration of Mexican-American consumers (1989; 1994) and of marketers acculturation (Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999) inquired in the peculiar case of rodeos (2000).

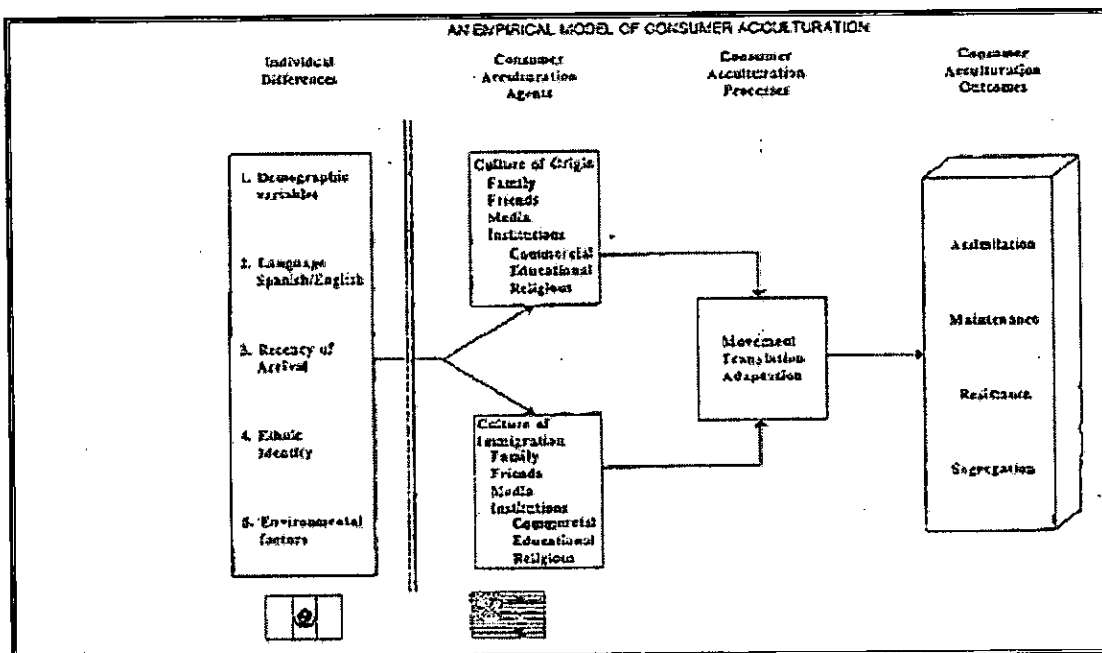
The principle, which sounds consistent with a critical ethnographic method sustaining these and the current studies (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Rosaldo, 1989; Thomas, 1993), is so simple as effective. The a priori model represents the first step of the research, and rests on a desk research, principally based on literature review. On that ground, the a priori model collects and systemizes different contributions, and provides a comprehensive framework, which can be used for field observation. In fact, especially in the case of socially complex phenomena, an a priori model may guide observation and give precise indications in terms of questions and stimuli to be applied in ethnographic interviews. After data collection and interpretation, the empirical model is exposed to a process of Popperian falsification, which may show shortcomings and gaps in the model. The so-called "empirical model" is therefore an a posteriori template, built both on previous theory, as it incorporates the a priori model, and on empirical findings. This process may be framed in a sort of cyclical logic, as the empirical model becomes a new a priori model for future research.

Exactly in this light, the model I propose should be addressed. I start from Peñaloza's 1994 empirical model (fig. 16), and I build on that a new a priori model, which proposes the following distinctive variations:

1. *reshaping the hearth (explanandum)*. If Peñaloza's interest was to focus on the general processes of consumer acculturation, I am going to devote attention to one of the acculturative strategies, that is, consumer cultural alternation;
2. *more detailed list of explanatory variables (explanans)*. Basically, Peñaloza proposes the distinction between two sets of explanatory variables, she calls individual differences and consumer acculturation agents. In a different light, these sets address the individual and the socio-environmental dimensions, which have already been described as primary in all the identity framing processes. Our model maintains

the distinction between the individual level and the socio-environmental one, but at the same time tries to enrich the number and quality of variables present in the two sets. On the individual level, two major integrations are represented by the exploration of the migratory project and of social capital, whereas at the socio-environmental level much emphasis is attributed to rituals and external constraints, such as felt discrimination;

Figure 16 - Peñaloza's 1994 empirical model of Mexican-Americans acculturation



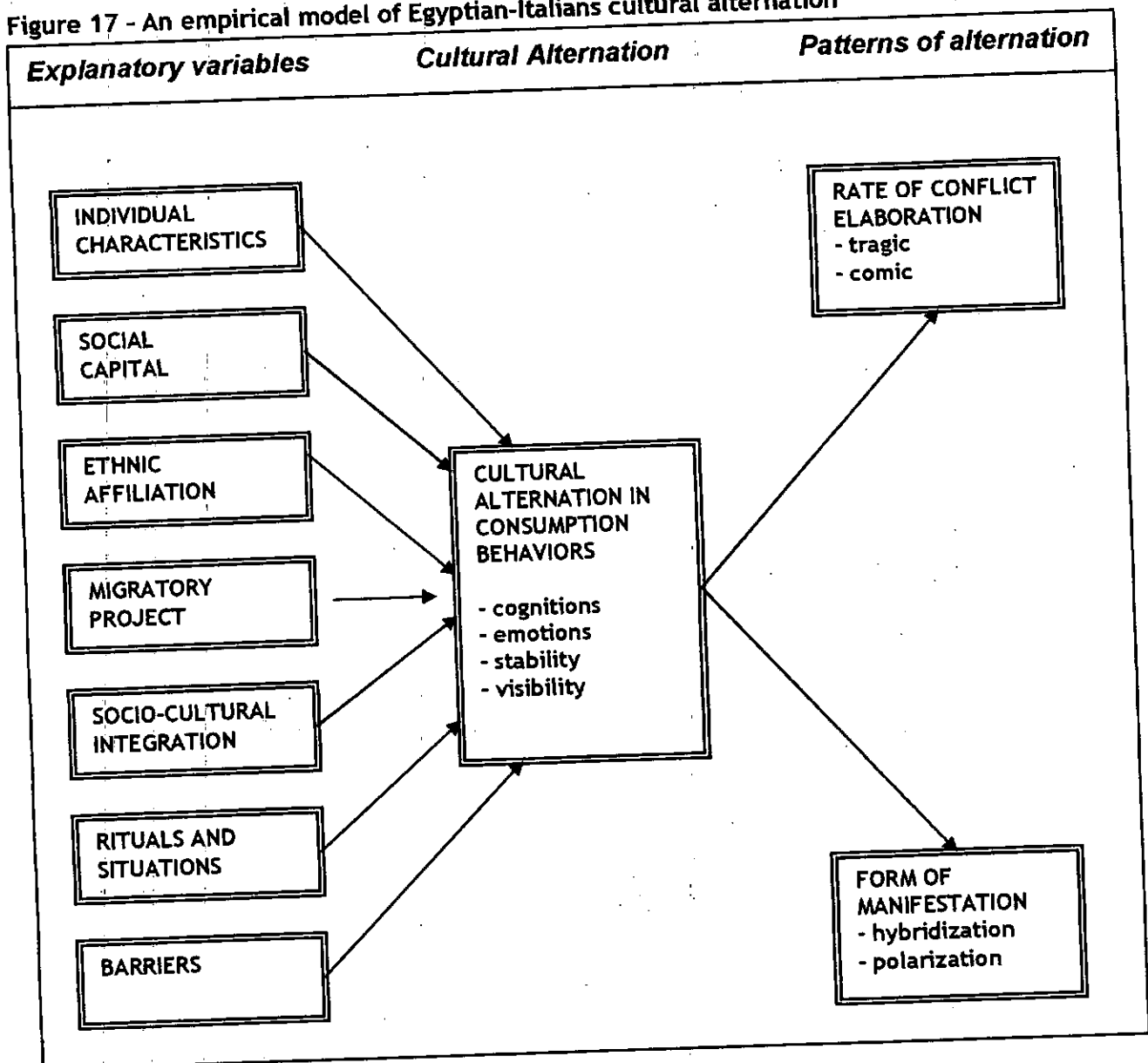
Source: Peñaloza (1994)

3. *the nature of connections among variables.* Peñaloza proposes a kind of chain-relationships among the described variables. The set of individual characteristics is represented as a variable affecting the set of consumer acculturation agents, which in turn impacts on consumer acculturation. Socio-environmental variables are therefore mediating variables in this process. What I argue is that both individual and socio-environmental variables impact on the adaptation processes. Furthermore, not only do individual variables affect socio-environmental ones, but also the reverse may occur;
4. *outcomes.* As a trivial result of the partially different explanandum, also outcomes present a different formulation. By the way, the psycho-social destinies (outcomes) I

admit are those based on (trans)cultural psychology (table 3), which are partially different to those observed by Peñaloza;

5. *unit and context of analysis*. Despite the remarkably similar method, this study refers to the under-researched Italian market, which ranks third in the European list of countries in terms of immigrant presence. At the same time, instead of observing Mexican consumers, this project has admitted Egyptians as the privileged unit of analysis.

Figure 17 - An empirical model of Egyptian-Italians cultural alternation



What are, then, the *explanatory variables* acknowledged in the new a priori model? A complete operationalization of variables is showed in table 4, whereas a synthetic discussion of these variables, which are numerous as suggested by Hair and Anderson (1972), is offered in the followings:

1. *demographic characteristics*. The way immigrant consumers cope with differences in language, currency, market rules and practices, and consumer culture in general may be affected by several socio-demographic variables, such as: sex, age, family composition, parental nationality, etc. In fact, "Those who were younger, better educated, bilingual, and more experienced in the market had an advantage in the marketplace over those who were older, monolingual Spanish speakers, less educated, and less experienced in the marketplace. Number of years here was not a fine enough distinction" (Peñaloza, 1995: 88);
2. *social capital*. The notion of social capital is embedded in psychological and psychiatric traditions (Ruggeri & Tansella, 1999; WHO, 1991), and suggests the relevance of individual resources in adaptation practices. It shows, moreover, strong analogies with Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital, which has been proved to be a powerful explanatory force, for example in the mechanisms of relationship with alterity and of framing individual versus collective identities (Holt, 1998). Social or cultural capitals, then, may be interpreted as a set of inimitable, non easily transferable, rare, and fruitful resources, which may lead to a "resource-based view" of individuals (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) as an extension of the RBV tradition of firms (Barney, 1986; Grant, 1991; Peteraf, 1993; Rumelt, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). An example of variable I attribute to social capital is the rural/urban origin. Studies, in fact, seem to show a correlation between the rural/urban origin of migrants and their consequent rate of adaptation, suggesting that rural origin typically tends to reduce the rate of openness to new cultural stimuli (Jun et al., 1993);
3. *ethnic affiliation*. Ethnic affiliation can be described as the rate of attachment to the original ethnic identity. In fact, members of an ethnic group perceive their ethnic affiliation whenever they are conscious of belonging to that ethnic group, which may be described as "(...) a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements which define the group's identity, such as kinship, religion,

language, shared territory, nationality or physical appearance” (Song, 2003: 6-7). Ethnic affiliation has been previously measured in terms of “felt ethnicity” (Deshpande et al., 1986; Satyman & Deshpande, 1989; Zmud & Acre, 1992), but it seems to be interconnected to a complex set of determinants. I therefore suggest operationalizing this construct in terms of self-designated ethnicity, felt ethnicity, and felt religion (Hirschman, 1981), but also in terms of years of residency in the country of origin. Furthermore, Song (2003) suggests that feelings of affiliation may be stronger in the case of non-White immigrants, in either USA and Britain. Waters underlines the great impact of religious ties, whose intensity may be interpreted as a thermometer of sense of belonging to a given ethnic group;

4. *migratory project*. Migratory project is a central tenet in the understanding of cultural adaptation processes. It may be appreciated both on the basis of its rate of freedom (Berry, 1980), which addresses the push or pull origin of migration (Cohen, 1997; Clifford, 1994), and in terms of goal, which can be explored in terms of stability, content, and rate of achievement. The motive of migration can, first, be maintained or changed over time. In addition, the nature of the objective is vital, where job opportunities may be intertwined with family motives, or other personal rationales (education, tourism, search of a new dimension of life, etc.). A combination of length of presence and migration goal leads to a traditional major distinction in terms of a “stay” strategy (permanent residency) or a “return” project (temporary residency). On that side, recent researches (Jun et al., 1993) seem to sustain the hypothesis that a “stay” perspective, characterized by higher stability and a longer temporal horizon, may induce a higher rate of consumer acculturation. A final dimension of migration goal insists on the rate of achievement, as the migratory process can be successfully carried out or it may, on the contrary, fail. All these aspects are vital to the understanding of the patterns of cultural adaptation;
5. *socio-cultural integration*. This parameter aims at assessing the rate of inclusion in the host social context, and has been typically related to the number and frequency of relational ties maintained with the ethnic group or constructed with the dominant society (Jun et al., 1993; Tinson et al., 2004). For example, as argued by Briley & Wyer (2002: 400), a strong identification with a given group increases the chances of observing behaviors “that minimize the risk of negative outcomes to both themselves

and the others". This is translated into a higher search for equality and more compromising choices. Further dimensions of socio-cultural integration include years of residency (Park, 1950), linguistic skills (Kim et al., 1990; Laroche et al., 1998; O'Guinn et al., 1986), and intermarriages, which play a major role given the significance of family and the at least partial break down of ethnic boundaries (Waters, 1990). Finally, a frequently underestimated dimension of social inclusion is represented by residential segregation, which, through the creation or the voluntary maintenance of a "total environment" (Park, Burgess, & McKenzie, 1925), enforces the logic of ghettos, and reduces the opportunities of relational and cultural exchanges (Waters, 1990);

6. *rituals*. Rituals have to be inserted in that model in their situational sense. I mean that rituals, which are associated to places, moments, and partners, may explain how and why individuals may shift from one cultural identity to the other. By the way, the relevance of rituals in cultural consumer studies have been largely admitted (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; McCracken, 1986; 1988; Solomon et al., 2002; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991);
7. *external constraints*. External limits may start from trivial aspects, such as structural barriers to the fulfillment of one's need. In services, for example, linguistic deficits may be a severe threat to a satisfactory use (Visconti, 2004b). In the marketplace, then, assortments may show shortages or absolute lack of certain products, and points of sale may be too distant or observe opening hours incompatible with migrants' life. Given these structural constraints, a further and even more critical obstacle seems to be the rate of felt discrimination. In fact, the perceived risk of being discriminated on the basis of ethnicity may play a key role in explaining processes of cultural identity shift. Previous studies (Coleman & Rainwater, 1978; Tinson et al., 2004; Zmud & Acre, 1992) argue that the lower the risk of being discriminated, the higher the possibility of alternating and showing different ethnic identities. "...Whites do not perceive ethnic discrimination to be a threat to their individual life chances, and their ethnic identity can be used at will and discarded when its psychological or social purpose is fulfilled" (Zmud & Acre, 1992: 447). Waters (1990: 95) supports this statement, when saying that "a number of studies done by other researchers reach the same conclusions: there is little experience of

discrimination among white ethnic today". On the contrary, non-White immigrants may suffer from higher forms of discrimination, and studies have shown that the so-called "ethnic threat" can induce a significant fall in an individual's overall performance (Phinney et al, 1993).

This a priori model is going to be empirically "tested", and is going to be elaborated into an empirical, a posteriori version that is discussed in § 5.1.

Table 4 - Operationalization of the explanatory variables

VARIABLES	OPERATIONALIZATION
DEMOGRAPHIC AND INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS	Sex; age; parental nationality; self attributed religion; family composition
SOCIAL CAPITAL	Education; previous migration experiences; rural/urban origin; job occupation; income; pre-migration exposure to Italian culture
ETHNIC AFFILIATION	Self attributed ethnicity; Egyptian felt ethnicity; felt religion; years of residency in Egypt
MIGRATORY PROJECT	Stability of the project; initial goal of the project; actual goal of the project
SOCIO-CULTURAL INTEGRATION	Family reuniting; years of residency; spoken language in different contexts; linguistic preference; social ties; frequency of social frequentations; media exposure; leisure time activities; Italian felt ethnicity; food purchase, cooking, and consumption
RITUALS	Places of food consumption; moments of food consumption; partners of food consumption; food as a gift
EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS	Felt discrimination; barriers to purchase (assortments shortages, distance of points of sale, etc.)

2.4.2 Possible outcomes of cultural alternation

Although cultural alternation has been acknowledged as one of the possible acculturation strategies (Berry, 1980; Berry et al., 1992; Inghilleri & Delle Fave, 1996;

LaFromboise et al., 1993; Massimini et al. 1996) or psycho-social destinies (Inghilleri, 2004), there is no theoretical evidence helping in a breakdown of this construct. In different words, no study suggests different forms of cultural alternation, which, also in the sporadic cases of its admittance, has been treated as a homogeneous construct, a sort of magic box.

Therefore, this project shows interest for an in-depth exploration of cultural alternation, and tries to detect different patterns of alternation. Being this part devoted to an a priori formulation of the model, and given the lack of any theoretical support on that point, very sophisticated hypotheses on alternation variants are hardly imaginable. I, then, have to rely on different bases, and decide to make reference to poetry (Sherry & Schouten, 2002), fairy tales, and theatre (Goffman, 1959). As a result, I am going to adopt *three metaphors* to describe the meaning, the mechanisms, and the effects of alternation:

1. *alternation as the guest star of a theatrical piece.* Relying on Goffman, the theatrical metaphor has already been postulated (§ 2.1). The main parallelisms have been built on the following associations: consumer-actor; cultural identities-piece roles; products-masks; inner/outer direction of consumption-audience; individual drivers of alternation-script; socio-environmental drivers of alternation-stage presentation; and different patterns of alternation-recitative styles. Each consumer disposes of different roles, he/she may act through the masking power of products. The shift between different roles is induced by subjective motives present in the script, and by environmental factors included in the stage presentation, even though each actor shows a peculiar recitative style, and therefore his/her distinctive way of alternation cannot be confounded with others;
2. *alternation and the genius of the lamp.* When cultural alternation is explored in the marketplace, another image can suitably fit. The consumer is the lucky owner of the prodigious lamp. He or she probably found the lamp in a way that is difficult to account for, or that was not easily to foresee. Analogously, in real life it is frequent to observe cultural encounters, which occur by chance with unpredictable outcomes. When the consumer wishes to express a desire, he/she knows that through a pressure on the lamp a genius may appear. The manifestation of the genius can be framed as the cultural identity that the consumer, in a given situation, wants to enact. The act of glossing the lamp is interpretable as the act of consuming a product, which, through its functional and symbolic content, can be used to live this identity. At the

same time, the wishes, which can be expressed to the genius, are specific of each individual, and therefore represent the peculiar patterns of alternation each individual may manifest. Finally, for each owner of the lamp, only three wishes may be fulfilled. This, in a way, may depict that cultural alternation presents some limitations, because its achievement requires to be culturally competent in more cultures (§ 2.3.2). Needless to say, this poses structural limitations to the number of cultural identities that may be played;

3. *alternation in the Odyssey*. Homers can be fruitful to this project as any other scholar in psychology, anthropology, sociology, or consumer studies. All these disciplines, in fact, share poetry's heart: the individual. Ulysses and the other characters in the *Odyssey* are suitable figures for theory generation and data interpretation. Cultural encounters, in fact, may be depicted as different seas that a person may wish or can be forced to cross. Individual resources are represented by the boat at the disposal of the traveler: social capital may sometimes resemble a trunk of wood; other times, it may be a wonderful but tricky ship, as the *Titanic* suggests; and, in other situations, it may be a comfortable and trusted boat. Nevertheless, the success of the trip does not fully depend on the boat, because weather conditions, pirates, or other threats (nymphs, witches, and other mythological creatures) may appear, all these factors resembling the role played by socio-environmental variables in the processes of cultural alternation. Various characters and different stages of the story finally represent the different identities and the various patterns of alternation, which individuals may show. And the Trojan war recalls the blood and conflict that many cultural adaptation paths present.

These metaphors probably grasp the meanings of cultural adaptation, and alternation in particular, better than hundreds pages of theory. Now going back to the a priori model, I expect that individuals may develop different alternating patterns, which can be framed in terms of:

1. *rate of achievement*. Also in this case I rely on a contribution outside the managerial realm. In particular, I go back to Aristotle's "Poetics", and the related definition of two main dramaturgic registers: tragedy and comedy. Comedy can be defined as a drama in which the initial complexity of the script is progressively solved and

terminates in a final happy end. Therefore, comedy, in this classical sense, does not necessarily imply fun or laughs, but it explicitly refers to the characters' capability of getting rid of complexity. On the other hand, tragedy is framed as a situation where complexity, both original or overcome at a certain stage of the story, cannot be solved by the characters. In some cases, it may even get worse. Relying on this Aristotelian classification, I acknowledge the complexity that cultural alternation implies (LaFromboise et al., 1993), and suggest that three possible ends of alternation may be: "tragic" alternation, whenever cultural complexity is not fully overcome; "comic" alternation, in situations of happy ending achieved through cognitive elaboration of cultural complexity; "fantasy" alternation; if complexity is elaborated in the light of religious, symbolic, or ethical principles that support a reconciliation with complexity. In this last case, complexity is not necessarily solved, but it is mystically accepted;

2. *ways of cultural identity combination*. Finally, it can be hypothesized that alternation may occur in pure forms, that is, alternatively presenting an identity consistent with the ethnic culture or the host one. In this research, which focuses on food consumption, I operationalize this "polarized" form of alternation saying that it occurs whenever a person cooks and eats only Egyptian foods in certain situations, and Italian foods in others. On the contrary, I would call "fusion" alternation the situation in which, at the same time, a person makes reference to two or more cultural identities. Again, in this project I will infer fusion alternation in presence of foods of different ethnic traditions consumed together, or, for example, of Egyptian recipes used to prepare Italian foods.

After this diffused discussion on the linkages between cultures and consumer identity, a general review of consumer literature on these related aspects is going to be traced (chapter 3). On the basis of the both theoretical and methodological shortcomings, then, I am going to design my research project (chapter 4).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Disciplinary contributions

This chapter shows double aims. On one hand, it admits the plurality of disciplines that play a fundamental role in the understanding of the relationship mind, behavior, and culture. On the other, it leads to a brief but systematic literature review of ethnic studies in consumer behavior, in order to define major contributions and limitations. Referring to disciplinary approaches, despite a general acknowledgment of the *multivocality of contributions* (§ 3.1.1), our attention is going to be devoted to the specific combination of psychological and consumer studies. In particular, within the psychology stream of research preference is accorded to the so-called cross-cultural, cultural, and, more recent, transcultural psychology (§ 3.1.2).

On the side of *literature review*, then, despite frequent references have already been recalled in previous discussion, here a more systematic elaboration of this field of studies is offered (§§ 3.2.1 - 3.2.5). Beyond a general interest for theory systematization, if possible, my major concern is to depict emerging theoretical (§ 3.2.6) and methodological (§ 3.3.1) shortcomings in ethnic studies, with a consequent introduction to the peculiar goals of this project (chapter 4) and the elaboration of a new methodological paradigm (§ 3.3.2).

3.1.1 Multivocality of contributions

Culture and ethnicity have been approached by a variety of disciplines, which are principally represented by anthropology, sociology and psychology (Ogden, Ogden, & Schau, 2004). If anthropology and sociology have been precious in gaining a better understanding of the “group factors of acculturation” (mobility, social interactions and pressures, socialization, etc.), psychology has gained a rich explanation of the “individual factors of acculturation” (perceptive, values, personality and attitudinal changes). In particular, the application of social psychology has shown to marketers and marketing scholars the central role played by cultural variations in the way the world is perceived and behaviors take place (Manstead, 1977; Gore, 1998).

Venkatesh (1995) explicitly points out that these various disciplines have all been characterized by the systematic application of cross-cultural logics in approaching cultural and ethnic studies. Despite this almost shared methodological similarity, major differences can be traced. Briefly summarizing and, somehow, simplifying the question, anthropology has steadily maintained an interest for the exploration of other cultures and, only more recently, it has also turned its attention towards the anthropologists' own cultures. On the other side, psychology and sociology have been investigating human beings both in their individual and socialized dimensions. Nevertheless, all these disciplines have been frequently applying their mono-cultural frameworks to cross-cultural settings, and have therefore shown high rates of theoretical and methodological ethnocentrism. An exception has recently come from social psychology, where new streams of research such as cross-cultural psychology (Berry & Dasen, 1974; Segall et al., 1990), cultural psychology (Cole, 1996; Cole & Engeström, 1993; Schweder, 1990), or transcultural psychology (Berry et al., 1992; Inghilleri, 1994; Terranova-Cecchini, 1991) have spread a renewed concern for the native's point of view (Geertz, 1983) and the risk of ethnocentrism. Generally speaking, these three cultural approaches in psychology are quite different in goals, the first moving from an etic perspective, the second from an emic one, and the last being based on a derived etic logic (Inghilleri, 1994; Moscardino & Axia, 2001). Still all of them, though to different extents due to variations in their ground tenets, move from the assumption that the individual psychological behavior is shaped by cultural factors, and call for a test on the generalizability of psychological laws.

A further aspect makes the picture even more complex. In fact, beyond the plurality of disciplines, within each of them an even more multifaceted world can be detected. Just to grasp this point, an example can be taken, on the basis of what Holt (1998) observed in the sole stream of sociology of culture. In fact, according to him, at least three major theoretical contributions can be detected, including:

1. *Max Weber* (1978). Weber was the first to enrich the concept of "social class" stating that the sole economic dimension, accurately analyzed by Marx, could not give a comprehensive idea of what social classes are. He therefore developed a multidimensional construct of social class, stating that the reputational groupings of

individuals in a society depends on economic factors, morals, culture, lifestyles, and other social settings;

2. *Lloyd Warner* (Warner et al., 1949). This author developed an anthropological approach, called “evaluated participation”, trying to detect what are the criteria that people in a given society use in order to judge the reputation of their fellow townspeople;
3. *Pierre Bourdieu* (1984). According to Holt (1998), the most influential advance in sociology of culture belongs to Bourdieu. The main contributions of his theoretical system includes the following tenets: social life leads individuals in a multidimensional status game, where each of them can rely on three different resources, including economic resources (financial resources), social capital (relationships, organizational affiliations, networks), and cultural capital (set of socially rare and distinctive tastes, skills, knowledge, and practices); cultural capital has three main manifestations, including the implicit (practical knowledge, skills, dispositions), objectified (artifacts and cultural objects in general), and institutionalized (official degrees and diplomas that certify the implicit knowledge and skills) dimensions; the subjective embodiment of these cultural resources gives rise to the so-called “habitus”, which can be defined as a fungible system of schema used both to classify social reality and orient behavior; cultural capital and the connected construct of habitus, however, have no sense out of the specific “field” they belong to. Bourdieu, in fact, points out that our society is dominated by different fields (politics, arts, business, education, etc.), each of them affecting the forms of the valuable cultural resources that can be spent in it; consumption objects are selected on the basis of peculiar tastes (likes and dislikes), which result from the specific cultural capital. Consumption objects are no longer selected based on a strategic planning for class demarcation, but are the resultant of aesthetic and interactional consumption where the level of cultural capital conditions the individual’s capability of consuming objects.

Concluding, Holt suggests that his theory of American consumption, with a couple of adaptations, can be formulated only on the basis of these multiple contributions.

In that light, the field of ethnic studies in consumption, as much as the realm of consumer behavior research in general, has run the risk of being confused by such an astonishing multiplication of disciplinary contributions. As previously theorized by philosophers like Kierkegaard, the exponential multiplication of possibilities, in this case associated with the availability of an almost infinite number of theoretical grounds, can increase the risk of paralysis. Therefore, consumer researchers may be tempted to reduce this complexity and rely on the sole ground of marketing studies, or they may also incur in rigid definitions of boundaries among disciplines. "These specializations have caused researchers to put on blinders, with psychologists appropriating the study of the human mind, sociologists the social order, and anthropology the culture. For the typical researcher, these distinctions have become rather cumbersome because reality is not partitioned that way, even though university departments are (Goody, 1993)." (Venkatesh, 1995: 30). On that base, it is arguable that any study in that field requires a more integrated and flexible integration of disciplines in order to achieve a better understanding of consumer phenomena as a reflection of cultural phenomena. Among these multiple disciplines, nevertheless, I wish to thank the contributions of cultural psychology, which is briefly presented in the following paragraph.

3.1.2 The psychological contribution: Cross-cultural, Cultural and Transcultural Psychology

The importance of Peñaloza's work to the framing of my project has already been acknowledged. Our studies essentially share theoretical interest, methodological design, and a multidisciplinary vocation, still having also distinctive characteristics (§ 2.4.1). With reference to disciplinary eclecticism, Peñaloza (1989) admits that to the study of consumer acculturation both cultural psychology and social psychological are fundamental. On the side of *social psychology*, she posits the relevance of socialization theory. Socialization occurs both at a primary level, when the taken-for-granted and frequently unconscious first "view of the world" pattern is developed typically within the family, and at a secondary level, when successive processes induce new socialization in order to cope with other social environments. Referring to consumer studies, the researcher's attention has to be put on the sole consumer socialization processes, which represent the path leading each individual to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and attitudes to act as a consumer in the

marketplace (Ward, 1974). Besides, with specific reference to immigrant consumers, socialization acquires the meaning of cultural adaptation in a multicultural consumer environment. Such a process of cultural adaptation in the marketplace may lead both to conforming and separatist forms of consumer learning.

On the side of what she comprehensively calls *cultural psychology*, the major contribution comes out of the work on consumer acculturation, as a subset of the more general issue of individual acculturation, which has been traditionally analyzed in the specific case of migrants. At the individual level, different stages of acculturation have been proposed (honeymoon, rejection, tolerance, and integration; Olberg, 1960), even if their order and progression may differ according to individual and contextual factors.

From now on, the relevance of cultural psychology to my project of research is simply taken for granted. Nevertheless, cultural studies in psychology do not all share the same assumptions and methodological views (Shweder, 1990; Segall, 1993). Therefore, a brief explanation of the main streams detectable in this field is required, in order to address those paradigms that more suitably fit the inquired phenomenon.

At a preliminary level, two dominating schools can be juxtaposed, that is, the “cross-cultural” (Berry & Dasen, 1974; Segall et al., 1990) and the “cultural” schools (Cole, 1996; Cole & Engeström, 1993; Schweder, 1990). At the same time, the emerging of a third school is argued, and goes under the label of “transcultural” psychology (Berry et al., 1992; Inghilleri, 1994; Terranova-Cecchini, 1991). Transcultural psychology, in particular, is going to be presented as an attempt of reconciliation of the other two streams, which in fact rely on strikingly different grounds. In particular, the distance between cross-cultural and cultural psychology can be appreciated on the basis of the following theoretical and methodological aspects (Inghilleri, 1994; Moscardino & Axia, 2001):

1. *cultural absolutism versus cultural relativism*. First, the relationship among mind-behavior-culture can be explored relying on the assumption that the fundamental psychological processes are shared among human beings, and are therefore universal. In that case, nevertheless, a general acceptance of the mediation of culture on human behaviors is somehow maintained, but still the major determinant of behavior is represented by the biological base. For example, it is argued that some basic psychological processes (i.e., language, thinking, and perceptions) are

shared in any place or time, and therefore sustain the hypothesis of a biological foundation of behavior. On the contrary, cultural relativism rests on the idea that human beings show fundamental psychological differences, which can be explained on the sole base of differences in cultural contexts. The relativistic approach is inherited from anthropology, and aims at eliminating any ethnocentric approach to cultural studies, where ethnocentrism has been originally defined as a combination of researcher's cultural domination, which emerges from the adoption of the researcher's cultural schema, and of moral judgment, whenever the researcher develops a conviction of cultural superiority (Sumner, 1906);

2. *emic versus etic orientation*. The distinction between emic and etic was theorized by the anthropologist Pike (1967), and applied in psychology by French (1963) and Berry (1969). This dichotomy was imported from linguistics, and therefore the distance between etic and emic logics is the same existing between phonetics and phonemics. If phonetics is the study of general rules of human language, then an etic approach in psychology is characterized by its intention of detecting universals in the functioning of human mind and behaviors at large. On the contrary, phonemics can be defined as the study of the peculiar sounds present in a given language, and therefore reminds the search for a contextualized understanding of a given culture, which is pursued by emic studies in psychology. The distinction emic-etic is then closely related to the dichotomy relativism-absolutism.

The juxtaposition between cross-cultural and cultural psychology can be then framed as the opposition between a universalistic and etic attempt of extending psychological laws across cultures, and a relativistic and emic acceptance of the identification culture-behavior. A comprehensive comparison of cross-cultural and cultural psychology is presented in table 5, and a brief distinction is also discussed in the following part of the paragraph.

Roughly speaking, *cross-cultural psychology* can be defined as the mainstream field of study, which aims at stretching the validity of psychological laws over cultural boundaries, through and objective comparison of individuals belonging to different cultures. Its three main theoretical hypotheses are (Moscardino & Axia, 2001):

1. *culture is an external index*. Cross-cultural psychologists are closer to the traditional post-positivistic scientific schema, assuming that culture can be framed as the independent variable, being a system of factors that “precede” behavior (Poortinga, 1997). Consequently, behaviors and psychological functionings are the dependent variable, which is investigated across different cultures in order to detect analogies and differences. Culture and behavior are therefore distinguishable (Inghilleri, 1994);
2. *absolutism and etic approach*. Cross-cultural psychology rests on the tenet that universal psychological processes exist, even if their expression can be culturally mediated. It could be said that cross-cultural psychology is therefore interested in studying the cultural origins of individual differences in those human functionings assumed as universal;
3. *comparative logic*. Cross-cultural studies are typically based on the comparison among different cultures, as analogies (universal traits) and differences (cultural variations in the expression of these universal traits) represent the main research goal. These studies are usually quantitative and assume a quasi-experimental design.

Concluding, it can be argued that cross-cultural psychology is the scientific study of human behavior and its transmission, on the basis of how behaviors are shaped and influenced by social and cultural forces (Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, 1990). However, this search for universals, which in social research are simply known as external validity requisites (Bailey, 1994), does not lead to ethnocentrism. Cross-cultural psychology, in fact, does not reach universality through the application of an ethnocentric lens, but through the detection of the invariants or constants in psychological functionings across different cultures.

In a complementary way, *cultural psychology* aims at exploring cultural origins of the differences observed in individual psychological functioning and development, on the assumption that the individual and his culture are an inseparable unit of analysis. In detail, the distinctive theoretical tenets in culture psychology are the following:

1. *culture is a co-variant*. Within cultural psychology, culture is no longer conceived as an independent and external variable, but as a structural component of the individual. Therefore, the cause-effect relationship (independent-dependent variable logic) is abandoned, and substituted by the co-variation logic (individual differences

and cultures co-vary). “Mind, then, is in an important sense ‘co-constructed’ and distributed” (Cole, 1996: 104), and culture and behavior are neither distinguishable nor separable, being one the complement of the other. Culture is in fact interpreted as a mediation tool between the individual and his environment, as culture provides “artifacts” through which people can orient themselves in everyday life;

2. *relativism and emic approach*. Cultural psychology does not look for universal laws across cultures, as psychological functionings and behaviors are always interpreted as culturally specific. Put in Jahoda’s words (1992: 11), “Culture and behavior co-penetrate to the point that each behavior is necessarily cultural. For that reason, it is meaningless attempting to de-contextualize behavior trying to reach some invariant universals [that is, what is the same in every culture], because human beings are not conceivable without culture”;
3. *renounce to comparisons*. Given the specificity of each culture, cultural psychologists are not typically interested in running comparisons among different cultures. On the contrary, attention is shifted towards idiosyncratic expressions of the inquired cultural group.

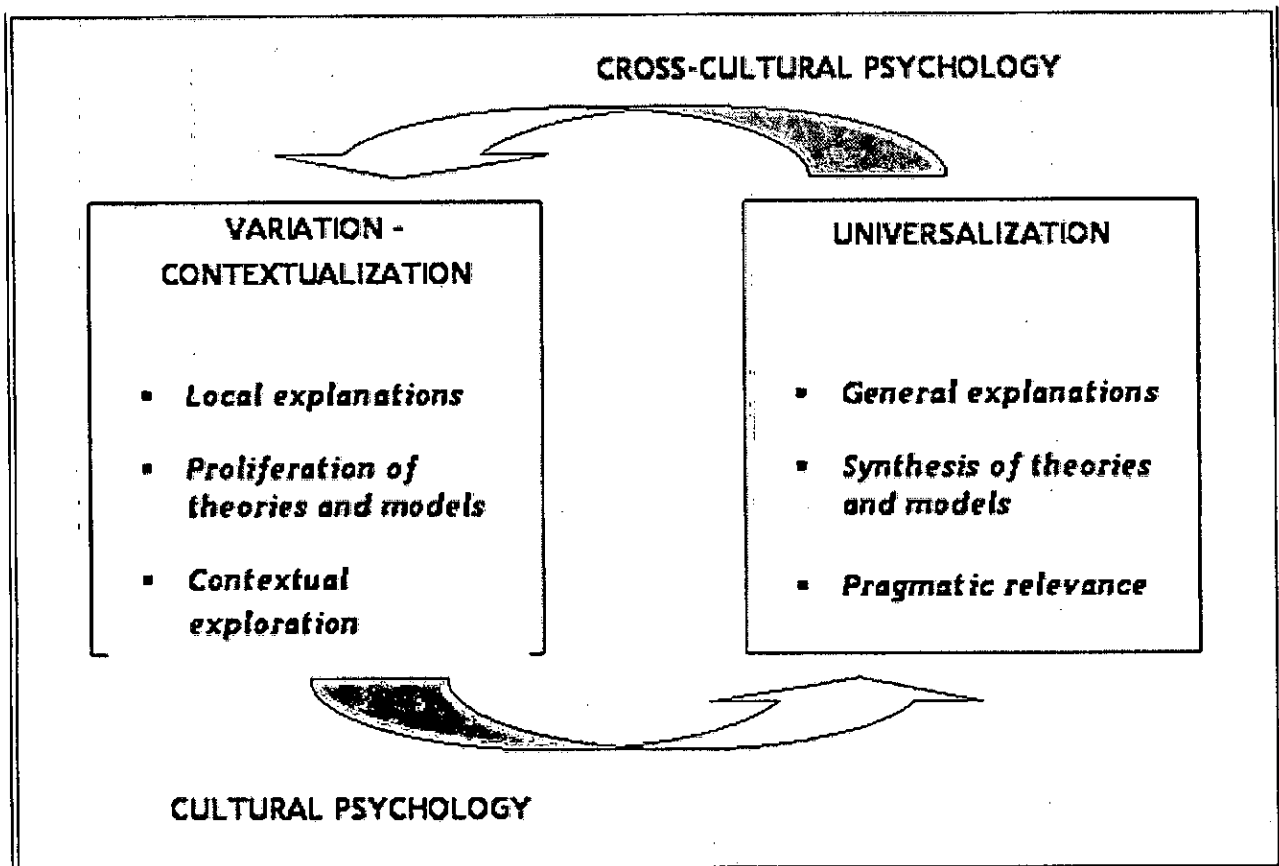
Table 5 - A comparison between cross-cultural and cultural psychology

	CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY	CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY
TENETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Culture is an external index ▪ Universality criterion ▪ Etic approach ▪ Comparative logic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Culture is a co-variant ▪ Relativistic criterion ▪ Emic approach ▪ Focalization on single cultures
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look for psychological invariants across different cultures ▪ Build a more universal psychology ▪ Remove an ethnocentric approach ▪ Detect the cultural variations in psychological invariants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look for the interaction culture-mind ▪ Build a more contextual psychology (local knowledge) ▪ Analyze the constitutive role of culture through the analysis of artifacts ▪ Look for some homogeneities across different cultures/psychologies (stretching of local “truths”)
ADVANTAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completeness and integration ▪ Cultural impact on mind and behaviors ▪ Attention to different cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dynamic perspective of the cultural evolution of the mind ▪ Exploration of cultural specificities ▪ Role of observation

DISADVANTAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Problems of translation in research ▪ Methodological ethnocentrism ▪ Absence of control variables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited external validity ▪ Difficulties in making comparisons across cultures ▪ Structural limits of ethnography
METHODS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Typically quantitative (experimental or quasi-experimental settings) ▪ Sampling: convenience sample; systematic sample; random sample ▪ Techniques: behavior observations; spot observations; diaries; questionnaires and interviews ▪ Mainly synchronic studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Typically qualitative (ethnography) ▪ Sampling: given a specific culture, selection of an insider and of other common people ▪ Techniques: ethnography; narratives and storytelling; video-recording ▪ Mainly longitudinal (diachronic) studies
AUTHORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Axia; Berry; Dasen; Poortinga; Segal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bruner; Cole; Liverta Sempio; Mantovani; Smorti

Source: elaboration on Moscardino & Axia (2001) and Poortinga (1997)

Figure 18 - Margins of integrations between cross-cultural and cultural psychology

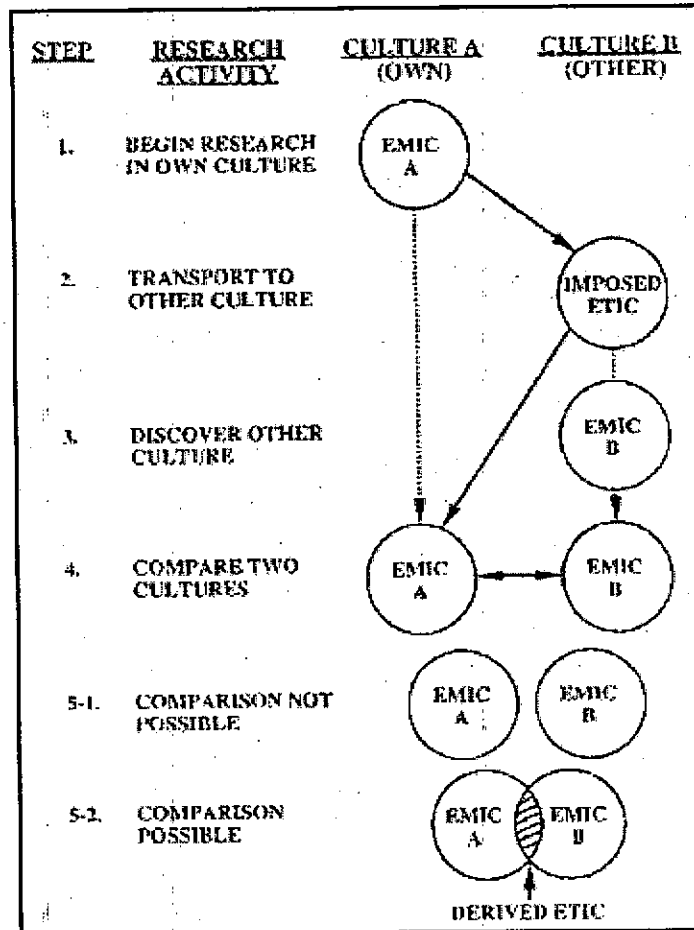


Epistemological and methodological dissimilarities between cross-cultural and cultural psychology have not been hidden. Nevertheless, should we argue that they are mutually exclusive frameworks, or do they *present a form of complementarity*? Still relying on distinctive assumption, these streams seem to be converging into a single river of knowledge. In fact, on one hand cross-cultural psychology starts from the search for universal laws, but then looks for cultural differences in the ways these psychological universals are manifested in various cultural contexts. On the other hand, cultural psychology still privileges cultural specificities, but then tries to extend the scope of analysis looking for possible analogies in different cultures. In fact, pragmatically speaking, it would not be sensible to have a separate psychology for each possible culture. Therefore (fig. 18), these two mainstreams move from different tenets, but they both wish to find a healthy balance between the capability of extending results (universality) and the need for contextualization of findings (relativism).

An attempt of giving substance to this disciplinary integration is represented by *transcultural psychology*, which has been depicted as a science dealing with the complexity of the system man-context (Terranova-Cecchini, 1991). This new stream can be framed as a Hegelian synthesis, a sort of third way, which - instead of using only a biological (absolutism) or cultural (relativism) lens - performs an exploration of the connections mind-behavior-culture through a bio-cultural look. This half-way has been defined "universalism", and results from a combination of biology and culture, of etic and emic, of experimental methods and ethnographic ones (Inghilleri, 1994). By the way, the exploration of a compromising path to cultural studies in psychology is not so recent, and is grounded on the attempts of Triandis (1978) and Berry (1989). Triandis theorized the "combined emic" method: in an iterative logic, psychological studies can start from a general theory (etic), but then they may adapt methodological tools to the peculiarities of the cultural group under investigation. This leads to the adoption of emic methodologies, which should, in turn, lead to a new etic construct. Etic-emic-etic are therefore circularly interconnected. A similar result, but through a different path, has been achieved by Berry (1989), who formulated the principle of "derived etic". His assumption is that psychological studies may start promoting an emic perspective, that is, by applying the researcher's theoretical structures ("imposed etic") to an observed phenomenon. The researcher's emic

is then contrasted and compared to the emic of the inquired group or individual. If present, the shared elements in these two emics are defined as a “derived etic”, and represent a kind of common ground on which behaviors in the two cultures may be compared on a valid base (fig. 19).

Figure 19 - The path to derived etic



Source: Berry (1989: 730)

This project is consistent with a transcultural perspective, and acknowledges the necessity of integration between the exploration of bio-cultural determinants of human behavior and an investigation of “subjective experience” (Inghilleri, 1994): motivation (Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1975) and flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; 1982; 1988), in particular. In different terms, I am not only interested in knowing *what* are the drivers of consumer alternation in the marketplace, but I do wish to explore *how* consumers react to cultural alternation in terms of cognitive and affective responses.

3.2 State of the art and new challenges

The contribution of psychology to cultural and ethnic studies have been largely detailed. At the same time, a systematization of consumer literature in that field is needed, in order to give a more structured idea of research directions, and to acknowledge possible shortcomings. I start from a brief redefinition of the boundaries of ethnic studies, as the role of ethnicity on consumption has been somehow contextualized both to situations and product category (§ 3.2.1). I then proceed along a detailed literature review (§§ 3.2.2 - 3.2.5), to end with a synthesis of the main theoretical lacks. Finally, I briefly acknowledge methodological limits in ethnic studies, which in fact have been principally relying on a cross-cultural approach (§ 3.3.1), and propose a complementary method I call “cultural crossing” (§ 3.3.2).

3.2.1 Reshaping and constraining the boundaries of ethnic studies

If the relevance of culture in consumer studies is no longer questionable, some caveats still have to be put forward. In fact, despite a similar general conclusion enforcing the idea that “consumption is ethnically bound”, Laroche, Kim, & Tomiuk (1998: 145) suggest that *the role of ethnic identity may vary across situations and products*. Therefore, they tend to circumscribe the role and the weight of culture in consumer behavior according to specific categories of consumption and/or to given context variables. As they explicitly conclude, “Finally, some sociological research findings have suggested that ethnic identity is only salient in certain conditions and is therefore transient. For instance, Frideres and Goldenberger (1982, p. 146) have concluded that ‘ethnicity is not a crucial feature of Canadian life across country as is often claimed.’ They found that the salience of importance of ethnic identity reached its highest levels under specific conditions: travel, religious or secular holidays, and with family (Frideres and Goldenberger, 1982). Similarly, Breton (1978, p. 60) has reported that ‘(only) certain areas of a person’s life involve his or her ethnicity.’ This perspective holds that ethnic identity is not a fixed process but rather an emergent and adaptive response to structural conditions (Yancey et al., 1980). Perhaps, a potential model of consumption and ethnic change lies not only in product evaluation but

also in the seemingly chaotic perspective on changing ethnicity that is held by these sociologists” (Laroche et al., 1998: 145). In a similar way, Melanie Wallendorf and Michael Reilly (1983) have already argued that assimilation may occur in different ways with reference to different products. This means that the impact of cultures (culture of origin and host culture) on consumption patterns cannot be generalized, but that it calls for a constant analysis of products types, attributes, and contexts of consumption.

On the side of situational factors, the role of culture in consumption praxis is more clearly cut in the work on situational ethnicity developed by Stayman & Deshpande (1989) and by Zmud & Acre (1992). Relying on situational research (Belk, 1974a: 1974b; 1975; Bonner, 1985; Lutz & Kakkar, 1975; 1976), this stream of studies tends to enforce the awareness that ethnicity has to be approached in a more subjective way (the so-called “felt ethnicity”) and it has to be contextualized. In fact, consumers rely on their cultural identities in different ways according to various situations. This reduces the possibility of large generalizations on the relationship between culture and consumption, and calls for more focused investigations.

On the side of product categories, then, Ogden, Ogden, & Schau (2004) strongly underline that cultural studies in consumer behavior are still very weak on this regard. Therefore, instead of circumscribing the object of research in terms of situational variables, they prefer to promote a higher attention to different product categories, typically marked in terms of utilitarian and symbolic products (Midgley, 1983). In detail, that means investigating the impact of consumer acculturation on different typologies of products. In fact, over the years these studies have been more traditionally exploring products belonging to the category of symbolic/expressive goods (food and clothing, in particular), whereas a better understanding of functional/utilitarian products is needed. At the same time, it could be sensible to understand whether the distinction between expressive and utilitarian items is a function of product category - as typically argued by international literature - or whether it may be a resultant of the context of purchase/consumption and/or of other individual variables. In the last case, in fact, the institutionalized distinction between utilitarian/expressive artifacts would no longer hold, because the same object may show to a given consumer a functional versus a symbolic

usage in different situations, or the same object may be invested by a utilitarian versus a symbolic significance by different consumers. In a way, this point has already been addressed by Holt (1997; 1998), when building a new theoretical paradigm, called “poststructuralist”, he detected a major shift of interest in consumer research. According to Holt, in fact, it is preferable to move attention from the objectified forms of cultural capital (what is consumed) to consumption practices (how consumer objects are consumed). If the “what” of consumption tends to lose importance to the advantage of the “how” of consumption, the new researcher’s interest coincides with the investigation of the significance attached by consumers to their choices. Consumption objects can then be interpreted as polysemic meaning containers, and the detection of these meanings can only rely on an intrasubjective rather than objective method. Besides, people sharing the same consumption practices need not necessarily consume the same consumption objects.

3.2.2 The monotonicity hypothesis

Ethnic identity is not an easily forgettable component of individual and consumer identity. In fact, maintenance of a sense of belonging to an ancestral ethnicity may occur regardless of time of residency and immigration experience. In a critical ethnographic analysis conducted for four years in two major US towns, Peñaloza (2003) tried to detect whether the condition of border crossing is only typical of Mexican immigrants, or whether it is still detectable within Mexican Americans, who only have Mexican origins but are born in the US. Her findings support the idea that also Mexican Americans still keep bicultural skills they employ in the marketplace.

On that base, if ethnicity is a salient trait of consumers’ identity, how can the relationship between ethnic origin and consumer acculturation in a new cultural market be framed? Is this relationship *subtractive*, or does it show a different connotation? Attempts of answering to this question have led to the formulation, and the later critical condemn, of the so-called “monotonicity hypothesis”, which represents one of the major tenet in ethnic studies in consumer behavior.

How can the monotonicity hypothesis (Schaninger, Bourgeois, & Buss, 1985), which has given rise to the linear *bipolar model of ethnic identity*, be formulated? Basically, it can be

framed as the assumption of a linear relationship that may be activated between ancestral ethnicity and host culture. In different words, the relationship between a consumer's double cultural identities, one linked to ethnic ancestry and the other related to the acculturating context, would be subtractive, that is, structured on a "win-lose" logic. The acceptance of new cultural traits, as a result of cultural adaptation (Berry, 1980; Padilla, 1980), would in fact lead to a consequent loss in terms of ancestral ethnic identity. One culture loses, whereas the other one wins, and the territory to be conquered is represented by the consumer's mind and behaviors.

In particular, *on the side of behavior*, the linear bipolar model suggests that consumption patterns are predictable in terms of consumer's positioning along the continuum of acculturation, whose extremes are expressed by strong ethnic identification and, on the opposite side, full acculturation (assimilation; O'Guinn and Faber 1996; Rossman, 1994; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983). The higher the rate of consumer acculturation, the closer their consumption patterns to those of autochthonous consumers.

Under a historical point of view, research design of several consumer studies have rested, implicitly or not, on this assumption (Schaninger, Bourgeois, & Buss, 1985), as in the case of Hirschman's (1981) pioneering work on Jewish consumers in America. Nevertheless, later attempts of empirical test on the monotonicity hypothesis have not provided complete support, if not a drastic fall (Deshpande, Hoyer, & Donthu, 1986; Kim, Laroche, & Joy, 1990; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983). To quote a couple of cases, Wallendorf & Reilly's seminal study (1983) on Mexican-American radically criticized the possibility of confirming the monotonicity hypothesis, and therefore definitively rejected the idea of a linear progression from culture of origin to host culture. Their findings, in fact, sustained the impression that immigrants may acculturate in ways leading them to the adoption of unique cultural styles, which cannot be interpreted as pure blends of ancestral and host cultures but as something totally new. "In many cases the consumption patterns of Mexican-Americans are unlike those either of their culture of origin or of their culture of residence. Apparently, the assimilation process is more than a simple linear progression from one culture to another" (Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983: 300). A further critical empirical disconfirmation came from the work of Kim et al. (1990) on English-French Canadians. In their study, these authors concluded that the monotonicity hypothesis is contradicted, as

distinct clusters of English-French consumers show different consumption patterns, which cannot be positioned along a linear continuum. This is close to the findings of Wallendorf & Reilly (1983), who claim that “immigrant adaptation is neither like the culture of origin nor the culture of residence but lies somewhere in between” (Kim et al., 1990: 839).

Some years later but in less drastic forms, Deshpande et al. (1986) commented on the monotonicity hypothesis, and concluded that it is only partially supported by empirical data. This led the authors to the formulation and adoption of a linear bipolar model of ethnic affiliation and acculturation, which has been later criticized by Laroche et al. (1998). Laroche et al., in fact, suggested that ethnicity is not a linear construct, being a multidimensional one: From a linear bipolar model, therefore, it is necessary to move towards a *multidimensional model of ethnic change*, where the differences between the two can be described as follows:

1. linear bipolar model. It assumes that ethnic identity and assimilation are two ends of the same continuum, being acquisition of the host cultural traits concomitant with the loss of ethnic identity. This is also known as assimilation hypothesis (Keefe & Padilla, 1987; Phinney, 1990). Bipolar scales and total scores of acculturation rate come out to be suitable methodological devices within this frame;
2. multidimensional model. Ethnic identity and assimilation are multidimensional constructs and do not coincide. Adaptation is a bi-level process, being a combination of maintenance and loss of traditional culture, and of gain of new cultural traits (Berry, 1980; Berry et al., 1992; Dohrenwend & Smith, 1962; Garcia & Lega, 1979). Consequently, multidimensional models lead to the formulation of typologies of cultural adaptation instead of scores. What has been previously defined as acculturation strategies (Berry et al., 1989) or psycho-social destinies of adaptation (Inghilleri, 2004).

Although numerous studies in consumer behavior have been based on the linearity and monotonicity assumptions (Lee & Ro Um, 1992), the idea that acculturation is necessarily a unidirectional and linear process can no longer be retained. Under a theoretical point of view, this means that future research has to be grounded on multidimensional models of ethnic change and cultural adaptation, which are consistent with a “win-win” logic of the connections mind-behavior-cultures. In different words, individuals and consumers may gain

from cultural encounters, and learn to live with a more multifaceted and complex identity, as suggested by the alternation frame (LaFromboise et al., 1993).

On the side of future streams of research, the so far prevalence of studies based on linearity and monotonicity enlightens that acculturation dynamics on the side of the host society are unexplored (Berry, 1980; Ogden et al., 2004), and that immigrants' alternative paths to assimilation still need to be better investigated. These represent new possible frontiers to scholars in the ethnic arena.

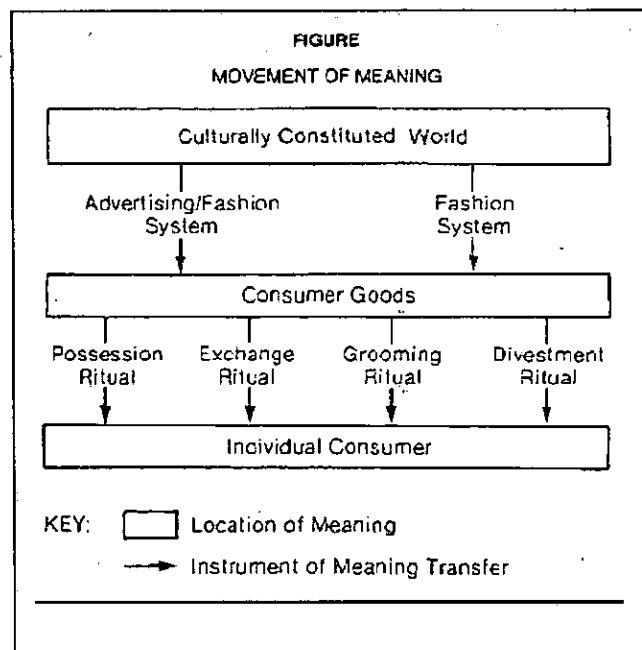
3.2.3 Cultural loci and mechanisms of cultural transfer

A second major tenet in cultural and ethnic studies has been the substantiation of culture, and the ways culture is transferred, shared, and transformed overtime. In particular, I start addressing the definition of the "*loci*" in which culture can be observed (McCracken, 1986). The issue of cultural loci and the mechanisms of cultural transmission have been central in McCracken's milestone work (fig. 19). "There are, in other words, three locations of meaning: the culturally constituted world, the consumer good, and the individual consumer, as well as two movements of transfer: world-to-good and good-to-individual." (McCracken, 1998: 72). In detail, cultural loci can be described as follows:

1. *the culturally constituted world*, which derives from the combination of cultural categories and cultural principles. Cultural categories are defined as the "conceptual grid of a culturally constituted world" (1986: 73), "representing the basic distinctions that a culture uses to divide up the phenomenal world" (1986: 72). They include the cultural categorization of space (e.g., occasions), time (e.g., work versus leisure, second versus millennium, etc.), nature (e.g., flora, fauna, landscape, etc.), and person (e.g., sex, gender, class, status, occupation, etc.). In turn, cultural principles play as the principles of categorization. In fact they can be defined as the "organizing ideas by which the segmentation is performed. Cultural principles are the charter assumptions that allow all cultural phenomena to be distinguished, ranked, and interrelated" (1986: 73). In different words, they represent the "how" and "why" of cultural categories, that is, why and how certain categories result from a certain culture. These values are substantiated through material objects too. Despite the invisibility of cultural categories and principle, they are typically

- substantiated through material objects, and consumer goods in particular, which therefore show a “performative” function (Austin, 1963; Tambiah, 1977);
2. *consumer goods*, which have been representing a privileged locus of cultural meaning since anthropological analysis of artifacts started. Such a cultural nature of goods is sometimes conscious to consumers, whenever they use goods as communicative signs. On the contrary, the cultural nature of goods is sometimes unconscious and implicit, but can still reach the level of consciousness in peculiar situations, as in cases of sudden loss of these goods (rubbery, divestment, impoverishment);
 3. *the individual consumer*. Despite the great interest and the consequently huge amount of literature on the first two locations of cultural meaning, the consumer’s mechanisms of cultural appropriation are still a rather neglected area of research. These mechanisms are useful devices to grasp the meaningful properties of goods by individual consumers, under the assumption that consumers use goods in order to shape both their selves and the world.

Figure 19 - Cultural loci and movements of cultural meanings transfer



Source: McCracken (1988: 72)

McCracken’s three-partite distinction for the locations of cultural meaning recalls to memory Bourdieu’s theory (1984) on the three forms of cultural capital, as synthesized by Holt (1998). In fact, Bourdieu distinguishes three constituents of cultural capital, including

institutionalized, objectified, and subjective/embodied cultural capital. These components can respectively be put in parallel to McCracken's loci of cultural meaning: the culturally constituted world, where institutionalization takes place; consumer goods, which represent Bourdieu's idea of culture objectification; and the individual consumer, as the location of the subjectified cultural endowment.

A further tenet in theory is that culture is not stable and immutable. "(...) Ethnographic, historical, and archeological data indicate that sociocultural systems have undergone a high degree of parallel and convergent evolution" (Harris, 1999: 144-145). Despite a personal denial of any evolutionary theory applied to culture, the perennial transformation of culture has largely been acknowledged. Then, what are the *mechanisms facilitating the continuous transfer of cultural meanings, from one locus to the others?* The everlasting circulation of cultural meanings, through which culture is steadily renewed and shared, has been framed by McCracken (1986; 1988), who postulated that cultural meaning constantly moves from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods, and then from consumer goods to individual consumers (fig. 19). At these two stages of cultural transfer different and peculiar mechanisms of transmission are attached:

1. *world-to-goods*. A first shift of cultural meaning results from the transfer world-to-goods, which may be caused by:
 - advertising, which accomplishes a principle of "symbolic equivalence" between consumer goods and cultural categories, trying to conjoin these two elements through the ad. Typically, the good is given whereas the cultural category to be linked is partially given (relying on market research) and partially free (depending on creativity);
 - fashion system, which can diffuse symbolic equivalence, as advertising does, invent new cultural meanings, or radically reform existing cultural meanings. The main actors supporting the fashion system are designers, who manage both symbolic and physical aspects of goods but who cannot directly communicate with the consumer, and fashion journalists/social observers, who only manage symbolic aspects of goods but can directly communicate to the consumer;

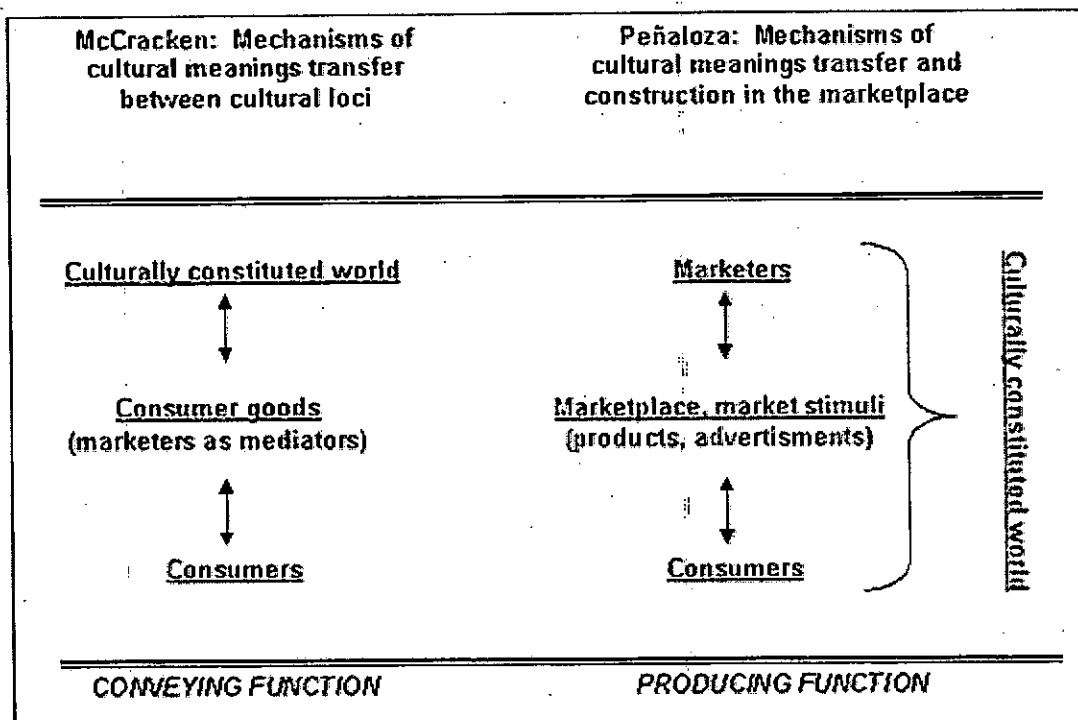
2. *goods-to-individual consumer*. At this stage, cultural transfer is granted by means of personal rituals, defined as “a kind of social action devoted to the manipulation of cultural meaning for purposes of collective or individual communication and categorization. Ritual is an opportunity to affirm, evoke, assign, or revise conventional symbols and meanings of cultural order (1986: 78)”. In short, personal rituals are used to transfer meaning contained in goods to the individual consumer, including:

- exchange rituals (Sahlins, 1972; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991) which occur whenever a gift-giver transfers a consumer good (gift) to a gift-receiver, in order to shift the meaning attached to the gift. This ritual may include the gift, the presentation, and the context (time and space). In the current research project, for example, some room has been devoted to the analysis of food as a gift;
- possession rituals, which occur whenever a consumer-owner retrieves a good’s meaningful properties to him/herself. Possession rituals move cultural meaning out of the goods possessed into the life of their owner, being both an expression of territoriality and of meaning appropriation;
- grooming rituals, which are performed in order to cope with the perishable nature of consumer goods. If goods are perishable, so the meaning attached to them. Therefore, consumer may adopt grooming rituals both to him/herself (e.g., dressing and preparing for “going out”) and/or to the good (e.g., cleaning and taking care of one’s automobile) in order to grant a continual process of meaning transfer from goods to consumer;
- divestment rituals, which occur both to empty goods of the meaning attached by the previous owner (e.g., when buying a new house) or to eliminate the meanings incorporated by the consumer when goods are eliminated or sold out (so-called disposition processes; Assael, 1987; Solomon, Bamossy, & Askegaard, 2002).

Within consumer behavior studies, another milestone contribution to the issue of cultural meanings circulation is linked to the name of Lisa Peñaloza. Her theoretical system is, on one hand, complementary and, on the other, partially contrasting to McCracken’s

one. Complementarity arises from her analysis of the “other side of the moon”, that is, the side of marketers. In fact, if her preliminary work - like McCracken did - was devoted to the processes of consumer acculturation (1989; 1994; 1995), during a further step in research she explored the mechanisms of acculturation that can be related to marketers, and the supply side of the market system as a whole (Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999). In fact, not only consumers, but the same producers, enjoy an experience of acculturation in a culturally constituted world.

Figure 20 - Comparison between McCracken and Peñaloza’s approaches to culture transfer



Source: elaboration on Peñaloza’s (2000)

On the other hand, the theoretical conflict with McCracken is in a way originated by this complementarity (fig. 20), because the role of marketers is more explicitly acknowledged and contributes to the construction of cultural meanings. Therefore, if McCracken theorized that marketers are simple mediators in the transfer of cultural meanings from the culturally constituted world to individual consumers, Peñaloza (2000) suggests that marketers have a much more active role in transforming marketing activities into cultural phenomena, consistently with Sherry’s findings (1995). In different words, McCracken depicted marketers’ “conveying” function,

which consists in transferring cultural meanings from the world to consumers, whereas Peñaloza argues that the marketplace is a distinct dimension, which originates from the stable negotiation and cultural exchange between marketers and consumers. Such an active involvement of marketers in the construction of cultural meanings in the marketplace can be labeled as a “producing” function. Through this lens of observation, “Attention is directed to the culturally productive properties of multiple agents in relation to one another, as a nexus of activities and discourses that constitute the marketplace and the larger cultural world” (Peñaloza, 2000: 104). The attribution of an active capability of modifying the cultural structure of the market is consistent with a constructionist view of reality (Gergen, 1994), in which reality is not perceived as it is per se, but it is constructed by means of discursive practices.

3.2.4 Theory shortcomings and new challenges

Previous discussion has acknowledged the mainstreams of theoretical contribution to the field of cultural and ethnic studies. As admitted, the connection mind-behavior-culture is a central tenet of several disciplines, which move from distinctive assumptions and methodological preferences, but find a place of convergence, a sort of “derived etics” (Berry, 1989), in which disciplinary multivocality and eclecticism build a fertile postmodern ground for the germination of new knowledge. Among these streams, I mostly, but not exclusively, rely on the support of cultural theories in consumption and on transcultural psychology, which show higher consistency with my research goals. A relatively detailed review of consumer ethnic studies and transcultural psychology findings have already been attempted. Even though any idea of evolution is opposed to postmodern definition of science (Brown, 1993; Podestà & Addis, 2004), still some issues require a better investigation. I propose to distinguish between four different categories of literature shortcomings, including: theoretical limitations at the individual level; theoretical limitations at the group or national level; research design fragilities of consumer ethnic studies; and methodological weaknesses in terms of theoretical approaches. The first three typologies are going to be discussed in the current paragraph, whereas the fourth point finds more suitable detail in the last part of this chapter (§§ 3.3.1, 3.3.2).

The *systematization of theoretical shortcomings* mainly refers to a couple of fundamental, and very recent indeed, contributions: Ogden, Ogden, & Schau (2004) published in the "Academy of Marketing Science Review", and Arnould & Thompson (2005) forthcoming in the March issue of the "Journal of Consumer Research". Both these papers represent a meta-analysis of previous contributions in the field of cultural and ethnic studies, and show an extensive investigation of the last twenty years of research. Still, they present a couple of differences. Ogden et al., in fact, perform a meta-analysis on publications appeared in different consumer reviews, taking into account also anthropological and some psychological publications. On the other hand, Arnould & Thompson privilege a careful and meticulous comparison among papers that have been published in JCR, given some minor exceptions. A further and even more relevant difference rests on the unit of their analysis. In fact, if Arnould & Thompson refer to the so-called Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), Ogden et al. focus on consumer acculturation studies. The distinction is not trivial, being CCT a wider and partially non-overlapping area of investigation if compared with acculturation research. Recalling these authors, CCT, far from being a unified grand theory, include all "theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationship between consumer action, the marketplace, and cultural meanings. (...). Rather than viewing culture as a fairly homogeneous system of collectively shared meanings, ways of life, and unifying values shared by a member of society (e.g., Americans share this kind of culture; Japanese share this kind of culture), CCT explores the heterogeneous distribution of meanings and the multiplicity of overlapping cultural groupings that exist within the broader socio-historic frame of globalization and market capitalism" (2005: 4-5)⁸. As a result, CCT acknowledges four main streams of studies: consumer identity projects, which deal with the ways consumers use products to forge a fragmented and multifaceted self; marketplace cultures, which depict consumer tribes (Cova, & Cova, 2002) or subgroups, as it happens for gays (Kates, 2002), Star Trek's fans (Kozinets, 2001), new bikers (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), or natural health consumers (Thompson & Troester, 2002); the socio-historic patterning of consumption, which explores the impact on consumption patterns of socio-institutional forces (ethnicity, gender, demography, etc.); and mass-mediated marketplace ideologies, which directly refer to the communication role in consumption decisions and experiences. Consumer acculturation

⁸ Pages refer to the unpublished version of the paper.

studies, on the other side, may find analogies with consumer identity and socio-historical theories, but still they show a stronger attachment to the case of cultural adaptation as a result of migration processes.

Keeping in mind these two milestones, and their distinctive characteristics, the first typology of shortcomings in consumer cultural and ethnic studies refers to *theoretical limitations at the individual level*, which include:

1. *the constitutive function of culture on individual and group identity*. As already more extensively discussed (§ 1.3.1), culture has been traditionally attributed a function of environmental influencer (Assael, 1987; d'Astous, 2002; Solomon et al., 2002). If the existence or relevance of external culture is not questioned at all, still a further and in my opinion even more important point is missing, that is, the constitutive nature of culture on individual and group identity, which can be collapsed into the construct of internal culture and the processes of psychological selection. This "creational" nature of culture has been clear to psychologists since very ancient times (Linton, 1945), but only recently has it been translated into managerial terms by a group of consumer scholars (Applbaum & Jordt, 1996; Belk, 1988; Costa & Bamossy, 1995; Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; Peñaloza, 1989; Venkatesh, 1995). Being the individual culturally structured, and being consumption a relevant but restricted dimension of human life, the connection between culture and consumption has then to be more extensively investigated;
2. *the consumer as an unruly bricoleur*. In postmodern times consumers have multiple cultural identities (Firat & Schultz II, 1997), and act as unruly bricoleurs (Holt, 2002), "who express personal sovereignty and claim to personal authenticity through nonconformist acts of consumption and thereby place the marketplace and its symbols at the center of their identities" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005: 14)⁹. I do not question whether this multiple structure of identity is typical of postmodern times or, as I think more plausible, it has been admitted only in postmodern times. Multiple identity requires a deeper investigation (§ 1.3.4) in terms of its partition principle (Elster, 1983), modes of interaction among the different selves (Ainslie, 1995; Sen, 1977), and its nature (Elster, 1995);

⁹ Page refers to the unpublished version of the paper.

3. *the cultural alternation dynamics and a RBV view of the individual.* If consumer identity is both culturally constructed and multiple in nature (Lee and Ro Um , 1992; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983), this may be true also in the case of immigrant consumers. Therefore, instead of framing their cultural adaptation process in terms of the acculturation/assimilation pattern, it is meaningful to admit more complex and rich acculturation strategies, as it happens in cases of cultural alternation (Berry, 1980; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Inghilleri & Delle Fave, 1996; Massimini et al., 1996; Inghilleri, 2004). In fact, despite the difficulties that an alternation exit of the adaptation path presents, alternation shows double or multiple forms of cultural competence (LaFromboise et al., 1993) and an extension of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Holt, 1998), which can be perceived as an enlargement in the individual's and consumer's resources. This may be consistent with the recent call for a Resource Based View of the consumer, as suggested by Arnould & Thompson (2005).

A second typology of literature shortcomings can be broadly addressed under the definition of *theoretical limitations at the group or national level*, and leads to:

1. *lack of analysis on the side of the dominant society.* As pointed out by Berry (1980), under a purely logical point of view, adaptation processes activated by the encounter of two cultural groups should take to transformations both in the dominated and in the dominant group. This has seldom been done (Ogden et al., 2004), because attention has principally fallen on the side of minorities, which are frequently asked to adapt to the new socio-cultural environment, both for political and marketing reasons. This enforces the need for an exploration of the other side of the moon, which under multiethnic pressures has more and more been changed into a multicultural society (Appadurai, 1990; Peñaloza, 2000; 2003);
2. *heterogeneity within borders, however traced.* Previous cultural and ethnic studies have been mainly cross-cultural in nature (Ogden et al., 2004). This has led to a lack of microcultural research and has limited a real understanding of variations within an inquired group (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), however defined (ethnicity, nation, etc.). On the side of ethnicity, for example, marketing literature has largely relied on broad categorizations of ethnicity, principally focusing on the main ethnic

minorities in the States (Hispanics, Asians, and Blacks). This tradition has taken to an underestimation of the variations that can be detected within subcultures (ethnic subgroups), which can be called "microcultures" (Ogden et al., 2004). Therefore, it looks sensible to develop new streams of research for intracultural differences and their impact on purchase decisions;

3. *dynamics in the developing countries*. Arnould & Thompson (2005) add that the globalization of consumer culture across national borders and its impact on the economies and consumption patterns of the developing countries is a relatively promising but rather neglected area of research (Arnould, 1989; Belk et al., 2003).

Cultural and ethnic studies in consumption present a third category of shortcomings I call *research design fragilities*, which include:

1. *space and time scope of research*. Andreasen (1990) points out that consumer acculturation studies have so far been devoted to short-term investigations and micro analysis, that is, to the understanding of the cognitive consumer and the individual processes of purchase and consumption. Studies in consumption have therefore to provide a richer investigation of cultural adaptation (Peñaloza, 1994), which he calls "cultural interpretation", and have to adopt a wider scope of analysis both temporally through long-term social changes analysis, and socially, paying attention to social transformations and interactions. "Our mission as consumer researchers should in fact be (...) to examine the relationship between consumer behavior and the rest of life" (Belk, 1986: 1);
2. *lack of integration*. Ogden et al. (2004) underline a lack of integration among the different consumer acculturation studies. The pulverization of studies has a double origin. On one hand, it is caused by the multiplicity of disciplines that have been researching on the issue of culture and consumer behavior: anthropology (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994; Sherry, 1990), sociology (Park, 1950; Gordon, 1964; D'Rozario & Douglas, 1999), and psychology (Berry, 1980; Berry, 1997; Fan, 1998), just to quote the mainstreams. A second explanation is related to the preference for perfectly focused studies, which, put together, do not provide a general explanatory model;
3. *measurement scales of acculturation*. Consumer acculturation has been traditionally operationalized through a variety of different factors. The most frequently used

include language (O'Guinn et al., 1986; Kim et al., 1990; Laroche et al., 1998), intermarriage (Waters, 1990), relational ties (Briley & Wyer, 2002; Jun et al., 1993; Tinson et al., 2004), ethnic attribution (Stayman & Deshpande, 1989), religion (Hirschman, 1981), and communication based measures, such as media usage (O'Guinn & Faber, 1985). At the same time, other measures have been proposed, including self-judgment scales (Dana, 1996; Deshpande et al., 1986; Hirschman, 1981; Stayman & Deshpande, 1989; Zmud & Arce, 1992) and psychological scales, which explore the psychological aspects of consumption and acculturation (Tropp et al., 1999), but behavioral indicators still remain the most widely used measures. Nevertheless, research on consumer acculturation scales still has to address several primary issues, such as the need for multidimensional measures (Laroche et al., 1998), the possibility of capturing microcultural variations within subcultures, and the necessity of scales empirical test (Ogden et al., 2004);

4. *extension of investigation to new product categories.* A final major gap refers to the necessity of exploring the impact of consumer acculturation on different typologies of products. However, this claim is not universally shared. On one hand, in fact, Ogden et al. (2004) acknowledge that acculturation studies in consumption have been principally devoted to symbolic and expressive products (Midgley, 1983), such as food and clothing. This would lead to the conclusion that a missing part is represented by functional and expressive products. By the way, this criticism can be accepted only if the distinction between functional versus symbolic product categories is assumed to be meaningful. I personally think that functional or symbolic use of products is more an attribute of the consumer than a predicate of product categories. Therefore, each consumer - individually or through his/her reference groups - decides how to consume a given product. Notable variations in the ways different consumers use a same product are then likely to appear. In a similar way, Holt (1997; 1998) sustains that consumer studies should not be too interested in researching what people consumer, but how they consumer and why.

A synthesis of theoretical and research design shortcomings is offered in table 6. This table also suggests which of these limitations can be addressed by the current research project. As an integrative part of discussion, the next two paragraphs explore methodological weaknesses in cultural and ethnic consumer studies.

TYPLOGIES	SHORTCOMINGS	REFERENCES	RESEARCH AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
THEORETICAL GAPS AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Constitutive function of culture 2. Consumer as an unruly bricoleur 3. Cultural alternation and consumer's RBV 	<p>Appelbaum & Jordt, 1996; Belk, 1988; Costa & Bamossy, 1995; Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; Linton, 1945; Peñaloza, 1989; Venkatesh, 1995</p> <p>Ainisie, 1995; Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Elster, 1983; 1995; Firat & Schultz II, 1997; Holt, 2002; Lee and Ro Um, 1992; Senn, 1977; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983</p> <p>Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Berry, 1980; Bourdieu, 1984; Holt, 1998; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Inghilleri & Delle Fave, 1996; Massimini et al., 1996; Inghilleri, 2004</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - focus on intrasomatic culture - exploration of the mechanisms of cultural elaboration on an individual level (psychological selection) - multiple self as a multicultural self
THEORETICAL GAPS AT GROUP/NATIONAL LEVEL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The lost side of the dominant society 	<p>Appadurai, 1990; Berry, 1980; Ogden et al., 2004; Peñaloza, 2000; 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in depth exploration of cultural alternation in terms of its determinants, nature, and possible outcomes - reliance on the notion of culture competence - processes of cultural alternation, explored on the side of migrants, can be extended to the dominant group, which is supposed to be multicultural
RESEARCH DESIGN FRAGILITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Heterogeneity within borders 6. Dynamics in developing countries 7. Time and space scope 8. Lack of integration 9. Measurement scales 10. Functional product categories 	<p>Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Ogden et al., 2004</p> <p>Arnould, 1989; Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Belk et al., 2003</p> <p>Andreassen, 1990; Belk, 1986; Peñaloza, 1994</p> <p>Ogden et al., 2004; Venkatesh, 1995</p> <p>Laroche et al., 1998; Ogden et al., 2004</p> <p>Ogden et al., 2004</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - investigation of individual patterns of cultural adaptation - Lifetime and ethnographic interviews (time and space) - Systematization of literature - Multidimensional measurement - Double scales on felt ethnicity

Table 6 - Literature shortcomings

3.3 The methodological fragility: from cross-cultural to cultural crossing

Ogden et al. (2004) enlighten how the impact of culture on consumer behavior has been largely explored through a cross-cultural perspective (Brass, 1991; McCarty & Hattwick, 1991; Hafstrom et al., 1992; Nakata & Sivakumar, 1996). This dominant methodological approach has been maintained instead of the dramatic changes that affect postmodern societies, both at a demographic and at a socio-economic level. Migration flows, the increasing number and relevance of ethnic minorities and minorities at large, tribalization of consumption (Cova & Cova, 2002), globalization and the connected dimension of localisms (Appadurai, 1990), the facilitation of access to information and products (Rifkin, 2001), all jeopardize traditional cultural methods and suggest to explore new directions. If the relevance of cross-cultural research is not questionable (Hofstede, 1980; Tan & Sheth, 1985; Van Raaij & Bamossy, 1993), it may be admitted that rethinking cross-cultural analysis seems to be a major concern in managerial studies (Lachman, 1997; Sagie & Elizur, 1998). The next paragraphs aims at providing the reader with a critical evaluation of cross-cultural shortcomings, and at shaping new possible scenarios for methodological innovation in the field of cultural studies (Clark, 1990; Venkatesh, 1995; Visconti, 2005).

3.3.1 Shortcomings of the cross-cultural approach

For the last twenty years, and even more, the debate on cross-cultural approach has been a hot issue on the agenda of anthropologists (Burton & White, 1987; Jorgensen, 1979; Vermeulen & de Ruijter, 1975), management scholars (Hofstede, 1980; Lachman, 1997; Sagie & Elizur, 1997), and international business researchers (Negandhi, 1983; Sekeran, 1983). This debate has sometimes led to the celebration of cross-cultural methods, which are considered to be the right lens to celebrate national differences - differences that are supposed to be observable and measurable in nature -, and to investigate how national traits impact on consumers' behaviors and marketers' decisions (Clark, 1990). At the same time, cross-cultural research has also been criticized, as leading to unacceptable generalizations on individuals or nations, or as a source of possible irrationality, inaccuracy, ethnocentrism, and even racism.

If a definition of culture is all but simple, much easier is *defining the cross-cultural methodological approach*. Cross-cultural research is comparative in nature and looks for analogies and differences across various nations on a given issue under investigation (consumption behaviors, product preferences, cognitive or managerial styles, attitudes toward hierarchy, etc.). Therefore, cross-cultural research is characterized in terms of strong focalization, multiple cultural settings (two or more nations to be compared), and detection of similarities/differences. Formally, it is definable as the stream of research having a "focus on statistical comparisons of a set of variables that were measured in samples drawn from different countries. Observed differences, or lack of differences, are then attributed to presumed cultural differences among the samples. Yet, the direct impact of culture, or any specific dimension of it, is not considered" (Lachman, 1997: 317). Although cross-cultural studies were born for and have been applied mainly to cross-national comparisons, they can also be used for the investigation of intranational differences, which can be detected across different ethnic groups (Andreasen, 1990; Ogden et al., 2004).

What are, then, the major *shortcomings* that cross-cultural methods have shown over time? Relying on literature review, it is possible to quote at least five main fragilities:

1. *homogeneity hypothesis*. One, or probably "the", ground assumption of cross-cultural studies is the more or less explicitly admitted homogeneity within observed nations or ethnic groups. On that base, Italians should share certain behaviors, as Egyptians, Americans, Blacks, or Jews do. If this assumption holds, then, any comparison between two or more nations or ethnicities becomes meaningful, as observed differences in behavior may be interpreted on a cultural base. In different words, given that each country shows a certain cultural homogeneity, it is therefore possible to make comparisons across different nations using their cultures as explanatory variables of the changes observed in consumers' behaviors. Now, can we maintain this assumption in postmodern contexts? If this tenet had been accepted, no segmentation analysis would have been sensible within national or ethnic borders. Obviously, this is not the case. Perhaps, assimilation studies and cross-cultural research have traditionally relied on a "modernist view of the nation that was socially integrated and homogeneous with discrete national boundaries and cultures"

- (Peñaloza, 1994: 34-35). This assumption can no longer hold in a postmodern world, dominated by variation and pluralism. In fact, if it seems acceptable to think that any nation or ethnicity may present some peculiar traits, and therefore a sort of homogeneity, still nowadays variety and individuality play a much stronger role that cross-cultural studies cannot detect;
2. *residuality*. Wallendorf & Reilly (1983) brilliantly point out that cross-cultural studies have frequently used culture in order to explain whatever differences observed between two ethnic groups. On the contrary, it is necessary to control for other non-cultural variables, which may play a stronger impact on the inquired patterns, and therefore represent a thicker explanation of phenomena. "Unfortunately, it is impossible to be sure that the observed consumption behavior differences reflect cultural differences. Instead, it may well be that such demographic differences as those in income, education, age distribution, family size, or product availability are the true causes of consumption differences. Before culture can be employed in a causal explanation, controls are needed for these other factors." (1983: 292). In turn, Lachman (1997) acknowledges the same methodological myopia as cross-cultural research: "Many cross-cultural studies fail to specify what specific dimension of culture has suggested influence on their variables. Culture is treated as a residual factor; variations that cannot be explained by other factors must be due to 'culture'" (Lachman, 1997: 319);
 3. *separation*. Another hidden assumption of cross-cultural research is related to the hypothesis that cultures are predicates of nations or ethnicities. It means that cultures have to and can be kept separate, if comparisons across nations or ethnic groups have to be admitted. On that side, Lee & Ro Um (1992) remark that cross-cultural studies show a fundamental limitation whenever acculturation and immigration issues are introduced. In fact, cross-cultural studies suitably fit the comparison of behavioral differences when cultures are separate (e.g., two different countries). But when cultures meet, as in the case of border crossing and the consequent process of acculturation, it is no longer possible to keep these variables distinct. Cultures, in fact, start interacting in frequently unpredictable ways (Berry, 1980; Berry et al., 1992); this situation mines any sensible possibility of interethnic comparison. In fact, "The cultural influence on the perceived importance of product

attributes becomes a complicated issue if acculturation is taken into account. Immigrants' attitude toward a brand may be influenced by either their culture of origin or the new host culture." (Lee and Ro Um, 1992: 431);

4. *measurement problems.* First, as any cultural or ethnic study, also cross-cultural research has to cope with the problem of defining and operationalizing culture. Beyond this shared and irremovable obstacle, however, it is possible to quote a couple of distinctive measurement problems that belong to cross-cultural methods. On one hand, this approach has to deal with a higher complexity in data gathering. In fact, cross-cultural approaches require field data from all the cultures under investigation, and therefore have to repeat the effort of data collection two or more times (Venkatesh, 1995). On the other hand, a much more critical fragility can be addressed. Given that cross-cultural studies analyze two or more cultural settings, and given the necessity of gathering data in all of them, it is typical to observe the adoption of the same tools of data gathering in the different contexts. To use Berry's frame (1989), it represents an act of imposed etic, that is, the same theoretical categories are used with minor or no adjustments across different cultural settings. This conflicts with tenets of cultural psychology (Cole, 1996) and with anthropologists' awareness of ethnocentrism. When entering a different cultural setting, in fact, it is necessary to adopt the native's point of view (Geertz, 1983), and research the inquired cultural group through those categories of thought and behavior that are internally originated. Consistently with that, Venkatesh (1995) points out that Hofstede's categories are derived from a Western epistemology and, in that, are culturally specific. Therefore, they are not easily and safely transferable into different cultural settings;
5. *weak managerial implications.* On the basis of the listed fragilities, findings emerging from cross-cultural studies have to be interpreted with caution, and may have a limited power in orienting managerial decisions (Lachman, 1997; Sagie & Elizur, 1998).

3.3.2 A possible integration: the cultural crossing approach

Culture has been metaphorically assimilated to an elephant (Roberts, 1970; Mantovani, 1998), due to its enormous weight on the functioning of individuals and consumers. At the same time, cross-cultural studies, given researchers' myopia, seem to be a regrettably weak lens to look at this elephant. "Can we 'grasp' the elephant now more adequately than we did two or three decades ago? To my mind, without a shift in the way we approach cross-cultural research, we will remain half 'blind' in this regard: our understanding of the impact of culture will not improve" (Lachman, 1997: 320).

By the way, some attempts of methodological shift can already be reported, as in the case of Clark's "*national character research*" and Venkatesh's ethnoconsumerism approach. Before providing a more precise definition of the methodological approach I suggest and call "cultural crossing" frame, I briefly summarize these two other contributions in the field. Clark (1990) argues that national character approach does not overlap with cross-cultural research, because cross-cultural studies are comparative in nature and take to the simultaneous analysis of two or more rival cultural settings, which are typically nations or ethnicities. On the contrary, national character research aims at detecting the modal personality characteristics within a certain nation. National character, in fact, is defined as "the pattern of enduring personality characteristics found among the populations of nations" (Clark, 1990: 66). Consequently, this approach is characterized by a different focus of investigation, which refers to wider personality traits that can affect large sets of group behaviors within a given nation. Therefore, national character studies typically investigate a single nation and try to elaborate a more comprehensive and integrated theory than cross-cultural research, which is typically more fragmented and isolated.

This approach should lead to the elaboration of a comprehensive framework, which combines both an empirical and a theoretical base. The empirical component grounds the model elaborated and the conclusions reached, whereas the theoretical component is useful in depicting a comprehensive and integrated picture that gives a thicker interpretation to empirical findings. On that assumption, the author proposes to combine an empirical part (modal analysis), which can be based on the characterizing dimensions that have been used in cross-cultural research, with an interpretative framework, which

consists in a theory building part. Modal analysis is therefore quantitative, empirical, and leads to thin descriptions of the world, whereas the interpretative framework is qualitative, theoretical, and leads to a thick description of reality (Geertz, 1973).

A further paradigm to achieve this methodological shift in cultural studies has been put forward by Venkatesh some years later (1995), and called *ethnoconsumerism*. Ethnoconsumerism rests on the assumption that any ethnocentric base in cultural studies has to be avoided. Ethnocentrism is then substituted by the adoption of different ground principles: local knowledge and native's point of view (Geertz, 1983), and therefore reminds similar methodological attempts such as Mariott's ethnosociology (1990) or cultural psychology (Cole, 1996). It is definable as "a conceptual framework to study consumer behavior using the theoretical categories originating within a given culture" and therefore represents "the study of consumption from the point of view of the social group or cultural group that is the subject of study. It examines behavior on the basis of the cultural realities of that group" (1995: 26-27). In that light, ethnoconsumerism helps acknowledge the individual as a cultural being, and consists in the systematic study of the cultural (symbolic and belief systems, norms, and rituals), the social (institutions and organizations), and the individual dimensions (personality traits, cognition, mental mapping, behaviors, etc.).

According to Venkatesh, ethnoconsumerism therefore shows several discontinuities with cross-cultural studies or other previous approaches: ethnoconsumerism is not a method; it provides a deeper analysis than an emic perspective; ethnoconsumerism represents an intracultural field of studies, whereas the cross-cultural approach is essentially an intercultural type of studies; operationally speaking, ethnoconsumerism refuses the cross-cultural logic of putting "different cultures linearly measured scales under the assumption that in every culture the scale measures the same phenomenon. Even if it does, do the high and low points of the scale have the same significance in different cultures?" (Venkatesh, 1995: 49); ethnoconsumerism is more than ethnography, because ethnography can only rely on field data, whereas ethnoconsumerism also requires a certain knowledge of cultural texts and materials.

Despite a general agreement on Venkatesh's assumptions, I wish to point out some tenets that, in my opinion, are questionable:

1. ethnoconsumerism is not a method: on the contrary, ethnoconsumerism adopts the anthropological basic assumptions of studying a cultural group starting from the native cultural categories that have been developed within that group. In that light, ethnoconsumerism can be interpreted as ethnography applied to consumption. And the methodological nature of ethnography is widely accepted;
2. ethnoconsumerism is stronger than an emic perspective. According to the author, the emic perspective, whose aim is not to uncover universal laws but rather to find out local knowledge and understandings, is a “loose term that refers to the subject’s point of view, is limited to strategies of data collection, and rarely leads into a discussion of any deeper interpretative issues” (Venkatesh, 1995: 28). On the contrary, the emic perspective has to be interpreted as an epistemological position questioning the possibility of finding regularities and universals across cultures, and having a distinctive methodological approach to research (Berry, 1989);
3. before psychology comes culture. This statement relies on the hidden assumption that culture is something external to the individual. Instead, cultural psychologists suggest that, if the presence and the relevance of an extrasomatic culture cannot be neglected, it is by no means necessary to acknowledge the individual’s appropriation and disposition of this external culture, which terminates in the elaboration of the so-called intrasomatic culture (Massimini, Inghilleri, Delle Fave, 1996).

Admitting the numerous lacks of cross-cultural research, and having some critical remarks on other paradigms proposed as an alternative to cross-cultural methodology, I elaborate a new framework I define “*cultural crossing*”. This label is born twice. On one hand, it explicitly admits the fundamental role played by Peñaloza’s work on the way this research has been shaped and the interest for the topic enforced. Cultural crossing is then an attempt to recall her 1994 milestone paper, “Atraversando Fronteras”, where she posits that “crossing border is a central theme in this research”. “The consumer acculturation process began with people crossing the border between the United States and Mexico. The border also served as a key construct organizing informant narratives, as they spoke of their lives on this side and that side of the border. Borders influencing Mexican immigrant consumer acculturation were not limited to the international border between the United States and Mexico, however. Mexican immigrant informants also encountered boundaries in

the United States in a number of aspects of their daily lives. Intranational borders in the form of subcultural differences were evident in the segregated neighborhood where Mexican immigrants lived and at the marketplace where they shopped in the United States, in the predominance of Spanish spoken at the various sites, in informants' consumption patterns, and in their identities" (1994: 50).

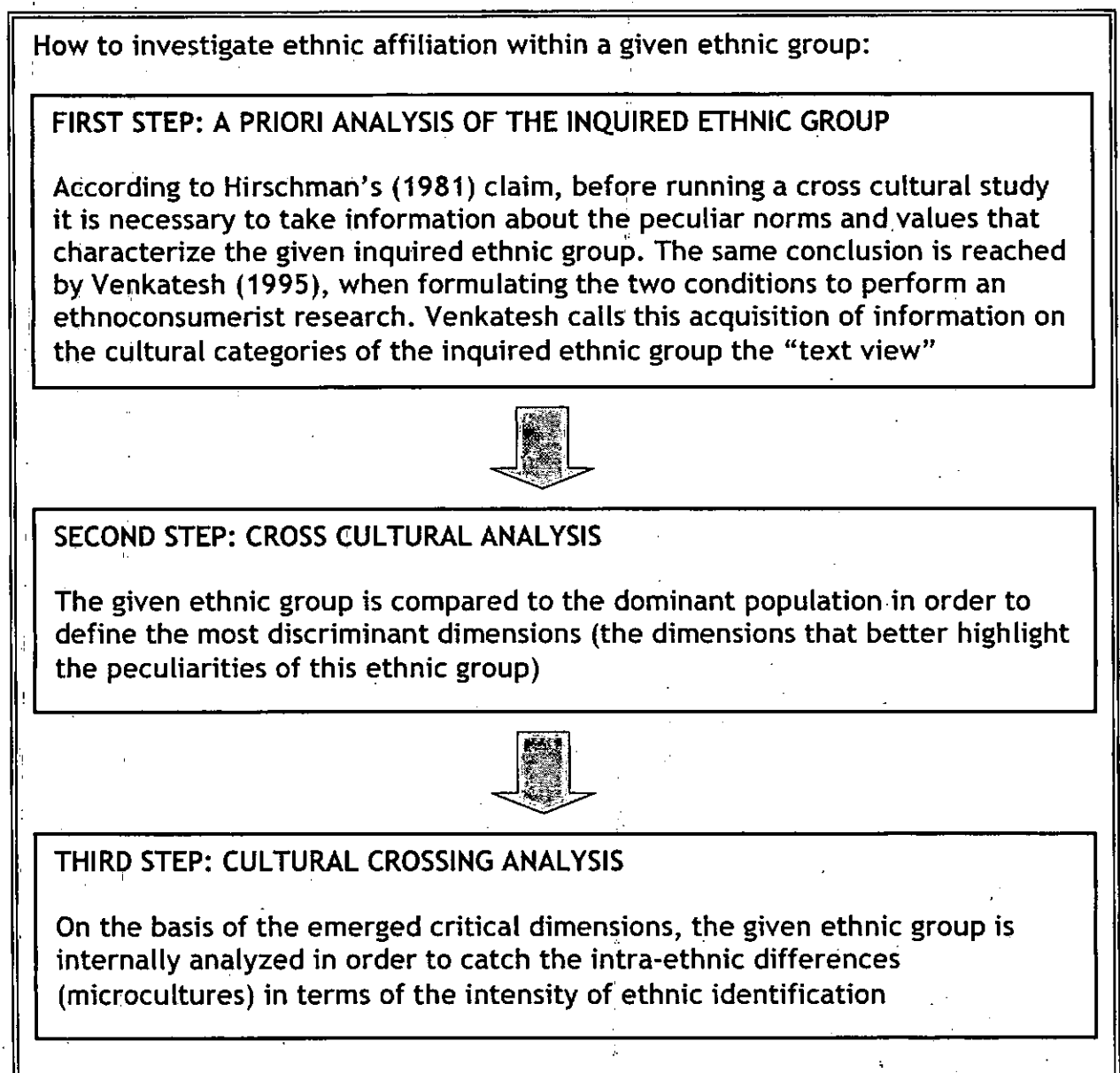
The second birth refers to the possibility of taking into account the central tenet of my work, that is, cultural alternation. In fact, once borders have been crossed, individuals get engaged in a dynamic and challenging process of creative reconstruction of their identities. If environmental and individual resources are favorable, this work argues that consumers may develop an alternation pattern, which enables their capability of disposing of more cultural identities, finely tuned on situations, individuals, and representational stimuli. Consumers, in that light, are continuously crossing cultures, in a relatively free and unpredictable way. I hope that individual focus and cultural alternation may be suitably captured in the "cultural crossing" claim.

Table 7 - Cross-cultural and cultural crossing approaches at the mirror

	CROSS-CULTURAL APPROACH	CULTURAL-CROSSING APPROACH
UNIT OF ANALYSIS	Country	Individual
FOCUS	Outside the individual → what is shared at a national level	Inside the individual → personal disposition and metabolization of cultural stimuli
BASIC ASSUMPTION	Homogeneity per country → national culture	Variety within country → individual culture(s)
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSUMPTION	National barriers can be traced and defended	Globalization and migration penetrate national boundaries
EXPLICATIVE VARIABLE	National culture	Creative and subjective reconstruction of the individual's cultural identity
LOGIC	Comparative logic among countries	Introspective logic
TYPE OF SUITABLE METHODOLOGIES	Quantitative and qualitative	Mainly qualitative (focus group, projective tests, storytelling, ethnography, etc.)
TEMPORAL DIMENSION	Typically synchronic studies	Typically diachronic studies (life stages)
MARKETING IMPLICATIONS	National patterns of consumption	Individual patterns of consumption, raising new segmentation criteria based on identity reconstruction stages/strategies

The cultural crossing temple depicts a methodological way to cultural identity exploration, where focalization on individual selves, variety seeking within a selected ethnic group, and connections mind-behavior-culture are its columns. In that light, cultural crossing is basically opposed to cross-cultural logic (table 7), because: homogeneity hypothesis is reversed into a heterogeneity assumption; residuality is abandoned in search of multidimensional appreciation of culture and of explanatory models; separation is transformed into cultural streams convergence and alternation; etics in passed into emics and derived etics; and, finally, managerial implications seem promising in terms of new criteria of market segmentation. At the same time and beyond these divergent assumptions and potentialities, I suggest that cultural crossing is not an alternative to cross-cultural studies, but a complementary framework. An example of integration is offered in figure 21.

Figure 21 - An example of integration between cross-cultural and cultural crossing frames



4. FIELD RESEARCH

4.1 Designing a study on migrants consumption: major caveats and ground decisions

Any research project aiming at an exploration of the dynamics linking culture and consumption patterns has to acknowledge several design and methodological problems. It is not only a question of method, having cross-cultural studies (§ 3.3.1) showed their limitations both in anthropological context (Geertz, 1983) and in marketing research (Andreasen, 1990; Clarke, 1990; Lee & Ro Um, 1992; Ogden, Ogden, & Schau, 2004; Venkatesh, 1995). It is, more frequently, a matter of ground choices. Should hypotheses be defined *ex ante*? How does ethnicity have to be defined and by whom? How can host culture be measured and interpreted? Does migration make a difference in approaching consumer studies, or is it basically a question of cultural difference, as it happens in the case of second generations? These and other closely related doubts have been enlightened over time by the most prominent scholars in that field (Hirschman, 1981; Peñaloza, 1994; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1993). A preliminary review on the major caveats in designing cultural studies in marketing is needed in order to provide our research project with sounder bases.

Hirschman's research on Jewish consumption patterns (1981) is still considered to be a milestone, and does include a severe evaluation of ethnic studies in consumer behavior. In fact, according to her, within marketing literature ethnicity studies have typically been:

- *post hoc in design and descriptive in nature*, as no a priori study of the distinctive norms and values of the explored ethnic group has been usually performed. "The unique norms and values that characterize a given ethnic group are infrequently considered in development of a priori hypotheses regarding the way(s) the group may be expected to differ from the surrounding society" (Hirschman, 1981: 102). This leads to an a priori definition of the peculiar characteristics that should be inquired in the given ethnic group. In Hirschman's case, the Jewish consumers who were distinctively denoted in terms of culture and religion. Such a weakness has been also acknowledged by Venkatesh (1995), when he openly declares his concern for the "text view" part of a study. Text view, in fact, refers to the historical and sociocultural themes of the inquired culture, which are embedded

in texts, local histories, value systems, and archival sources. Similarly, Clifford Geertz (1983) calls for the creation of a “local knowledge” of human phenomena, which suffer from a lower external validity, but is repaid in terms of richer and thicker descriptions of facts;

- *focused only on the Black consumers.* This requires an extension to other forms of “otherness” (religiously diverse groups, Asians and/or Latin consumers, etc.);
- *based on the researcher’s attribution of ethnicity.* If ethnicity is attributed by the observer, this then leads to a total lack of self-identification measures. “... subjects have been assigned to the ethnic group of interest or general population category on the basis of researchers’ perceptions of their membership in one or the other group. This may, of course, lead to incorrect assignment. Further exacerbating this problem is the fact that subjects are typically not asked the degree of identification they feel with a particular ethnic group”. A consequence is the need for the elaboration of a multidimensional measurement scale of ethnic identification.

More than ten years later, Peñaloza (1994) still detects some fragilities within ethnic studies, and points out several caveats any researcher in the field has to cope with. These concerns are more or less explicitly presented in her pivotal analysis on Mexican immigrants’ acculturation in the marketplace. In detail, it is relevant to notice that:

- *the nature of the acculturation process has to be accurately researched.* A rich understanding of this issue, in fact, can only be achieved through extensive investigation on the psychological and social processes of acculturation, as if it were to gain the access to the “black box” of immigration. The complexity of acculturation phenomena has also an impact in terms of methods that more suitably meet this need. Qualitative studies, and ethnographic methods in particular, seem to have a higher potential in supplying a more comprehensive framework of the interaction individual (immigrant consumer) - society (host culture), than quantitative researches do. Introspection and interpretative ethnography (Denzin, 1997) are in fact essential to a rich understating of acculturation dynamics;
- *any ethnic group has its own peculiarities,* and cannot be treated as if all immigrants were the same. Just to quote the case of her 1994 study, this author investigates Mexican immigrants in the US, and starts from a thick description of

the peculiar traits of Mexican migration flows (demographic traits, geographic proximity, etc.). Again, this problem reflects the necessity of an ex ante exploration of the inquired ethnic group (Hirschman, 1981; Venkatesh, 1995);

- *the host culture to which immigrants confront themselves and which they potentially assimilate to may not be the most “updated” version.* In different words, Wallendorf & Reilly (1993) have empirically showed that migrants, in order to assimilate to the host culture, may rely on their own stereotypes about the host culture. These stereotypes may have been elaborated also before their arrival in the destination country, for example as a consequence of their exposure to the host country media, to tourists, to narratives of other immigrants. As a result, once these people reach the destination country they may try to conform to values and behavioral patterns that are more present in their mind (stereotypes) than in the actual host culture. Wallendorf & Reilly’s findings are perhaps consistent with Peñaloza’s. Immigrants “were first exposed to the idea of life in the United States while they were still in Mexico through word of mouth, media, international trade, and tourism. The pre-immigration contact, much of which was commercial in nature, is contrasted with my observations and informants’ reports of little personal contact with Anglo-Americans in the United States” (Peñaloza, 1994: 46). This suggests starting from the migrants’ point of view and observing the host culture through their eyes;
- *migration makes the difference.* Ethnic studies frequently treat subcultures (Ogden et al., 2004) as the “ethnic dimension” of a social system, where this category (i.e., subculture) includes both immigrants and second-generation citizens. If no doubt exists on the possibility of finding ethnic-attachment also in second generations, it is then risky to say that second generations and immigrants’ ethnic identity can be treated in the same way. The “loss” experience (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1990), which is described as a structural trait of migration processes, is in fact a distinctive characteristic only immigrant consumers present. Nevertheless, this point has been frequently underestimated and misled;
- *acculturating pressures do not simply come from the two cultures (origin and host) a migrant has to cope with.* In fact, an “ethnic” consumer also has to take into consideration both the role played by marketing stimuli (relevant because in consumer behavior studies the attention is devoted to the restrained subset of

consumer acculturation instead of the more general issue of immigrant acculturation) and the degree to which immigrants have been accepted by the host culture;

- *the homogeneity hypothesis has to be rejected.* According to Peñaloza (1994: 34-35), assimilation studies and cross-cultural research have been traditionally relying on a “modernist view of the nation that was socially integrated and homogeneous with discrete national boundaries and cultures”. This assumption can no longer hold in a postmodern society (§ 3.2.2), dominated by variation and pluralism (Brown, 1995; Cova & Cova, 2002; Fabris, 2003; Firat et al., 1995; Podestà & Addis, 2004; Solomon et al., 2002). Therefore, it is then more promising to look at intranational/ethnic differences than to focus on homogeneous traits;
- *contextualization of research findings in the global economy.* To conclude, Peñaloza underlines the importance of linking the research findings to the general transformations occurring in the global economic environment, where the dimensions of globalization and localism are gaining stronger momentum (Appadurai, 1990; Peñaloza, 2003).

On the basis of previous warnings, the current research project does address the weaknesses of past studies and attempts to overcome them through the following major decisions:

1. *text view analysis.* First of all, the need for an inner understanding of the inquired ethnic group is met through the involvement of a linguistic and cultural mediator belonging to that ethnic group. This professional figure (Castiglioni, 1997; Inghilleri et al., 2000) will be part of the research team and play a prominent role during: the preliminary acquisition of social, cultural, and historical information on the inquired ethnicity; the ethnographic interviews where linguistic problems emerge and/or whenever the respondent asks for his/her presence; the interpretative phase, to cross-validate the attribution of meaning to observations and interviews elaboration (reliability concern; Bailey, 1994) . A second way to cope with text view analysis consists in making a preliminary exploration of the areas in which immigrant respondents live, work, and buy. This is translated into a field review of their shops, streets, and neighborhoods. A collection of artifacts (products, cards, documents,

- photographs) represent the output of this exploration. Artifacts will be used to cross-validate the interpretation of observations and interviews, providing the researchers with a richer base of analysis (Baudrillard, 1968; Cole, 1996; Inghilleri, 2003; Mantovani, 1998). Finally, text view is also attempted through desk research, that is, by means of a review of secondary data on Egyptians in Italy (Ambrosini & Schellenbaum, 1994; Caritas, 2004; Semi, 1999);
2. *a priori and a posteriori models*. The research project stems from an a priori interpretative model of the explanatory variables of immigrant customers' cultural alternation, hypothesizing different outcomes in terms of alternation patterns (fig. 17). On the basis of empirical results, this a priori model is going to be falsified (Popper, 1959) and transformed into an empirical (a posteriori) interpretative model (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This process has already been validated by Peñaloza for the assessment of acculturation models both on the side of consumers (1994) and of marketers (2000);
 3. *immigrants' point of view*. The immigrants' perspective is going to be taken into account in a double way. On one hand, a multidimensional measure of ethnicity is adopted, where the immigrants' evaluation of their ethnic affiliation is applied (felt-ethnicity, felt-religious belonging, self-attributed ethnicity, and self-attributed religion). On the other, an understating of the immigrants' stereotypes on Italian products is proposed, where the cognitive and affective dimensions of their use of Italian foods is going to be explored in depth. These design decisions should reduce the risks of researchers' ethnocentrism, promote the "native's point of view" (Applbaum & Jordt, 1996; Geertz, 1983), and facilitate an emic approach to the field (Berry et al., 1992; Cole, 1996; Inghilleri, 1994; Moscardino & Axia, 2001; Pike, 1967; Shweder, 1990) in search for a "derived etics" (Berry, 1989);
 4. *careful analysis of acculturative dynamics*. The psychological and social explanations of the way immigrant consumers acculturate represent the hearth of this study. In particular, it is argued that the psycho-social response a migrant gives to the host culture may assume different forms, which have been already described in psychological literature (Berry, 1980; Berry et al, 1992; Devereux, 1975; LaFramboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Inghilleri, 2004). Given the relevance of cultural alternation, which is a peculiar trait of complex societies

- and personalities, our focus is going to be kept on that construct, trying to gain a more detailed understanding both of its determinants and outcomes;
5. *the "loss" dimension in migration experiences.* The sample is inspired to criteria of variance and contrast (Peñaloza, 1994; 1999; 2000), and therefore it may include both second generations and immigrants. In the case of immigrants, however, the dimension of the migratory project will be explored, along with the cognitive and affective implications of the separation from their home country;
 6. *homogeneity versus heterogeneity.* The current project promotes a complementary approach to ethnic studies. As an integration to a cross-cultural framework, a cultural crossing approach has been proposed (§ 3.3.2), whose main goal is to provide a sound theoretical and methodological base for the detection of differences within a given ethnic group. Therefore, instead of focusing on homogeneity, a heterogeneity-driven frame will be formulated;
 7. *contextualization of research findings in the global economy.* Given that the focus of this research is on phenomena of cultural alternation, it will be easier to locate findings in a global perspective. Cultural psychologists, in fact, acknowledge alternation as the base for the construction of a multicultural society. Furthermore, this research argues that migrants merely provide a privileged observatory for multiple cultural identities, even though this situation of multicultural subjectivity is postulated also on the side of autochthonous consumers, as a result of global economies (§ 1.2.2).

4.2 Focus and goals

After a preliminary debate on the main hidden risks attached to ethnic studies, it is then necessary to shape the area of research more narrowly and precisely. In fact, it is not enough to state that the area of inquiry is constituted by the exploration of the connection mind-behavior-culture, where culture is operationalized as the ethnic belonging and the nationality of the consumers. At least, it is vital to define what kind of products and services, that is, what kind of consumption categories, have to be investigated. Our attention is going to be attributed to *food consumption*, including either native foods or those foods belonging to the host country. In fact, the possibility of combining these two dimensions (native, host) is necessary to observe phenomena of cultural alternation.

In detail, despite some isolated skepticism, the choice of food consumption as the focus of ethnic studies is largely supported. Among those who call for a different focus, it is possible to quote Ogden, Ogden, & Schau (2004). These authors, in a very recent contribution, point out a lack of exploration of *different product categories*, which leads to a major gap in the international literature on consumer culture. In that light, they ask for an exploration of the impact of consumer acculturation on different typologies of products. Over the years, in fact, they observe that ethnic studies have been mainly linked to symbolic and expressive products (food and clothing, in particular). A better understanding of functional and utilitarian products (Midgley, 1983) is then needed. At the same time, it could be sensible to understand whether the distinction between expressive and utilitarian items is bounded to product category, as typically argued by international literature, or to the context of purchase/consumption.

Moving from different theoretical rationales, Applbaum & Jordt (1996) suggest that a research devoted to the detection and interpretation of cultural categories in the objectified world of goods could better *focus on services*. The adoption of services rather than physical products, in terms of research area of inquiry, may show a couple of advantages. First, services imply a stricter contact between the seller and the buyer (immigrant consumer). Through interviews with the sellers it is then easier to get richer information about consumers' cultural categories. Perhaps, the relevance of front-officers in services and their role of "part-time marketers" have long been hypothesized by service marketing scholars (Gröönroos; 1990; Norman, 1984). Second, consumers more easily perceive services as events, and this increases their capability of describing services in terms of narratives and storytelling, which are suitable methodological devices to explore the subconscious and involuntary spheres of culture (Atkinson, 1998; Boje, 1995; Boyce, 1995; Czarniawska, 1997; Gabriel, 2002).

Nevertheless, it is possible to face these criticisms. First of all, Ogden et al.'s warning about the redundancy of studies on food is overcome by Holt's approach (1997). Holt, in fact, suggests that in postmodern societies it is more interesting to focus on "how" consumption objects are consumed instead of "which" consumption objects are selected. In this light, the choice of a specific product category is apparently less relevant, as a traditionally defined "symbolic product" like food can be consumed in several different ways, both functionally and symbolically. Consistently with that, our research project aims at exploring the ways food (native and host) is purchased,

prepared, consumed, and offered as a gift by immigrant consumers. In that light, food simply is a diffused product category that enters everyday purchase and consumption choices of individuals, where the intriguing point is the sense attributed to it by consumers. Furthermore, the opportunity of focusing on the service dimension accounted by Applbaum & Jordt can be met also when food is the inquired variable. In fact, it is possible to investigate services offered by different points of sale, or we may look at the technological devices and the ways they are used to prepare food.

If skepticism on the selection of food as the heart of inquiry gathers just some isolated voices, a big chorus joins in to celebrate that choice. As noted by Bourdieu (1984), food consumption is the area where “one would find the strongest and most indelible mark of infant learning, the lessons which longest withstand the distance or collapse of the native world and most durably maintain nostalgia for it”. Consistently with that, Wallendorf & Reilly (1983) focused on food consumption of Mexican-Americans in comparison to Mexicans and Anglo-Americans consumption patterns. The authors justify their choice of analyzing food consumption saying that cultural studies dealing with assimilation issues have to focus on products showing normative connection to cultural styles. With reference to food, the normative connection of food to cultural styles has been largely proved by previous studies (Braudel, 1967; Greeley, McCready & Theisen, 1980; Patai, 1977; Royce, 1982). Analogously, according to Peñaloza (1994: 42) “Food is more than a means of nourishment and sustenance; it is also a key cultural expression. For informants, eating the food they ate in Mexico in the United States provided them with a taste of home and served to reaffirm ties to their culture of origin”.

In turn, Laroche, Kim, & Tomiuk (1998) performed a survey on the relationship between ethnic identity, acculturation, and consumption patterns in the food market. The study was focused on Italian consumers in Montreal, Canada. The empirical data confirm that food consumption patterns are culturally bound and depend both on the previous culture (ethnic identity) and the dominant one (acculturation). This supports the so-called “discriminant validity hypothesis”, which suggests that food consumption is an ethnically-laden variable. In particular, their findings show that ethnic identity is positively correlated to traditional/origin food, and that ethnic identity is frequently negatively correlated to convenience/dominant foods, which are interpreted by Italian consumers as “North-American creations” (Laroche et al., 1998: 145).

Furthermore, Applbaum & Jordt (1996), relying on Arnould's work (1989), assure that a promising way to grasp cultural categories is through the investigation of foreign goods and how these goods are domesticated into native culture. For example, de Pysler (1992) has tried to detect the cultural meanings attached to the introduction of motorcycles in the Indian market, whereas Venkatesh (1995) has focused on the Indian adoption of new household technologies. The underlying idea is that the introduction of a foreign product in a new market brings to the surface the cultural categories present in the culturally constituted world (McCracken, 1986), because these categories are necessary to attribute a meaning to the newly introduced product. Cultural categories can be metaphorically interpreted as gastric enzymes that should be used to digest the new product.

Food is only a part of our research focus. In fact, once food consumption has been presented as the key product category to be investigated, it is then necessary to set the main ethnic groups to be analyzed. This project aims at increasing the understanding of variation within a given national group. Therefore, instead of promoting a comparison between two or more ethnicities, the choice falls on a single ethnic group, the *Egyptian migrants living in Milan (Italy)*. The isolation of nationality, in fact, helps exploring the ways different Egyptian immigrants can respond to Italian culture, and potentially alternate between their culture of origin and the host one with reference to food consumption. In particular, the choice of Egyptian immigrants relies on a multiple rationale:

1. *the numeric relevance of Egyptians in Milan and Italy.* Demographic reasons are the preliminary motivation of that choice. The Egyptian community ranks number one in Milan, which in turn represents 11.2% of total immigrants in Italy (Caritas, 2004). Therefore, Milan can be assumed as the most relevant urban context for the exploration of the migration flows in Italy, and Egyptians are the numerically prominent group in that town;
2. *cultural distance.* A second substantial motive is nested in the distance existing between Italian and Egyptian cultures. If phenomena of cultural alternation have to be observed, it is then sensible to orient attention to two cultures that can be more easily distinguished between themselves. In that specific case, Egyptian and Italian cultures are dramatically different, for a number of reasons. Respectively: different histories (Pharaohs versus Roman and Greek dominations),

- different languages (Arabian versus Indo-European base), different religions (Muslims versus Catholics), no colonial domain of one country on the other, different rituals in food consumption, different crops and foods;
3. *variety and contrast*. As better explained later on, the sampling technique is going to be non-probabilistic and therefore rests on the variety and contrast principles. This means that the sample composition has to maintain the highest variety in terms of some control variables (age, sex, number of years of residency in Italy, profession, etc.). If so, the choice has to fall on an ethnic group showing such a variety. Egyptians present high variation in terms of residency (first and second generations are diffused), sex (men and women are relatively balanced), age, religion (within that nationality there are both Copt Christians and Muslims), education, occupation (employees, entrepreneurs, professionals), social integration, provenience (urban versus rural origin), and mobility;
 4. *strict relationship with food*. Egyptians present a symbolic, ritual, and religious attachment to food. Just to quote an example, as all Muslims they respect a period of Ramadan during which food consumption is suspended, except after sunset. Furthermore, at least in Italy, there is a high presence of Egyptians in the food industry, with a major concentration in pizza restaurants and bakeries. This phenomenon is known as “entrepreneurial ethnic specialization” (Ambrosini, 1999; 2001). Food is then both a consumption category and the professional occupation of several Egyptians, enforcing a strong and complex dynamic with food;
 5. *opportunity of consuming Egyptian foods*. The possibility of observing cultural alternation would be biased if Egyptian foods were not easily at the disposal of Egyptian consumers. On the contrary, the actual distribution structure in Milan acknowledges several Egyptian restaurants, ethnic areas in supermarkets and department stores, and some ad hoc shops where typical Egyptian products can be bought.

Given that our focus is on Egyptians' processes of alternation in food consumption, the *research goals* have to be put forward. (Trans)cultural psychologists have theorized different patterns of acculturation strategies (Devereux, 1975; LaFramboise et al., 1993), as depicted in paragraph 2.3.1. Our interest has been devoted to the peculiar phenomena of alternation, which can be defined as stable situations of multiple cultural

identities grounded on rational (cognitive) and emotional (affective) motives (§. 2.3.2). If the existence of cultural alternation is not questioned, as psychological research has already supported that hypothesis, this research explicitly acknowledges two main goals:

1. *drivers of cultural alternation*. A first key question refers to the explanatory variables of alternation. Why does a consumer shift from one cultural identity to another one within the same consumption sphere? In our specific case, it means understanding why Egyptian consumers may wish to and actually buy/consume products belonging to different cultures (at least, culture of origin and host culture). Individual characteristics, migratory projects, levels of self-identification with the original ethnic group, or levels of social integration in the host country may all be examples of these explanatory variables. The relevance of these and other variables on alternation phenomenon has to be explored, both under a cognitive and an affective point of view;
2. *different outcomes of cultural alternation*. Cultural alternation is an under-explored area of research, in particular in marketing studies. Furthermore, it is generally treated as a homogeneous process. This project aims at exploring possible forms of cultural alternation, that is, it aims at finding variety inside the alternation framework. For example, it may be hypothesized that alternation can occur in a “polarized” form (whenever the consumer alternatively shifts from pure Egyptian to pure Italian foods, and vice versa), or in a “hybrid” form (whenever the consumer, at the same time, adopts models of food consumption that are a hybrid of Egyptian and Italian traditions);
3. *building an empirical model of cultural alternation*. Finally, the combination of determinants and different outcomes of cultural alternation leads to the construction of a posteriori (empirical) model of cultural alternation. In order to approach the field, a preliminary a priori model is going to be formulated. Direct observation and ethnographic interviews intend to be the way leading to model confirmation/falsification and adaptation (Peñaloza, 1994; 1998). Within an ethnographic approach, Popper’s principle of “falsification” (1959) finds a distinctive declination. As discussed by Wallendorf & Belk (1989: 73), “In constructing a credible interpretation of ethnographic data materials, Lincon and Guba also suggest the use of negative case study, in which the researchers construct an interpretation and then successively modify it as they encounter instances that provide negative support for the original hypothesis. This is

somehow akin to the analytic approach suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in what they call the constant comparative method (...)"

To conclude, a metaphor may provide the reader with a better understanding of the logics and goals of the study. Relying on a theatrical metaphor, which has already been addressed in personality studies (Goffman, 1959; Harré, Clarke, & De Carlo, 1985), it is possible to acknowledge the dynamic nature of personality, the plurality of selves (Elster, 1995), the social interactions in the construction of identity. When the consumer - in that case an Egyptian consumer in Italy - is framed as an "actor", alternation opens the way to a multiplicity of cultural identities this consumer may "play". Different cultural identities are different "roles" the actor/consumer may cover in the drama. Products are then the different "masks" a consumer adopts to interpret the (self) attributed roles. As in each play, the performer acts in front of an "audience", which can be read as the consumer's ethnic community, the host society, reference groups in general, or the actor himself/herself in the situation of inner-directed consumptions (Assael, 1987; Maslow, 1954). Furthermore, the shift from one role (one cultural identity) to another one can be explained on the basis of the "script" and the "stage presentation". Out of the metaphor, script and stage presentation stand for the explanatory variables of alternation. Finally, the "recitative style" is the individual way different actors play the same role. In a market situation, it depicts the different ways immigrant consumers may alternate in consumption behaviors. In other words, recitative styles represent different alternation outcomes. Therefore, this research project, being interested in the whole drama, shows a greater focalization on scripts and stage presentations (determinants of alternation), and on recitative styles (different forms of alternation).

4.3 Research steps

This project relies on a qualitative approach, and in particular adopts ethnographic interviews as the main source of data collection (Holt, 1997; 1998; Peñaloza, 1994; 2000; Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999). Acknowledging previous discussion, the main phases of research have been framed on the basis of Arnould & Thompson's (2005) suggestions for consumer culture studies, and Peñaloza's (1994) critical ethnographic approach. In detail, the key procedural steps include:

1. *literature review*. It represents the first and traditional base to acknowledge previous findings, systematize them, and detect shortcomings, if any. This part has been fully detailed in chapters 2 and 3, and has led to the identification of theoretical and methodological limitations of cultural and ethnic studies, which can be integrated by a complementary framework defined “cultural crossing” approach;
2. *focus and goals definition*. On the basis of detected shortcomings, then, it is possible to ground research goals and unit of analysis. This issue has been covered in § 4.2;
3. *text view analysis*. Whenever a study aims at addressing a culturally diverse group, as it occurs in the case of a distinct ethnicity, a preliminary phase consists in collecting information in order to avoid a posteriori design (Wallendorf & Reilly, 1993) and facilitate the adoption of the native’s point of view (Geertz, 1983). This main step has been labeled “text view”, and is consistent with ethnoconsumeristic analysis (Venkatesh, 1995). A more detailed explanation of how text view has been taken into account in this research is described in the last part of this paragraph;
4. *sampling*. Data collection is subject to an a priori definition of sampling criteria. This part is briefly detailed in § 4.4;
5. *data collection and interpretation*. The final part consists in data collection, which is linked to method definition, and data interpretation, which leads to the formulation of an empirical (a posteriori) model of consumer alternation. This final step is discussed in § 4.5, whereas in chapter 5 and 6 empirical findings are fully described.

Literature review, focus, and goals have already been defined. Now some room has to be devoted to the issue of *text view analysis*, which has been met through three integrated paths: desk research, field sites exploration, and adoption of a multidisciplinary team of research, which has distinctively included a linguistic and cultural mediator.

Starting from the *level of desk research*, it aims at detecting secondary data consistent with the unit of analysis and the goals previously stated. In fact, if text has to be known, that is, if more knowledge on ethnicity’s history, culture, and life has to be gained, previous researches may be fruitful. Unfortunately, Egyptian migrants in Italy

have received relatively little attention so far. Two main contributions can be quoted. On one hand, Giovanni Semi's work (1999), which applied ethnography to the analysis of patterns of social integration of Egyptians in Milan. On the other, a second contribution, which relies both on an anthropological and sociological ground, is linked to Ambrosini & Schellenbaum (1994), and shows analogous goals, with a stronger investigation of the economic dimension. Indications from these studies include: a sort of invisible migration of Egyptians, who, despite their numerical relevance, are not easily detectable in everyday life; a sort of acceptance of the social discourse on migration, which takes them to a strong construction of public identity on the basis of work dimension; a strong separation between public and private life; the lack of an Egyptian community, which is more frequently substituted by individuality or an enlarged vision of family, and a job specialization in the industries of construction and food and beverage.

A second path leading to text view analysis has been represented by *a careful and extensive analysis of field sites*, in order to understand the impact of behavioral factors and get familiarity with the marketplace. In this case, field sites include urban shopping streets, informants' neighborhoods and dwellings, religious sites (churches and mosques), shops (restaurants, bakeries, butcheries, supermarkets, etc.), and aggregation places (gardens, cultural associations, etc.). Criteria for sites selection include: 1) the presence of a large group of the inquired ethnicity (Egyptians); 2) a location directly connected to one or more of the immigrants under investigation; 3) the centrality of these sites to the lives of the informants; 4) the availability of a large set of commercial activities (products and services). This field analysis was preliminary and has revealed to be a way of gaining both an understanding and an access to the inquired group. Parallel to sites investigation, *documents collection has supported observations*. Artifacts included food products, kitchen tools, brochures, business-cards, flyers, and several photographs both in the field sites and informants' dwellings or shops. These artifacts, which may represent a way of data triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Ozanne & Anderson, 1989), aim at supporting the interpretative phase and at validating the findings based on ethnographic interviews (§ 5.1).

Finally, a third and last way to meet text view requirements rests on the *multidisciplinary composition of the research team*, which has included a consumer researcher, a psychologist, and an *Egyptian linguistic and cultural mediator*. Linguistic

and cultural mediators can be defined as facilitators of communication whenever the two main parties involved in the communication process - in that case, interviewers and interviewees - belong to different cultures and may speak different languages. The linguistic and cultural mediator does not "produce" any communication, but he/she helps the circulation and interpretation of communication between the two main parties (Castiglioni, 1997). The need for this added research member can be better expressed through Lisa Peñaloza's words (1989: 116): "Perhaps the most critical difficulty to be encountered by researchers in the investigation of immigrant consumer acculturation is that it is very difficult to comprehend other cultures". Therefore, the assistance of the mediator was crucial at the following stages:

1. *text analysis*. An in depth interview on the Egyptian culture represented the starting point of the field work. The mediator acted as an expert in the culture under investigation, being a migrant and belonging to the inquired ethnic group;
2. *interview grid test*. The linguistic and cultural mediator also played a key role in testing the grid for ethnographic interviews and observations. This aimed at avoiding, as far as possible, forms of "imposed etics" (Berry, 1989), and represented an adaptation of the "back translation" principle originally proposed by Green & White (1976);
3. *interviews in Arabic*. In case of interviews carried out in the migrants' mother tongue, this professional interpreter could be required. By the way, the two respondents who used Arabian to answer were helped by friends in this process;
4. *validation of the conclusions and research findings*. Researchers triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Ozanne & Anderson, 1989) represents a final way to rely on the mediator's assistance, in order to increase findings robustness and reliability (Bailey, 1994).

By the way, the need for an insider/outsider member in the research team has been postulated in previous research. In Italy, for example, a study on migrants' use of traditional versus mainstream medicines (healer versus doctor) has been carried out through a direct involvement of linguistic and cultural mediators, who were defined as "privileged witnesses by definition" (Inghilleri, de Cordova, Castiglioni, 2000: 75).

In a completely different setting, Annamma Joy, when investigating the role of galleries in the circulation of art, reports about the issue of addressing "otherness". "A major issue in ethnographic research involves coming to terms with "other" and interpreting "otherness". (...). Coming to terms with it meant learning new ways of

seeing and experiencing art. Through the help of an assistant who was both “insider” and “outsider” (as researcher), it was possible to come to terms with the art world” (1998: 266-267). Mutatis mutandis, the same occurs in my area of investigation, where the mediator acts as Joy’s assistant in entering otherness.

Concluding, through text view analysis, the following aspects may be enlightened:

1. *cultural framework*. A foundational step consists in identifying the cultural framework that structures and defines the inquired consumer culture. In detail, the cultural framework is “a theoretical structure on the basis of the cultural categories derived from two key elements: the *field view* and the *text view*. The field view is a descriptive account of the current practices, subjective impressions and statements of the people living within a cultural group, a record of relevant cultural symbols, and descriptions of relevant domains of experience. The text view refers to the historical-sociocultural themes of the culture embedded in texts, local histories, value systems, and archival sources” (Venkatesh, 1995: 50);
2. *cultural categories*. A second step leads to the identification, interpretation, and the interconnection of cultural categories present in the cultural framework. Cultural categories are specific to the culture under study and should be considered as meanings carriers with reference to the issue being studied. The centrality of cultural categories is also acknowledged by McCracken (1986), who defines them as the conceptual grids “of a culturally constituted world” (73), “representing the basic distinctions that a culture uses to divide up the phenomenal world” (72). They include the cultural categorization of space (e.g., occasions), time (e.g., work versus leisure, second versus millennium, etc.), nature (e.g., flora, fauna, landscape, etc.), and person (e.g., sex, gender, class, status, occupation, etc.);
3. *cultural practices*. A further step takes to the identification and interpretation of recurrent behaviors imbued of meanings, which can be called cultural practices (Holt, 1997). An example of cultural practices in consumption may be rituals (McCracken, 1986; 1988; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991), which are going to be investigated in depth through the study;
4. *cultural objects*. Contemporaneously, it is necessary to identify and interpret the same artifacts involved in these practices, which are called “cultural objects”. In fact, despite the invisibility of cultural categories and principles, these categories

and principles are typically substantiated through material objects, and consumer goods in particular, which have a “performative” function (Austin, 1963; Tambiah, 1977;

5. *consumer environment and consumer behavior*. Having an exclusive glance on consumption dynamics, it is finally necessary to identify and interpret consumer behaviors in their environment.

4.4 Sampling

Sampling requires at least the discussion of the following points: mono-ethnic base for sample drawing; sampling criteria and sample composition; sample size; and possible guidelines for future research.

The definition of a *mono-ethnic base for sample drawing* is translated into the focalization on a single ethnic group for data collection and theory generation. The rationales of this choice are both theoretical and methodological. First of all, in fact, this project wishes to remove the homogeneity hypothesis that has long dominated ethnic studies. Therefore, the avoidance of any interethnic comparison allows the exploration of variety within the inquired group. At the same time, ethnicity boundaries are assumed to be permeable to cultural exchanges, and therefore the focalization on a given ethnicity still allows the investigation of multiple cultures, as the conceptual frame of alternation openly acknowledges. This seems to be a rather new and promising way to look at ethnic borders. Under a methodological point of view, then, studying ethnicity in the singular helps overcoming the monovocality of cross-cultural studies, and suggests the fairly new cultural crossing approach. Furthermore, the selection of a single ethnic group can be addressed as a peculiar adjustment of the so-called cohort analysis. Traditional cohort analysis has been elaborated to cope with relevant distortions induced by external sources of bias, such as age, education, and occupational effects. (Glenn, 1977; Hirschman, 1981). “Cohort analysis involves the use of a sample that is invariant with respect to potential sources of contamination. A cohort is chosen that contains individuals who are very similar with respect to potentially biasing factors, such as age, but who vary in the level of the primary independent variable of interest” (Hirschman, 1981: 104). Despite traditional cohort analysis privileges quantitative studies and representative samples, the key tenet on which it is built can be retained also within an ethnographic perspective. In fact, this project is not interested in using

ethnicity as the central unit of investigation, or the main explanatory variables of observed behaviors. What I look for is an understanding of cultural identity patterns, under the convergence of different cultural stimuli, being these acculturation patterns the suggested explanatory variable of observed consumer behaviors. Therefore, although the selection of the Egyptian group has not been fortuitous (§ 4.2), yet it does not represent the central motive of interest. Selecting a single national group allows to look for individual paths of cultural elaboration, and somehow control for ethnic origin influences. It is not argued that ethnic origin does not matter; the difference between external culture, which can be more easily related to ethnic identity, and internal culture, where individual idiosyncratic resources make the difference (§ 1.3.2), is simply acknowledged. By the way, our interest for individual patterns of cultures metabolization has been variously repeated and justified.

A second point of discussion on sampling is intertwined to *sampling criteria and, as a result, sample composition*. Given the ethnographic nature of the study, any attempt of drawing a representative sample would be ridiculous (Bailey, 1994; Molteni & Troilo, 2004). Instead, a purposive sample is suggested (Gibbs, 1997; Wallendorf & Belk, 1989), that is, a sample suitable to increase the richness of data gathering and theory generation on the basis of the stated research goals. Nevertheless, despite the discarded requirement of statistical soundness, the selection of interviewees cannot be depicted as a random search. In fact, as suggested by Miles & Huberman (1984) and by McCall & Simmons (1969), purposive samples in ethnographic inquiry can be fruitfully built through a fair application of variety and contrast. In different words, the sample has to admit such a number of interviewees that they can present high variation and contrast on some relevant dimensions. Typically variety and contrast have been observed in terms of age, gender, time of residency, and presence/absence of family members in the host country (Tinson et al., 2004), or also in terms of occupation, nationality, and language ability (Peñaloza, 1994). The a priori model, which has guided the data collection phase, has taken into account all and even more variables in terms of variety, and has led to a sample of: man and women, young and adults, first and second generations, new and old comers, Christians and Muslims, highly educated and not, high- or low-skilled in Italian language, strong or weak media users, and so forth. Relying on a couple of privileged informants, other respondents have been met by chance on the field or reached through snowballing procedure (Water, 1990).

Addressing *sample size*, then, the number of interviewees has been stated both through a benchmarking with other international researches, which share the ethnographic interviewing method (Holt, 1997; 1998; Peñaloza, 1994; 2000; Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999), and a saturation criterion. By saturation I mean that sample size has to be based on an ideal rate between the marginal benefits and costs of a new interview. When the marginal benefits of a new interview are compensated by its costs, that is, when findings of new interviews tend to confirm previous ones, it is time to stop the process of sampling. Furthermore, given that a relatively limited number of ethnographic interviews may generate a huge amount of data, it is also necessary to set limits to reduce the risk of losing control over data.

As a preliminary estimate, sample size ranged between 15 - 20 interviews. Temporal extension of each interview should range from one hour to one hour and a half, or more. Informants are left free to select the interview language. Should the Arabic be chosen, an interpreter is going to be included in the research team. Once pre-tested, the interview guide aimed at collecting the following information: migrants' biography and demographics; processes of cultural selection and migratory project accomplishment; description and comparison between food consumption patterns in the two countries. In particular, food consumption patterns were investigated distinguishing among purchase, cooking, consumption, and gift (when food is used as a present to others). This sequence of observations helped enlightening the processes of identity reconstruction, with major attention to the patterns of cultural alternation.

A final remark may conclude the discussion over sampling, and suggests future *streams of research*. The inclusion of an Italian sample, that is, of the autochthonous group in the phase of data collection, can show meaningful implications. On one hand and more traditionally, it may be used as a control sample, or as a base for cross-cultural comparisons. On the other, it may be interesting to support the external validity of my actual research. In fact, in case of homogeneities detected in identity patterns - what has been defined as acculturation strategies and psycho-social destinies - between the two ethnic groups, it will be then possible to conclude that behavioral patterns can be better explained not in terms of ethnic belonging, as suggested by the cross-cultural mainstream, but in terms of individual paths of identity reconstruction, as suggested by the cultural crossing perspective. This hypothesis rests on the awareness that within multicultural marketplaces and societies also autochthonous consumers experience a

constant process of acculturation. This dimension has been so far unexplored in consumer studies. In fact, "Future research should also study the ways in which non-immigrant consumers experience the cultural implications of global economic restructuring, with consumption viewed as an important avenue for expressions of intercultural relations" (Peñaloza, 1995: 93). Mixing together migrants and autochthonous consumers means starting from their emics, and may lead to the detection of a derived etics (Berry, 1989), that is, of a set of relatively universal functionings of consumers in the marketplace.

4.5 Data collection and data interpretation

This paragraph concludes the discussion on research design, and specifically addresses the last two phases of research: data collection and data interpretation. Data collection is embedded in the question of method definition. As it has already been stated, this project has gathered data through *ethnographic interviews* (Holt, 1997; 1998; Peñaloza, 1994; 2000; Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999). The shift towards an ethnographic analysis has proved to be necessary whenever positivistic positions on ethnicity are discarded for the adoption of postmodern lenses (Venkatesh, 1995), which abandon a demographic view of ethnicity for a richer understanding of lived experiences attached to ethnic belonging. "Ethnographic interviewing is a particularly effective methodological strategy for examining consumption patterns since informal conversation in the dining room or living room of an informant's home parallels everyday situations in which people routinely talk about their likes and dislikes, their recent consumption experiences, and their dreams for the future" (Holt, 1997: 329). Ethnographic interviewing is close to phenomenological interviewing technique because both of them encourage informants to give grounded examples (stories, tales, recounting) instead of abstract rationalizations. At the same time, they can be distinguished as ethnographic interview explicitly asks for the evaluative criteria that informants use in order to talk of their consumption habits (Holt, 1997).

Critical ethnography is the label given by Peñaloza to ethnographic interviewing in consumption context. She posits that exploration of immigrant consumers learning in the marketplace has been carried out through a critical ethnography method (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Rosaldo, 1989; Thomas, 1993), which shares ethnography's fundamental tools/techniques (participant observation and interpretative analysis) but "differs in its

concern with issues of subjectivity and relationships of power affecting both the researcher(s) and those under investigation. Concerns of critical ethnographer include (1) relation between the researcher and the researched, (2) the agency of those being investigated, that is, how people were treated during the course of the study, how they were represented in the written account, and whether the study incorporated their interests, and (4) the importance of situating our work within the global economy” (Peñaloza, 1994: 35). Besides, critical ethnography “draws from critical theoretical work in the humanities and social sciences in conceptualizing human agents as sentient beings negotiating their identities and life circumstances from particular positions and in relation to others, while giving attention to the ways these subject positions and social relations are structured economically and have developed overtime” (Peñaloza, 2000: 86).

A final remark on ethnography is compulsory. The choice of focusing on richer and thicker (Geertz, 1973) descriptions of cultural and social phenomena, the preference for discontinuities and differences, the elaboration of a local knowledge have been traditionally criticized for their inferior generalizability and external validity. Nevertheless, Belk (1993) has brilliantly argued that in ethnography generalization is a predicate of the framework, not of the findings (fig. 22). The choice of looking for an empirical model of migrants cultural alternation seems, on that base, to be built on stone.

Finally, *data interpretation* represents the last stage of analysis, and implies the evaluation of research trustworthiness. Data collected include field notes, post-interview notes, interview transcripts, artifacts, photographs, and audio-recordings. During the interpretation phase, all field notes and interview transcripts are going to be fragmented, coded into different “data units” (separate pieces of information), and internally categorized in data types (e.g., food at work, food at home, food rituals, etc.). A holistic and comprehensive interpretation has to be provided, on the basis of interpretative ethnography tenets (Denzin, 1978; 1997). In particular, each interview is going to be analyzed first on an individual base, confronting findings of different members of the research team (cross-validation), and later on a comparative base, though the application of a general grid. To control for subjectivity, conclusions are

going to be presented for validation both to informants and other researchers or experts in the field.

Figure 22 - Strengths and weaknesses of ethnography

Factors	Description	Comparison	Generalization
Status of data	Focused data	Comparative data	Limited data
Richness of data	Very rich	Very rich	Low quality
Data gathering	Inductive	Inductive/ Deductive	Deductive
Strategic use of research	Understanding	Differentiation	Universalization
Testable hypotheses	Minor importance	Major importance	Major importance
Positivism, interpretivism	Interpretivism, subjectivism	Interpretivism, subjectivism	Positivism, subjectivism
Nature of theory	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Realism	High	High	Low
Speculation	Low	Low	High
Data accuracy	High	High	Low
Credibility of analysis	High	High	Low

Source: Belk (1993)

Research trustworthiness cannot be assessed and gained through the criteria and methodological techniques shared within positivistic research (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). Therefore, different substitute criteria have been proposed by Wallendorf & Belk, elaborated on the contribution of Lincoln & Guba (1985), and include:

1. **Credibility** (adequate and believable representations of the constructions of reality studied)
2. **Transferability** (extent to which working hypotheses can also be employed in other contexts, based on the assessment of similarity between the two contexts)
3. **Dependability** (extent to which interpretation was constructed in a way which avoids instability other than the inherent instability of a social phenomenon)
4. **Confirmability** (ability to trace a researcher's construction of an interpretation by following the data and other records kept) (...)
5. **Integrity** (extent to which the interpretation was unimpaired by lies, evasions, misinformation, or misrepresentation by informants)" (bold in the source; Wallendorf & Belk, 1989: 70).

The first four criteria in the list are adaptations of the positivistic criteria of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity; the fifth has been added by the authors. On the base of this renewed ground, the main techniques that are going to be employed in order to increase project methodological rigor are: prolonged engagement, triangulation (source, methods, sites, and researchers), on-site interaction, negative cases (non alternation cases), good interviewing technique, safeguarding informant identity, and researcher self-analysis.

5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

5.1 Ethnographic research: steps and sources of information

The selection of ethnographic research techniques has been motivated (§ 4.1), and is consistent with the exploration of consumption behaviors through the cultural lens, which has been typically related to the anthropological tradition. Furthermore, the research goals, which can be synthesized in terms of elaboration of a comprehensive and systemic lecture of migrant's adaptation processes and alternation exits, require a methodological approach able to take into account a plurality of information sources: verbal answers, non verbal communication, pictures, observation of sites and individuals in their sites, artifacts, participation, text view analysis (Venkatesh, 1995), and so forth.

This chapter aims at providing the reader with a general description of the ethnographic work, and with an in depth ethnographic account about main findings, in terms of explanatory variables (chapter 5) and cultural alternation exits (chapter 6).

This paragraph, in detail, highlights the ethnographic process, which has represented a long-lasting experience, both in retrospective and prospective sense.

Referring to *researchers' subjectivity issue* (Peñaloza, 1994), this research project has been led by me, an Italian young adult male, born in Milan e grown up in this town. In that light, the urban setting was more than familiar to me, even though the inquired ethnicity, Egyptians, was an almost new group to approach. In previous researches and in relational terms, in fact, I have been in contact with several migrants, but of different ethnic origins: Albanese, Russian, Peruvian, Brazilian, Argentinean, and almost all kinds of European people. The reasons that led to the choice of Egyptian consumers have already been accounted (§ 4.2) and were confirmed along field work. Given my initial absence of competence in that culture, I have kept, at least during first stages of research, a more virgin approach. What comes to my mind rethinking to that cultural travel is the variety of Egyptians I met. More or less, they share a certain resistance to be contacted, which has been frequently overcome during phone-calls, interviews, and meetings. In particular, this resistance contrasts with the generous way some respondents narrated their life and sentiments, giving a warm understanding of the migration experience and of their everyday life, as individuals and consumers. Ethnographic work has been a stable enrichment, both through the interpretation of

individual stories, which have been elaborated through interview transcripts and individual field grids, and cross-analysis, which increased our understanding of the phenomenon through variety and contrast. Over time, my sense of affiliation, at least in affective sense, to the observed group has remarkably increased. This can be expressed in several terms. First, I started to enter the world of Egyptians, and this reduced the initial distance. Second, I introspectively felt a change in myself. In fact, if at the beginning I was in the researcher's part, and this was for example clear when I asked to take photographs of artifacts and places, I then started to feel closer and to present myself as a person meeting other persons. Roles were somehow self-evident, but my participation to conversation and my respect for the stories I heard were transformed. This can explain the reason why I stopped to take photographs, because it sounded to me as observing strange animals at the zoo. Finally, some of the interviewees are now part of my life, and are waiting to read my conclusions on the work we did together.

In my observation and interpretation process I was not alone. Given my cultural distance with the inquired ethnicity and relying on a psychological lens of interpretation, I was assisted by:

1. *a psychologist*, who participated to the questionnaire elaboration and testing, to the majority of interviews, to the coding and interpretation phases. In addition, this woman has a Master degree on migration, which complements her psychological base with an inner lecture of cultural phenomena. The decision of being a male/female couple of interviewers was also assumed in order to respect Egyptians' cultural traditions. In fact, a Muslim woman would have hardly accept to meet alone a man in her apartment;
2. *a linguistic and cultural mediator*, who represented our link to the Egyptian community. The stable contact with her was necessary and fruitful in terms of questionnaire test, cultural interpretation of certain behaviors and answers, and findings elaboration. She was also a source of information about Egyptian history and culture at large, which traced the framework of the lives we listened to;
3. *a supervising team of experts*, including marketing scholars and a prominent transcultural psychologist, who was precious to adjust research goals and refine literature state of the art.

The *relationship with interviewees* has been consolidated through repeated contacts. We applied the snowballing technique (Water, 1990) in order to gain access to Egyptian respondents, starting from a limited number of closer informants. At the end, we met 21 respondents from 19 households. During observation, we actually interacted with a larger number of individuals, but transcripts and their codification only refer to direct respondents. In several cases, our attempts to enter Egyptians' houses or work places failed. In particular, we did not succeed in obtaining interviews with owners or shop-assistants of Islamic butcher's shops.

Time-management has been frequently tough, both for rational and cultural reasons. In practical terms, Egyptians, as migrants' large majority in general, are hard-workers and have very limited time for social life. Therefore, interviews were conducted in their work places, if possible, or at home in the late evening or during weekends. Some Islamic interviewees, for example, proposed us to meet on Christmas day. On the other hand, cultural biases essentially refer to a more flexible conception of time observed within the Egyptian community: punctuality and respect of appointments have been a hard gap to be filled in.

Referring to the *different research stages*, the elaboration of an a priori model has been the result of the last four years of work. The definition of main variables to be observed, their categorization and operationalization, the theoretical lenses to look at the phenomenon (ethnic studies in consumer behavior and transcultural psychology) have all been progressively revised. Empirical analysis has started with an exploration of sites ("ethnic" shops, neighborhoods, religious sites), and has proceeded with a desk research on the Egyptian community of Milan. Later on, questionnaire was defined and tested, and preliminary information on the Egyptian culture was collected through the linguistic and cultural mediator who participated in the study. Finally, interviewees were run and concentrated in two moments. The first group of interviews, covering 2004, was useful to improve goals focalization and contact a relatively large sample of potential respondents. The second group of interviews, which were planned at the end of 2004 and in the first months of 2005, presented a strong selection of candidates, in order to enforce sample variety and contrast (McCall & Simmons, 1969; Miles & Huberman, 1984), and consistently with a purposive logic (Gibbs, 1997; Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). Typically, the second group of respondents was selected and reached through the snowballing technique, whereas the first group was based on privileged

informants and people met during field observation. Interviewers approach combined pure observation and more active participation: for example, we were involved in tasting Egyptian dishes, we were accompanied in ethnic shops, and we had exchanges with some respondents (small gifts, books, etc.). I cannot say that participation emerged during the second part of the study, because it was much more connected to the specific individuals we met. Some of them were simply more interested in going beyond research mandates, and gave us the beautiful chance to take a wider look into their lives, or to share other experiences.

In terms of *field settings*, interviews were conducted in 12 work places, 7 houses, and two of them were managed at the interviewer's office, because respondents said they were embarrassed for their housing conditions. Given the relevant role of the work sphere to the Egyptian community, which has been frequently presented as an example of good integration within the Italian job market, the possibility of reaching so many work places (schools, restaurants, bakeries, etc.) can be described as a big chance. More or less, all work places we visited presented some traces of respondents' double cultural appurtenance: Italian style, with Egyptian details (paintings, pictures, religious images, Arabian inscriptions, etc.). Referring to houses, we observed very different situations: crowded flats and mono-nuclear apartments; central and peripheral; elegant and poor; shared with family members or with friends. We never had the chance of looking to bedrooms, because all interviews were done in kitchens, dining rooms, and living rooms, and no respondent proposed us to take a look around. As for work places, flats presented Italian furniture combined with some Egyptian components: prayer carpets, Koranic parchments, religious books, which are left in evidence on shelves or tables, and painting or photographs. From time to time, larders were opened to show us specific products or let us directly taste them. Furthermore, part of interviewees was conducted during the Ramadan period, and we could therefore taste Ramadan sweets and biscuits, or have an inner flavor of this fundamental religious celebration.

Finally, *data collection and sources of information* for ethnographic account consisted of:

1. *audio-recorded files*. The 21 interviews generated 1.645 minutes of audio-taped conversation (that is, 27 hours and 25 minutes). Only one respondent (MAN) expressed peremptory refusal to audio-recording. In that case,

meticulous field notes were taken during discussion and a detailed post-interview analytical summary was settled. On average, each interview lasted 1 hour and 22 minutes;

2. *field notes*. During interviews, several comments were signed and generated 378 pages of notes. These notes were particularly precious when audio-recording quality was not good, and could then bias the understanding of respondents' exact words. Furthermore, some interpretative comments were anticipated also at that stage, driving observation and new questions;
3. *individual interpretative grids*. Each interview was integrated by a post-interview individual grid, which at the same time represents a synthesis of main information and a first and individual interpretation of the migrant's narration and profile. Individual interpretative grids acknowledge the analytical dimension of ethnographic study, because they allow a detailed account of the single cases observed. This grid followed a pre-defined format (appendix B) and the final document of individual grids is a 208 pages, double spaced, report;
4. *transcripts*. On the base of audio-recordings, all interviews were taped. When audio recording impeded a literal translation, the sense of discourse was summarized between parentheses. Total transcripts generated a double spaced 610 pages document;
5. *transcript codification*. All transcripts were double codified. Codes were generated both on the basis of the a priori model (variables included in that model), and of the a posteriori information collected on the field. In fact, first interview transcripts were read and compared in order to generate new codes suggested by observation. At the end, a comprehensive and integrated list of codes was generated (appendix C), and included 58 codes (14 of them were empirically derived and added to the a posteriori empirical model). In detail, each piece of information received a double code. The capital letter, ranging from A to I, denotes the general category the observed variable belongs to (individual characteristics, social capital, ethnic affiliation, migratory project, socio-cultural integration, rituals and situational factors, barriers, consumer behavior phases, adaptation outcomes). The number, then, identifies the specific variable that has been considered within a given category. Therefore, B/, for example, identifies the "openness to alterity" variable that belongs to

the category of “social capital” factors. If a given piece of information was insightful for more than one variable analyzed, it was double codified. Two researchers read and codified all the transcripts, and then compared their results. The final version of transcript codification includes only those codifications on which both researchers agreed. By the way, during this interpretive phase researchers showed a high rate of concordance. In that light, comparing their individual codification did not take to remarkable disagreement, but to a deeper interpretation of facts: very frequently, in fact, traits that one of them did not note were captured by the other, and vice versa. At the end, ethnographic interpretation and account have been heavily relied on that informational source (872 pages, double spaced), which has been triangulated with all other sources quoted in that list (Denzin, 1978; Ozanne & Anderson, 1989);

6. *photographs*. We took 117 photographs of artifacts (food in particular), work places, apartments, religious sites, and neighborhoods;
7. *artifacts*. Finally, almost 30 artifacts were collected, including books, food, business cards, and flyers.

On the base of all these information, and relying on a cyclical process of triangulation among different sources and data (primary and secondary, transcripts and observation), it is possible to point out main empirical findings. Following paragraphs present the model explanatory variables, that is, the main hypothesized and observed variables having a role in the exits of cultural adaptation along migration.

The final chapter, then, offers a synthesis of the main conclusions, in terms of adaptation exits, kinds of cultural alternation, and role of culture in individual lives. The empirical model will close the discussion and can be accepted as a general frame of literature review and ethnographic account.

The following figure (fig. 23) provides a comprehensive idea of the people we met and we thanks for having shared ideas and emotions with us. I hope that at least part of their narration will emerge from my account.

Figure 23 - Sample composition

Name	Sex	Age	Education	Rural/ urban	Date arrival	Years in Egypt	Occupation	Household	Language Ability	Religion	Gen.	Citizenship	Adaptation exit
AM	F	17	High school	Urban	'89-'99 2002	4	Student	Father, wife 1 brother	Fluent	Muslim	2°	Egyptian	Alternation
AMI	M	27	High school	Urban	2003	26	Manufacturer	2 Egyptians 1 Romanian	Very low	Copt	1°	Egyptian	Assimilation
EL	F	42	High school	Urban	1982	20	Bakery owner	Husband, 1 daughter	Good	Muslim	1°	Egyptian	Alternation
GRA	F	39	High school	Urban	1977	22	Linguistic mediator	1 son	Fluent	Muslim	1°	Egyptian & Italian	Alternation
HAN	F	26	High school	Urban	2000 2004	22	Shop assistant	2 brothers	Very low	Copt	1°	Egyptian	Proto alternation
HAS	M	40	University graduation	Urban	1991	27	Cook	1 brother, 1 nephew	Good	Muslim	1°	Egyptian	Alternation
IB	M	31	High school	Rural	1995	22	Cook	3 friends, 1 nephew	Low	Muslim	1°	Egyptian	Opposing polarization
IR	M	52	High school	Rural	1974	22	Restaurant owner	Wife, 2 sons	Good	Muslim	1°	Italian	Alternation
JO	M	24	University graduation	Urban	1984	3	Student	Alone (family in Venice)	Fluent	Copt	2°	Italian	Alternation
MAG	F	44	High school	Rural	1980	19	Bakery owner	2 sons, 1 daughter	Fluent	Muslim, Christian	1°	Egyptian & Italian	Alternation
MAI	F	44	High school	Urban	1985	25	Bakery owner	Husband, 3 children	Good	Muslim	1°	Egyptian & Italian	Acculturation

Name	Sex	Age	Education	Rural/ urban	Date arrival	Years in Egypt	Occupation	Household	Language Ability	Religion	Gen.	Citizenship	Adaptation exit
MAN	F	38	University graduation	Urban	1992	26	Linguistic mediator	Husband, 1 son	Good	Copt	1°	Egyptian	Alternation
MAS	M	34	Legal title	Rural	1992	22	Doorman	Wife, 2 children	Low	Copt	1°	Egyptian	Alternation
MER	F	23	High school	Urban		0	Shop assistant	Mother	Fluent	Catholic	2°	Italian	Opposing polarization
MGI	M	32	University graduation	Rural	2001	29	Butler	Alone	Fluent	Copt	1°	Egyptian	Alternation
MO1	M	23	High school	Urban		0	Student and barman	Parents, 2 brothers	Fluent	Muslim	2°	Italian	Alternation
MO2	M	29	University graduation	Urban	2000	25	Manufacturer	3 friends	Good	Muslim	1°	Egyptian	Alternation
OS1	M	34	University graduation	Urban	1993	23	Clerk	Wife, 2 children	Fluent	Muslim	1°	Egyptian	Alternation
OS2	M	35	High school	Urban	1992	23	Owner of service-society	1 brother	Fluent	Copt	1°	Egyptian	Alternation
OSM	M	49	University graduation	Rural	1977	22	Restaurant owner	Wife, 1 son, 1 daughter	Low	Muslim	1°	Egyptian & Italian	Alternation
WIL	M	55	University graduation	Urban	1976	26	Import - export	Wife, 2 sons	Fluent	Copt	1°	Egyptian	Alternation

5.2 Individual characteristics

5.2.1 Sex

Sex in itself does not look to be an influential variable in the explanation of the cultural adaptation exits.

Its relevance may eventually emerge whenever culture is used as a terminal value. An Egyptian woman, for example, described how she educates children and the way she frames their reciprocal relationship. If the son is free to live his own life, even in a westernized way, the daughter has to respect Islamic tenets and, in case of return to Egypt, is going to be forced to follow her parents. In similar cases, sex is used as a castrating or enabling factor, and can therefore be a barrier or a facilitator in terms of alternation achievement and integration.

5.2.2 Age

Sampling technique applied the variety and contrast principle (Miles & Huberman, 1984) also in terms of interviewees' age. The result has been a sample including respondents in the range 17 - 56. On the base of ethnographic findings, age seems to be relatively irrelevant in terms of the selected strategies of cultural adaptation. In fact, the youngest respondent, a second generation girl who was born in Egypt and grown up in Italy, has presented a relatively mature rate of elaboration of her cultural roots, whereas older respondents have, from time to time, shown higher conflict with Italian culture and more dysfunctional reactions to cultural adaptation.

5.2.3 Parents nationality

Within the inquired sample, almost all respondents have both parents of Egyptian origin. A couple of exception can be outlined, being the case of a second-generation girl, who has an Egyptian father and an Italian mother, and a middle-age woman with a father of partially French origins.

Parents' nationality does not seem to play a major role, but sample high homogeneity on that side does not show sufficient contrast in order to draw more precise conclusions. At the same time, the available empirical basis admits a different observation: if parents' nationality does not play a dominant role, the identification of a

given culture with paternal figures is much more important. Sometimes, Egypt has been metaphorically associated to the mother, other times to the father: *MAN "L'Egitto era mio padre"* (*MAN "My father was Egypt."*). This identification principle underlines the role of acculturation media, which are going to receive a separate analysis in the following paragraphs.

5.2.4 Religious appurtenance

Egyptian community presents an inner variance in terms of religious appurtenance. In fact, it is possible to detect a major distinction in terms of the numerically and politically prevailing Muslim (Islamic) group, and the minority represented by Copt Christians. Field analysis included eight respondents of Copt affiliation and thirteen interviewees of Islamic provenience. On average, being religion a key variable in Egyptian everyday life, particular care was given to the possibility of contrasting the two religious groups. In the followings, a synthesis of the main empirical findings is provided, keeping separate respondents in terms of religious affiliation:

1. *Copts*. Copts, whose name comes from the ancient way Egypt was called (in Greek, in fact, Copt means Egyptian), considers themselves as the most ancient component of Egyptian history, and have frequently presented themselves as the "sons of pharaohs". Copt minority is one of the Orthodox subgroup of Christianity, and respondents have prominently categorized themselves as "Christians" tout court. On interviewers' request to give a better definition of religious affiliation, they tended to use the "Orthodox" adjective instead of the more precise "Copt" one, pointing out a preference for more generic and extensive categorizations. In one case, the distinction between Orthodoxies and Copts has been spontaneously provided, being the justification for a more general discussion on the sense and reliability of categories;
2. *Muslims*. Respondents belonging to the Islamic majority have been frequently using as interchangeable the labels "Muslim" and "Arabian", or "Egyptian" and "Muslim". Somehow, this can be described as an expression of trespassing under the perception of being the largely most influential group. Starting from the early Eighties, Egypt has been experiencing a radical change in the way Copt-Muslim relationships are expressed. In the past, this two religious

communities had sound and positive exchanges. A Muslim respondent openly admitted he had been in love with a Christian girl, and that all his friend were Christians. Another Copt man remembered when Christians and Muslims made gift to each other during reciprocal religious ceremonies. On the opposite, year after year things have been changing, and this is probably true in certain geographic areas even more than in others. If this change has been synthetically described as a "religious renaissance" by one Islamic woman (GRA), who emigrated before this processes had started, Copts have presented several shocking experiences occurred in the last period: political persecution (on identity documents it is registered the religious affiliation), houses destruction, verbal and physical threats, and even homicides. MAN "*Mi sputavano in faccia! (...) Era un rapporto orribile*" (MAN "*They split at my face! (...) It was an awful relationship.*").

In itself, religious affiliation has no prescriptive impact on adaptation exits, even though it is strongly related to "openness to alterity", which has emerged as one on the key variables in guiding migrants' elaboration of cultural stimuli.

5.2.5 Marital status

The inquired sample has been relatively heterogeneous in terms of marital status. In fact, it has been possible to meet men and women married with Egyptian consorts, men married with Italian spouses, respondents engaged with persons of different nationalities, singles, and even divorced Egyptian women.

Referring to marital status, the only point that deserves some deeper discussion is the way marriage is arranged and the connection to Egyptian tradition. Large majority of interviewees presented traditional modalities of wife selection, who is frequently chosen by the husband's parents. At the same time, marriage, which is always celebrated in the hometown in strict observation of Egyptian rituals, has also been described as a preliminary step to grant family rejoinings. Through that path, if the way marriage is arranged and celebrated tends to rely on tradition, its exits seem to be less foreseeable. In fact, Egyptians have presented marriage as a way to tie a person to his/her land. On the opposite, migration changes the meaning and perspective of marriage, which tends to be a way to tie a person (typically the wife) to the destiny of

the migrated consort. INT. *“In realtà l’incontro con sua moglie anziché legare lei alla terra, ha legato lei all’Italia...”* OS1 *“Infatti, sì sì! Infatti lei tante volte mi diceva che lei non c’ha mai pensato di lasciare il nostro paese perché è così legata...però alla fine, ha deciso di sì, diciamo.”* (INT *“By the way, the marriage with your wife, instead of rooting you in the land, has tied her to Italy...”*) OS1 *“Yes, of course! In fact, she has repeated me so many times she had never thought to live our country because she is so tied... But, at the end, let’s say she decided to do it...”*). Consistently with that, many of the wives we met have openly admitted they came to Italy only for family ties, and have frequently shown a stronger nostalgia for their country than men do. This is enforced when women are left in their role of wives and mothers, and is conversely contrasted when they have the chance to enter the job market.

5.2.6 Children

The way migrants grow up their children is infused with the elaboration of parents’ cultural adaptation. In that light, also apparently trivial elements, such as the choice of names, can be an interesting observatory to test parental processes of social inclusion. English names are used to provide children with an international “passport”, whereas Italian names are a direct admission of Italian affiliation. Arabian names are a reinforcement of ethnic appurtenance. Similar considerations can be extended to school selection (Italian versus Arabian), educative styles (admitted freedom, sex-based definition of roles, etc.), or language use.

At the same time, children show an educational role on their parents. In fact, they are grown up in the Italian context, have frequent social ties with Italians, and may also feel more Italians than Italians. In that way, for example, if parents may insist in using Arabian language at home in order to transfer linguistic skills to their children, on their turn children are consciously used by parents to increase their knowledge on the Italian context. The dynamics between first and second generation represent a world a part, which was only partially grasped by this research project. Some respondents tend to normalize the debate, saying that possible misunderstandings can be ascribed more to intergenerational distances than to cultural clashes. In other situations, the dynamics are presented in conflicting terms, where a sort of “win-lose” game is played and the winner takes all. By the way, this contrast is not mandatory, because some situations observed presented a sound relationship between first and second generations.

5.3 Social capital

5.3.1 Formal education

Once again, sample composition shows high variance in terms of formal education level. In fact, it includes people with the minimum legal title (9 years), a large group of respondents who finished high school (12 years), and a relatively significant part having a university grade (ranging from 15 up to 17 years of education). Relying on interviewees' accounts, the actual Egyptian educational system includes six years of basic school, three years of legal school, three years of high school, and a variable number of years for university courses, which ranges from four to six.

At the same time, ethnographic interviews raised to attention the possible courses migrants completed in Italy. Egyptians who reached Italy around the late Seventies or the early Eighties had no chance to attend linguistic courses, which were started by public offices and non profit organizations only at the end of the Eighties. For recent comers, on the opposite, linguistic courses have been a frequent "must", and have proved to be useful not only for linguistic skills acquisition, but also for a preliminary understanding of the Italian context. A respondent explicitly defined his teachers as "mediators" with the Italian society (MO2). In isolated cases, then, migrants we met had been involved in professional courses. Those who went on with their education did not attend courses finalized to equipollence achievement. In fact, their Egyptian professional title was typically dismissed, and new professional skills were built in order to meet Italian job market possibilities (cooks, tourist guides, linguistic and cultural mediators, etc.) and fit the social discourse built around migrants' presumed occupational specializations. Only one respondent has entered the Italian high school for personal interest, and for the possibility of going on with Italian university.

Another empirical finding relates to second generations, which attest a capability of learning from and capitalizing on their parents' experience. In fact, their double cultural competence has been depicted as a distinctive resource that can make the difference and can be exploited in the job market.

Summing up, respondents with higher formal education rates tend to carry on their education in Italy, and show more motivation and ambition in terms of career

development, even if their professional occupation can be totally divergent in terms of their Egyptian title. In that light, it is not possible, on the base of our empirical data, to conclude that formal education directly impact on the adaptation exits. In fact, some alternating respondents do not belong to the mostly educated minority. At the same time, the higher the educational level, the higher the propensity to further education and the need of professional empowerment. An Egyptian man, owner of a couple of restaurants and graduated in engineering, so comment his work experience: OSM *“Non avevo avuto prima passione per la cucina. Non avevo mai pensato di fare il cuoco io. Di cucinare, di finire così. Però ho trovato una persona, e sono finito a farlo. Devo studiare...anche per fare il cuoco...”* (OSM *“I have never had a particular interest for cuisine before. I have never thought to be a cook. Of cooking, of doing this life. But I met a person, and here I am. I have to study, also to be a cook...”*).

5.3.2 Other experiences of migration

One inquired variable has been represented by the presence of other migration experiences, the idea being that they may constitute a resource migrants can rely on during their adaptation to the Italian context. In fact, if cultures may also be very different, the competence of crossing them seems to be less contextualized and more transferable resource.

Unfortunately, only a couple of cases presented some previous migration experience. All other observed situations showed an almost direct arrival to Italy, due to the fact that Egyptian migrants seem to carefully select the destination of migration before leaving. They also tend to enter Italian frontiers after getting a tourist visa for other foreign countries. Most of them, in fact, narrated that they first reached a different country, and then obtained a tourist visa to get to Italy.

The two observed exceptions refer to a second generation girl, who alternated long periods of residency between Egypt and Italy, and a man who concluded his studies in France, and then moved to Italy. Both of them present mature alternation exits, but our sample composition does not allow any definite conclusion on the impact of this variable in terms of adaptation strategies.

5.3.3 Rural versus urban origin

Respondents' origin is vary varied, even though almost all of them come from town located in the northern or central parts of Egypt. In particular, one quarter of them is from El Cairo, and almost all have been living along Nile's shores.

Rural versus urban origin has been frequently regarded to be an indirect measure of individual resources, under the assumption that metropolitan migrants may dispose of higher experience of western lifestyles or encounters. Our empirical findings tend to disconfirm this hypothesis, because migrants of rural origin did not systematically show greater problems in adapting to the Italian context, nor they had greater difficulties in elaborating the cultural merging. On the opposite, they have presented the highest picks of openness to otherness, and a more structured capability of conflict resolution than their urban counterparts. Furthermore, within the rural sub-sample this propensity to alterity has also been frequently combined with a more emotional approach to others, who are "felt" and not only perceived, and with a stronger disposition to support people in states of need.

Concluding, it seems that the impact of this variable is essentially negligible on the adaptation exits. At the same time, our observations seem to break the western stereotype that wants rural people as close and slow: rural respondents, in fact, contextually showed openness to alterity and high levels of formal education.

5.3.4 Occupation

Sample composition has been relatively varied in terms of respondents' occupation, taken into account the strong Egyptian specialization in a few industries (restaurants and bakery shops, in particular). In fact, we interacted with: cooks, bakers, linguistic and cultural mediators, manufactures, butlers, students, barmen, teachers, clerks, and shop-assistants.

From empirical observation two main dimensions turn out to be important in the interpretation of occupation, which has been often presented as the driving motivation of Egyptian migration and life (Semi, 1999):

1. *adhesion versus refusal of work stereotypes*. As already traced, social discourse depicts Egyptians as good cooks and bakers. This stereotype has no real foundations, given that Egyptians do not have strong tradition in bread-

making nor men are accustomed to cooking in their homeland. Nevertheless, this stereotypes play a reassuring and normalizing function, because they facilitate social acceptance of Egyptian workers within predefined industries. The rationales of ethnic specialization are still largely unexplained, even though an intriguing idea, emerged through cross-analysis, sustains the possibility that specialization emerges as a result of labor shortages in a given moment and new ethnic flows entering a country in the same period. Once new ethnic groups start to fill in certain temporary job gaps, they go on building networks and social discourse is constructed around. Conscious of the existing stereotypes, some respondents have accepted to ride this horse, and have generally been appreciated as cooks or bakers. At the same time, other migrants selected different paths, and have followed two main directions. On one side, some of them refused stereotypes and tried to enter the traditional Italian job market (i.e., shop-assistants, clerks, barmen, etc.). In other situations, new professions (i.e., linguistic and cultural mediators) or a substitution of Italians in stereotypic Italian professions (i.e. Italian teacher, import-export, etc.) represented an even stronger attempt to find a job free from any social conditioning;

2. *employees versus entrepreneurs or professionals.* A second dimension enlightening the rate of empowerment achieved (and achievable) in the job market is represented by the acceptance or refusal of the entrepreneurial risk. On one hand, employees refuse that risk, whereas people involved in new enterprises or acting as professionals tend to follow a more dangerous but potentially fruitful path. Perhaps, the employee condition is almost a necessity during the first stages of migration, and can therefore be presented as a potentially temporary stage, which can be later reversed into a more autonomous profession. These two dimensions can be combined and give origin to a 3x2 positioning matrix (fig. 24).

A certain correlation between employees in stereotypic professions and adaptation exits has somehow emerged, confirming that this category of migrants seems to have stronger problems in elaborating cultures and achieving a deeper social integration. At the same time, as already discussed, these migrants frequently are the recent comers. In that light, occupation has to be controlled with years of residency. It can be then

assumed that only a systemic lecture of the picture may lead to a precise interpretation of facts, whereas cause-effect dynamics seem to be distorting.

Figure 24 - Occupational strategies

	Employees	Entrepreneurs and professionals
Adhesion to stereotypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ cooks ▪ butlers and housekeepers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ bakers
Entrance into the traditional job market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ clerks ▪ barmen ▪ waitresses ▪ shop assistants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ owner of cleaning services firms
Substitution in Italian stereotypic roles and new professions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Italian teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ import-export businessman ▪ owners of Italian restaurants ▪ linguistic and cultural mediators ▪ owners of phone-centers and internet points

5.3.5 Income

Even though this variable was not directly measured, in order to preserve the atmosphere of trust and respect built over time, it was indirectly captured through observation. Migrants' houses, their artifacts, clothes, household dimension, occupation, holidays, leisure time preferences have all be indirect but rich indicators of respondents' income ranges. On that base, I can confidently conclude that sample composition covered all possible situations, from states of deprivation up to condition of economic healthiness. The same location of households has varied in different parts of the town, and covered central districts as well as peripheral suburbs.

Referring to the possible role of this variable, by definition income has a double nature. On one hand, it is an outcome index, and measures the rate of professional realization. Consistently with that, entrepreneurs constitute the pyramid pick, and their economic state is readable as the result of years of hard word and commercial skills. At the same time, income plays as an enabling factor, because money can have an instrumental use. In respondents' narratives, for example, it has been a tool to facilitate

people's diets in their kitchen, because pizza and pasta are often translated into the following global trends in their consumption patterns: local adaptations. More limited cases are those of adaptations who legal family reunions, to increase the frequency of visits to Egypt, or to help relatives taste Italian products imported from Italy by relatives and friends who have and other family members in their professional carrier and along the integration process. Another fundamental use of money relates to the chance of buying a house, given Italian low propensity to renting flats to foreigners.

Coming to a conclusion, there may be a connection between income and alternation, but I would not argue the connection is shapeable in cause-effect terms. In fact, as said, income level can be read as the exit of a successful process of socio-economic integration, and in that light is more an indicator of outcome than an explanatory variable of alternation. At the same time, income is tied to occupation and years of residency. Therefore, the intertwined nature of this set of variables has to be considered together, and not in separate terms.

5.3.6 Pre-migration Italian cultural competence

Another variable that has been considered as a possible influencer of individual resources is represented by respondents' cultural competence in Italian culture before migration. In that case, a pre-existing contact with Italy can be due to:

1. *Egyptian media*. Television, radio, books, or newspaper may have transferred images, and representations of the Western world, at large, and of Italy in particular. This media-filtered competence is a double edged sword, because it provides an anticipation of western life, but facilitates the oneiric emergence of false dreams. Misaligned expectations have been narrated in several occasions. An Egyptian woman, for example, expected to find an English-style urban structure, which is hardly comparable to real Milan landscape. OS1 "Se parliamo di televisori, se parliamo dei film, appena si vede un posto in Italia, appena si vede un posto in Europa, come si dice...è, sono un altro mondo. È un mondo di favole, per cui ti porta subito col desiderio di andare, a provare, a vedere, a assaggiare." (OS1 "If we refer to television, to films, as soon as an Italian place is showed, as soon as an European landscape is presented, ... it's another world. It's a world of fairy tales, which suddenly infuses you with the desire of going there, of trying, of seeing, of tasting...");
2. *food experience*. Another possible way to taste Italian culture during the period of residency in Egypt is through Italian cuisine. Pizza and pasta are the most well-known Italian dishes, and, under tourists' pressure, they started to be relatively diffused in Egypt too. Once again, this experience may bias

3. *on the opposite, work position on its own seems to be a weak predictor of the rate of openness to otherness. The case of one interviewee, who works as a linguistic and cultural mediator in public health services, paradigmatically points out this aspect. MAN "Io ho vissuto con loro (riferito ai musulmani). Mi sono abituata a vivere con loro, anche se non mi piace. Mi comporto con loro uguale. Non mi piace che hanno fatto tanto male in Egitto. Io personalmente non mi fido di loro, non ho amici. Ma sul lavoro no. Devi sopportarli per forza. E' un rapporto schifoso" (MAN "I lived with them (referring to Muslims). I've got used to live with them, even if I don't like. I behave in the same way with them. I don't like they did so many bad things in Egypt. I personally don't trust them, I don't have friends between them, but not at work. At work I must bear them, there's no choice. It's a disgusting relation").*

Summarizing, the rate of openness to alterity seems to play a major role in the ways migrants acquire and elaborate their cultural competence in the host country. In particular, empirical cases sustain a positive connection between rate of openness and alternation exits of socio-cultural inclusion.

5.4 Ethnic affiliation

5.4.1 Declared nationality

The inquired sample shows variation in terms of nationalities of the interviewees: the majority of first generation respondents still has the sole Egyptian nationality, whereas second generations mostly have the sole Italian one, but for partially different reasons (MER identifies herself with her Italian origin, MO1 identifies Italy as his "home country", JO presents a conflicting relationship with his country of origin). A smaller set of interviews disposes of the Egyptian and the Italian citizenships. This state is typically presented with a sentiment of praise and honor. MAG "Sono fiera di dire che porto due passaporti: sono di origine egiziana, adesso sono italiana" (MAG "I am proud to say I have two passports: I have Egyptian origins, now I'm Italian").

At the same time, the acquisition of the Italian citizenship is described as complex and difficult, being dominated by bureaucracy and racism. IB "adesso ho fatto la richiesta per la carta di soggiorno, ma la legge italiana vuole tante cose. Un casino della madonna! (...) così loro fanno i razzisti con noi, sono qua da 12 anni... anche se prendi l'avvocato è un macrocasino..." (IB "Now I submitted a demand to get my visa, but Italian laws require so many things. It's all a mess! (...) They discriminate us. I've been living there for 12 years... Even if you take a lawyer it's an awful mess..."). Furthermore, the question of nationality is infused of emotional meanings (praise, sense of belonging, self-identification, etc.). Therefore, also in situations where the two nationalities may be available, the choice of

accepting or renouncing to one of them is still presented as something very personal. *INT* "Per caso, ha acquisito anche la cittadinanza italiana?" *WIL* "Mai pensato, mai penserò. Tengo la mia. Anche perché è la mia terra natale, tutto lì... non perché non voglio averla, però il discorso della cittadinanza è una cosa particolarmente personale. Nient'altro" (*INT* "Did you get Italian citizenship?" *WIL* "Never thought about it, and I'll never do. I keep mine. Also because it's my motherland, that's why. It's not because I don't want it. Anyway, the question about citizenship is really a very personal thing. Nothing more than this").

By the way, alternation exits have been observed in individuals presenting completely different nationalities (only Egyptian, only Italian, the two of them). This should lead to conclude that nationality/citizenship per se does not play a determinant role and cannot be used as a detector of the cultural adaptation strategy pursued by migrants.

5.4.2 Felt Egyptian ethnicity

A traditional way of measuring ethnic attachment to the culture of origin is through a five point Likert scale. This measure was replicated in the study, but followed an ethnographic approach. In fact, after a preliminary request of numerical evaluation of the respondent's attachment to his/her culture of origin, a deeper discussion over the motives and rationales of his/her answer was questioned. In that light, it was possible to get a clearer and thicker idea of a migrant's cognitive and/or emotional levers that maintain him/her in or push away him/her from his/her culture of origin. The interpretation of ethnic attachment was triangulated through a couple of further information: on one hand, the expressed attachment to Italian culture was kept in mind; on the other, the meta-strategies that different respondents pursued in order to combine different cultural stimuli were taken into consideration, because they show the proactive or adaptive approach to cultural "provocation".

Within the inquired sample, the variety of answers in terms of ethnic affiliation was striking. In a couple of cases a low attachment to the culture of origin (evaluation = 2) was declared: this could be explained in terms of negative experience with the culture of origin, which was identified with the father in one case (absent and distant along the respondent's infancy) and with the Muslim persecutions over Copts in the second case. All other respondents aligned in terms of high retention of their cultural roots, even though they offered a certain variety in terms of expressed strength of attachment

(evaluation = 4 versus evaluation = 5) and motives of attachment (more cognitive versus more emotional).

In a few cases, a direct request of estimating one's attachment to his/her culture of origin generated misunderstanding. In all these cases, such a misunderstanding was induced by an absent or attenuated explicitation of the cultural construct. Cultural salience had in fact been filtered by linguistic problems, which were overcome through translation or exemplification, or by cognitive lacks, which could not be eliminated and lead to a non-answer to that question. By the way, if it is true, as early hypothesized by Vygotsky (1978), that language shapes mind, the fact of missing the notion of culture can reveal relevant limitations in the resources at the disposal of these migrants in the negotiation among cultures.

On the base of observations and answers collected, and through a triangulation of these information with other parts of the ethnographic interviews, the rate of ethnic affiliation to the culture of origin does not seem to have the highest predictive power in terms of cultural adaptation exits. Two other dimensions, in fact, seem to provide the observer with a higher predictive power of the ways migrants may afford the task of traveling across cultures:

1. *the way cultural linkages are analyzed.* In some cases, in fact, cultures have been processed in a much more rational way, and lead to a "cognitive path to culture", which includes the possibility of using culture in an opposing form (maintaining one's cultural roots can be a defense strategy against the risks of assimilation). In other cases, cultural reflection can be dominated by emotional, generative, and magic dimensions: culture as the mother, culture as a tree whose fruits can be taken away along the migration process, culture as the first air breathed. MAG "Sono molto legata a quella terra e molto fiera, ma come un legame tra madre e figlia. Io comunque devo distaccarmi da mia madre per la mia crescita, ma riconosco questa radice..." (MAG "I'm very tied to that land and I'm very proud, but in the way a daughter is tied to her mother. I have to part from my mother in order to grow up, but I'm still conscious of this root...") - IR "Io quando parto e vado in Egitto sento un'altra aria. Questa è la prima aria che ho respirato. Non perché qua c'è lo smog: la c'è lo smog 1000 volte più che qua, però è la prima aria che respiri." (IR "When I leave and go to Egypt, I breathe another air. This is the first air I breathed. It's not because here it's polluted: Egyptian air is 1000 times more polluted than here, but that's the first air I've breathed");
2. *the way migrants approach the transformation of their cultural identity, of their cultural self (selves).* Some of them, in fact, tend to show a much more

“adaptive” path to cultural identity reconstruction, and are willing to describe these changes as something they cannot control or something natural. MO2 “Arriva prima sempre l'italiano. Sempre italiano” (MO2 “Italian words come always first. Always Italian”). - OS2 “All'inizio volevo rimanere egiziano, ma poi è stato più forte di me. E' normale che la persona cambia. Sono qui da dieci anni, è normale. Cambia il modo di vivere, di mangiare, il rapporto con le persone” (OS2 “At the beginning I wanted to remain Egyptian, but then things were stronger than me. It's normal that a person changes. I've been living there for ten years, it's normal. Lifestyles change, foods change, so do relations with people”). Others prefer to assume a “proactive” approach, and are typically engaged into a critical comparison between cultures, in the permanent attempt of dismissing what is wrong in the two of them and maintaining what is right. Perhaps, the right/wrong assessment of cultural contents operates at an individual level, enforcing the proactive nature of this strategy. IR “Quando guardo la cultura, di tutti i paesi che ho conosciuto, io vivo la cultura, applico certe cose perché ci sono cose giuste. Giuste magari per me” (IR “When I look at culture of all the countries I've seen, I live culture, I dispose of certain things because they are right. At least, right to me”).

Figure 25 - Strategies of elaboration of ethnic affiliation

	Cognitive and opposing approach	Emotional, generative, and magic approach
Adaptive paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ naturality of changes ▪ rational elaboration of ethnic affiliation ▪ (EL, MAS, MER, MO2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ naturality of changes ▪ emotional and metaphorical elaboration of ethnic affiliation ▪ (MAN, MGI)
Proactive paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ critical elaboration of changes ▪ rational elaboration of ethnic affiliation ▪ (GRA, OS2, WIL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ critical elaboration of changes ▪ emotional and metaphorical elaboration of ethnic affiliation ▪ (IR, MAG, MO1, OS1, OSM)

5.4.3 Number of years lived in Egypt

As a general remark, respondents have on average spent the first 22 years of their lives in their country of origin (Egypt). When they left earlier than this, they expressed a feeling of anger, not being ready for the migration experience. INT *"Sei partita giovanissima"* MAG *"È per questo che sono arrabbiata"* (INT *"You left Egypt very young"* MAG *"That's why I'm so angry"*).

The number of years spent in the country of origin seems to play a relevant role in the depth and quality of cultural competence acquired. In fact, it can be read as a chance of:

1. *being exposed to acculturation media*. The country of origin provides an almost infinite number of media through which culture can be perceived and experienced: individuals, family and neighbourhood ties, scholar system, work environment, natural and urban landscapes, communication media, and artefacts at large;
2. *making experience of acculturation media in their context*. Culture can be learnt in several ways, but the possibility of interacting with acculturation media, which are shaped as depositories of a given culture, is much richer whenever this media are located in their context. This chance, in fact, reduces risks of distortion. INT *"Le era già capitato di provare prodotti italiani prima di arrivare in Italia?"* WIL *"No. Cioè sì, ma fuori dai confini italiani non esiste (...) Bisogna dimenticarlo, tanto è vero che l'ultimo caffè lo bevo all'aeroporto e il primo all'aeroporto!"* (INT *"Did you taste Italian food before your arrival to Italy?"* WIL *"No, well yes. But it doesn't exist outside Italian borders. (...) Forget it! That's why I drink my last coffee at the airport, and the first at the airport as well"*);
3. *learning a "living" culture*. Whenever a person detaches from a given socio-cultural context, as in the case of migration, his/her knowledge of that culture tends to stop and crystallize. Cultures are, in fact, constantly under modifications. One of the respondents pointed out that the knowledge she kept away from Egypt - what she calls the "fruits" of her culture of origin - has progressively become obsolete, because the way she experienced Egyptian culture does no longer fit the actual state. She reported that "the fruits she took no longer exist in Egypt".

Years of residency in the country of origin is a critical point also for second generations. If they do not have direct contacts with their country of origin (holidays, travels, or some years of residency), they tend to identify this culture in the paternal

figures they have (Mery). On the opposite, those who have spent some time in Egypt tend to increase their critical lecture of the Egyptian culture, and may negotiate its meanings also with their parents (John, Amany, but also Mohamed 1).

5.4.4 Felt religion

Felt religion has been frequently described as a sensitive and private area of life, even though it may invest also the public dimension, as in the case of participation to religious ceremonies and rituals. Within the Egyptian community two main religions have been observed. On one hand, the mainstream position is led by the Islamic community, which largely dominates in terms of number of affiliates and political power. On the other, the Copt Christians are still a minority group, and have been frequently quoting situations of discrimination and even persecution in their country of origin, due to their religious appurtenance. MAN *"Mi sputavano in faccia per la strada (...) Un anno hanno bruciato tutte le case dei cristiani"* (MAN *"They spited at my face in the streets" (...) One year they burnt all Christians' houses"*). In a way, during the late Eighties, Egypt has started a religious renaissance in terms of fundamentalism within the Islamic community, and has enforced the religious distinction both within the Islamic group, between Islamic and extremists, and outside the Islamic community, between Islam and Copts. A tangible confirm has been raised across interviews, because the large majority of respondents has all called for a resolution of conceptual misunderstandings in the field of religious appurtenance:

1. *Islam and extremism.* Within the Islamic community, a feeling of self-separation from extremists is largely perceived. Muslim respondents, in fact, tend to point out that their belonging to the Islamic religion does not have to be confused as a form of extremism. MAI *"Fanatica no, ma religiosa"* (MAI *"I'm religious, still I'm not fanatical"*). MAG *"Io ho conosciuto un Islam molto al di là del pacifismo, veramente pacifista (...). Purtroppo questi sono rimasti all'alfa e al beta. Non per altro si chiamano integralisti"* (MAG *"I came to know a kind of Islam which was far beyond pacifism, which was really peaceful (...). Unfortunately these people remain at alfa-beta stage. It's not by chance they are called 'extremists'"*);
2. *Islam and Christians.* At the same time, Copts largely underline their distance from Muslims, because they run the risk of a double discrimination. Within the Egyptian boundaries, they in fact represent a religious minority being attacked by the Islamic extremists. Within the boundaries of migration, that is, in Italy, they run the risk of being confused with Muslims, and may therefore be included in the "post September 11th" phenomenon. MAS *"Il mio problema adesso è*

che l'italiano non conosce bene la differenza tra il musulmano e il cristiano, questo è il problema. Cristiano è un'altra cosa di musulmano. Cristiano non fare casino, non fare come Bin Laden, questa un'altra cosa. Però qua in Italia quando vedi la faccia, come arabi, allora dici "tutto arabo", invece no. Casino... la gente nel 2004 deve sapere che c'è musulmano e c'è cristiano" (MAS "Now the trouble to me is that Italians don't get the difference between Muslims and Christians. Christians are different from Muslims. Christians don't bother, they don't behave as Bin Laden does, that's another question. Here, as Italians look at an "Arabian face" it seems all the same to them, "all Arabians", which is not. It's a mess... In 2004 people must be conscious there are Christians and Muslims").

By the way, the modality respondents live their religious attachment is much more a matter of personal characteristics than a question of religious affiliation. In fact, both within the Islamic and the Copt communities it is possible to find individuals with stronger normative basis, who tend to literally follow religious norms, and others who more critically judge and select religious mandatory principles. AM *"certe cose le vado a rispettare altre invece vado un po' più a rifletterci (...) A seconda della situazione in cui mi trovo, delle scelte che devo fare, se mi devo basare su un punto della religione. Ci penso molto attentamente prima di decidere"* (AM *"I respect certain things, but I think over others. (...) According to situations and choices I make, I decide if I have to rely on religion or not. I think over very carefully before taking decisions"*). Those who show a more critical approach to religion are frequently critical also towards different cultures, and therefore operate a selection of those cultural elements that can improve their quality of personal and social life.

Another point emerged through investigation refers to the evolutionary and dynamic nature of religious attachment. Some respondents, in fact, quoted the transformation of their religious affiliation over time. The main causes of this changes have been detected in: the transformation of the context, the migratory experience, and the different lifestyles and rhythms of their Italian life. Particular interest is played by the external context, which took some of them to a weaker religious attachment, thanks to a more Occidentalized approach to religious life. For others, on the opposite, the secularization and laicization of Western life worked as a reinforcing factor, which stimulated their religious attachment. INT *"Era più forte quando era in Egitto, lo sentiva di più (il legame con la religione)?"* AMI *"Sì"* (INT *"Was your attachment to religion stronger when you lived in Egypt?"* AMI *"Yes, it was"*). The migratory experience, when used as a tool to critically contrast cultural contexts and escape from ethnocentric positions, has also been a useful device to reinvent and modify respondents religious life. IR *"Magari un bicchiere di vino o bere il whiskey, queste cose sì. Anche queste sono cose molto lontane dalla nostra cultura, però io condivido anche – ripeto – la cultura del paese in cui vivo"* INT

"E quindi da uno a cinque potrebbe dire..." IR "Tre, o anche meno. E parlando di dieci anni fa, sarebbe stato 10" (IR "Yes, I do these kind of things, maybe drinking a glass of wine or a whiskey. These kind of things are very far from our culture, but I also share culture of the country I live in." INT "Then, on a five point scale, would you say..." IR "Three, or even less. Ten years ago it would have been ten..."). Finally, Italian life, through its rhythms and job predominance, has been described as a factor attenuating religious ties. Nevertheless, this position enlightens a poor vision of religion, which is essentially described as a collection of rituals and ceremonies a person has to attend to. OS2 "Una persona rimane legata alla religione quando non ha da fare. Uno che arriva a Milano e lavora, piano piano si distacca" (OS2 "A person keeps tied to religion when he doesn't have anything else to do. A person who comes to Milan and works will slowly detaches from religion").

To conclude, despite the side of verbal declarations in terms of one's religious affiliation once again measured through a five point Likert scale, the same behavioral sphere has been investigated. Religious attachment, in fact, emerges from several aspects of everyday life: use of religious sites (churches and mosques), celebration of religious moments (Ramadan, Christmas, etc.), time devoted to prayers, linguistic preferences, consumption (halal meat, avoidance of alcohol and pork meat, etc.), and even commercial praxes. INT "E' molto importante per lei la religione?" IB "Solo il mese del Ramadan. Il mese di Ramadan arrivo di più...più forte anche per il Dio" (INT "Is religion very important to you?" IB "On Ramadan month, I feel it more, it's more strong my affiliation with God") - HAS "Per motivi di religione preferisco sempre l'arabo" (HAS "For religious reasons, I always prefer the Arabian language") - MAI "Qua non c'è la birra, non c'è neanche prosciutto...maiale, roba di maiale" (MAI "We don't sell beer or ham, generally we don't sell any kind of pork meat"). Religious ties are therefore a powerful explanatory variable of individual behaviors, also within the marketplace both in the consumer and in the supplier roles.

5.4.5 Frequency of travels to Egypt

A further variable that emerged as a possible lens of a migrant's sense of affiliation to the country of origin is represented by the frequency of his/her visits to one's homeland. This variable was not taken into account in the a priori model, and emerged from field observation when investigating the dimension of spare-time, and holidays in particular.

It is important to point out that the frequency of visits may be biased by several factors: bureaucratic ties, for example due to the long time required to get a regular visa in Italy; high costs of travel; high sensibility to savings, due to personal and professional projects embedded in the migratory project; problems in obtaining long periods of holidays for employees. Therefore, a reduced frequency of visits has to be

interpreted at the light of these and other possible barriers. An example of strategy that forces these barriers is offered by the use of Internet and webcams in order to see one's family members still living in Egypt. *EL* "I miei figli vanno su Internet, così io parlo con mia mamma, li vedo (...) Ce l'ha... davanti a casa, c'è il signore che lavora là, è che lui le prende la linea e le dice 'signora parla' " (*EL* "My children are Internet users, and that's how I can talk to my mother, I can see them (...) She has an Internet point in front of her house. There's a man working there, he gets the connection and tell her 'now you can speak'").

Most of respondents quoted summer holidays as the period for going back to their hometown. On the opposite, other holidays are used in order to make short trips in Italian towns or to take part in Italian celebrations: a junior Muslim interviewee, for example, explained what Christmas means to her, being a moment to be shared with friends and not with her family, differently from the Christian tradition. In different words, she has been able to adjust her interpretation and use of a Catholic tradition in a creative manner. In this way, holidays can be seen as a stage on which migrants play their double cultural competence, alternating visits to their home country and moments of exploration in the Italian culture.

What are, then, the feelings attached to these visits back to Egypt? The majority of them tends, more or less explicitly, to admit that these journeys are not interpretable as "holiday", but as a way to meet their families. Therefore, the feelings attached to these moments seem to be less connected to states of fun and more linked to the joy of renewing family ties, in particular with one's parents. *MAN* "Vado tutti gli anni. In Egitto non è vacanza" (*MAN* "I go every year. It is not a holiday when I go to Egypt"). Furthermore, year after year migrants tend to perceive Italy as their "home" or, at least, as "another home". Therefore, their link to Egypt seems to lose connection to the land and house, and tends mainly to focus on family members who did not move. *EL* "Quando vado in Egitto è una gioia perché vedo mio papà, mie sorelle... Cioè io ho la casa là, però non è per la casa, è per le persone, invece qua sì, per lavoro, casa" (*EL* "When I go to Egypt, it's a joy because I can see my father and my sisters... Well, I've a house there, but I'm not happy with the house. It's just for persons I meet. On the contrary, here it's work, home..."). In some situations, then, interviewees also explained how it is hard to go back to some Egyptian traditions or routines: the frequency of visits, the continuous presence of children and relatives, and so forth. This may even induce them to anticipate their departure for Italy, both in praxis or, more simply, in terms of "desiderata".

As a general remark, second generations tend to live these visits in a different way: their frequency is generally lower, the “holiday” dimension is stronger, the people they miss do not coincide with their parents but with grandfathers/mothers, and, for those of them who were born in Italy, Egypt is not a “home” to go back to.

5.4.6 Family roots in Egypt

Nevertheless, a full understanding of the frequency of travels to Egypt requires its triangulation with another variable, being expressed by the presence/absence and kind of family roots in Egypt. In general terms, the strongest ties are those towards one’s parents. Sometimes, Egypt itself has been identified with one of the parents: the father to MAN, the mother to MGA. Only one interviewee quoted the importance of friends he is still in contact with.

Why, then, do family roots affect visits to Egypt? It is essentially a question of meanings attributed to these visits. In fact, a significant and atypical situation is the one experienced by the sole respondent who has been successful in transferring his whole family to Italy. In his experience, flying back to Egypt may either mean to go there for work (he is involved in an import-export activity) or taking a holiday in places that do not coincide with his hometown (typically, around the Red Sea). Once family roots disappear, work or holiday may be new motives of visiting Egypt, whereas rejuvenating family ties is the leading rationale for those migrants who still have a family there.

5.5 Migratory project

5.5.1 Stability of the migratory project

The condition of double cultural competence is at the same time associated to a feeling of double exclusion. The cultural identity matured in the host country makes it harder to go back to the country of origin. At the same time, the homeland’s voice goes on calling his children during migration, and the nostalgia for one’s roots is steadily felt. Furthermore, alternatives (Italy versus Egypt) cannot be described as one superior to the other, because each of them presents its own advantages/weakness, and those enforce uncertainty about a final choice. *MGI “Sono tra due fuochi! La vita di immigrato non è facile, in Europa si sentono tantissime belle cose: la democrazia, i diritti umani, la libertà, la civiltà, come ti trattano. E’ un sogno per tutti*

quelli che vivono in un paese arabo, islamico, vedere tutta questa libertà che c'è qua... Però, dall'altro lato, c'è la mancanza della famiglia, la mancanza degli amici, la mancanza del lavoro, la mancanza della terra...le mie radici... Per questo non sono ancora deciso" (MGI *I'm between two fires! Immigrant's life is not easy, you can touch such beautiful things in Europe: democracy, human rights, freedom, politeness, the way you are treated by people. It's a dream for all people coming from an Arabian, Islamic country to see all this freedom... But, on the other side, I miss my family, my friends, my work, and the land...my roots... This is why I'm still suspended*”).

Despite these conflicting and complex considerations, the majority of respondents still wish or plan to definitely go back to Egypt. The motivations may be relatively various: to the elderly, Egypt is perceived as the place to spend the last years of life or the illness moments. OSM *"Per la mia vecchiaia, andrò in Egitto. Io non faccio la mia pensione qua, vado a riposare un po' tra i miei poverini, non con la gente ricca. Non ho voglia di ricordare se ho fatto poco o ho fatto tanto, perché qua ho fatto tanti sacrifici (...) Voglio andare a casa mia con i miei poverini, non con gente ricca che fa una vita così, tutta di corsa"* (OSM *"For my retirement, I'll go back to Egypt. I'll not spend my last years here; I'm going to rest among my poor men, not among rich people. I don't want to judge what I did, much or little, because I did so many sacrifices here. (...) I want to go back to my home with my poor friends. I don't want to stay with these rich people, who always live in a hurry"*). - GRA *"Se non sto bene allora mi trasferisco giù per essere assistita. (...) Se anche devo morire, speriamo che muoio durante le vacanze perché sennò rimarrei qua e questo proprio..."* (GRA *"In case of illness, then I'm going to live in Egypt to have someone looking after me. (...) If I have to die, I hope I'll die during holidays, because otherwise I must stay here, which I really don't want..."*). On the opposite, to the younger ones, the idea of moving back to the homeland is associated to the project of starting a new activity, which represents the major declared goal embedded in the migratory project. At the same time, only a few respondents seem to have undertaken structured plans in order to achieve their finality of leaving Italy, and therefore present a low realism beyond their claims. In fact, many of them admit to be willing of taking time and waiting for the right moment to move back. MAS *"Da quando sono arrivato qua, preso un'altra vita allora continuato così, allora non riesco ad andare via subito di qua allora... Aspettiamo un momento e vediamo come..."* (MAS *"Since I came here, I've taken another way of living and I've been going on like this, so... I cannot leave immediately... Let's wait a bit and see what will come..."*).

The motivations and emotional states of those migrants who acknowledge the stability of their migration in Italy are various. Some of them present a positive motivation and even a sort of "flow experience" associated to their staying in Italy, which, from case to case, raises from a strong identification in their new life, family ties, or the awareness of a higher quality of life achieved through migration. MAG *"E' come se ti fossi fatto un vestito idoneo, proprio tuo. È come quando sei entrato anche nel pensiero, nella politica, nello spirito di un popolo: allora tu appartieni a questo popolo. Anche perché è un popolo davvero bello vario"* (MAG *"It's like you*

had a perfectly fitting dress, cut on you, really yours. When you enter people's mind, politics, people's spirit, you then belong to that people. Even because it's a really varied population.") - MAN "*Quando ti abitui a una cosa bella, andare in giù non è facile*" (MAN "*When you get accustomed to a beautiful thing, then it's not easy going down*"). At the same time, family ties on their own can be enough to maintain the migration stability, but may fail in eliminating the nostalgia for the loss of the mother country. IR "*Non credo che devo tornare, andare in qualche altro paese, perché i figli sono qua, nati qua. La vita è qua, basta. Anche se questa è una cosa che non è bella, perché non è bella, ma è una cosa della vita. Bisogna accettarla*" (IR "*I don't think I must go back to Egypt or to another country, because my children are here, they were born here. Life is here, that's all. It's not a beautiful thing, because it isn't, but it's life. It has to be accepted.*"). As it was put in one respondent's metaphor, the lion ever misses its jungle, even after years of work at the cirque...

By the way, stability of the migratory project per se does not seem to have a direct impact on the exit of cultural adaptation. In fact, mature forms of alternation can be detected both within those respondents who claim they are willing to stay and among those who wish to move back to Egypt. On the opposite, what seems to have a meaningful impact on the exit of cultural adaptation is the rate of definition of the migratory project. Independently on the content of the goal(s) attributed to migration (job opportunities, family ties, expulsive factors, search of new challenges, etc.), when these goals are missing and the migration project turns out to be undetermined, migrants seem to stay in between cultures, and miss a sort of coagulation point to make sense and full use of their experience. INT "*E tu Hanaa, dove vorresti stare?*" HAN "*Non lo so*" (INT "*What about you, Hanaa? Where would you like to live?*" HAN "*I don't know.*").

5.5.2 Initial goals of migration

Previous researches on the Egyptian community of Milan tend to acknowledge the job sphere as the predominant motivation of migration. This recursive finding has led to a sort of stereotype, which depicts Egyptians as good workers who do not threaten the host country, differently from other African ethnicities. IB "*Sono egiziano e arrivo qua solo per il lavoro, capito? Conosco tanti tunisini, marocchini, loro non c'hanno voglia... Ma noi sempre per lavoro qua*" (IB "*I am Egyptian and I simply came to find a job, can you understand? I know a lot of Tunisians and Moroccans: they don't like working, whereas Egyptians always come to work*").

Along interviews, a much more fragmented and various list of motivations to migration has emerged, including:

1. *job opportunities*. Work challenges are still a relevant, but not exclusive, driver of migration. It was interesting to notice that Egypt is not described as a place where work positions are missing, but as a job market where work is inadequately paid. MAS "*L'unico problema è che trovo lavoro, poco soldi*" (MAS "*The only problem is that I find a job, but it's underpaid.*"). As a matter of fact, Italian job is a synonym of "money" more than of "quality of job", if the large majority of immigrants has to give up more qualified occupations they could aspire to in their homeland, and accept low profile job positions in the Italian market;
2. *family ties*. This motivation assumes a double expression, if applied to Egyptian males and females. In fact, if men can undertake migration in order to afford the expensive costs associated to a new family and house, women typically moves to join their husbands abroad. Marriage is then a useful legal device to facilitate the arrival of relatives in the host country, and represents a preliminary step of migration;
3. *expulsive factors*. A relatively relevant part of the interviewees was strongly forced in the migration choice. This typically can be associated to a couple of dominant push factors. On one hand, religious discrimination, which has severe implications on the Copt minority; on the other hand, political problems related to war, lack of freedom, post-September 11th effects, and absence of opportunities. HAS "*Avendo la laurea in quel momento lì ho cominciato a pensare 'ma io cosa posso fare in quel paese lì che non posso neanche fare niente, devo solo lavorare, tornare a casa e anche se c'è qualcosa di male non devo neanche rispondere?'*" (HAS "*Once I got my university degree, I started asking myself: 'what can I do now, in this country which doesn't aloud me to do anything, I just have to work and go back home, and even if there's something wrong, I have to shut up?'*");
4. *lifestyle*. Finally, a striking point emerged in a small minority of respondents. Among them, migration is not associated to expulsive factors or pull-driving job opportunities, but refers to the search of a new space of life. Italy, and Europe at large, represent a place where projects are allowed, and a chance to get rid of curiosity for different patterns of behavior. INT "*Che cosa l'ha portata nel 1974 in Italia?*" IR "*Cercare una nuova vita, un nuovo spazio. La tristezza che vivevo allora nel mio paese...*" (INT "*What brought you to Italy in 1974?*" IR "*I was looking for a new life, a new space. It was due to the sadness I lived at that time in my country...*") - OSI "*Da giovane mi piaceva viaggiare. Poi con l'idea 'Europa-un altro mondo' volevo vederla...*" (OSI "*When I was young, I liked travelling. Thus the idea of 'Europe-another world', I had to see it...*"). By the way, the choice of Italy does not

emerge as conscious and strongly motivated. In fact, Italy has been typically selected on the base of family networks. Only rarely, Italy was chosen for the opportunities of getting a regular visa through its cyclical regularizations (the so called Italian "sanatorie").

Nevertheless, the original goal acknowledged in the migratory project needs a constant renovation, both in the sense of its maintenance or in case of transformation. This, in particular, leads to the exploration of the actual goal attributed to migration.

5.5.3 Actual goals of migration

Half of respondents tends to consider stable its original project, when associated to the exploitation of job opportunities or the construction of a new life. At the same time, the other half of the moon has changed or integrated the initial goals of migration. In these cases, the more frequently quoted transformations include:

1. *new family roots*. Children structurally modify the sense of migration, not only for the natural transformation of the household, but for the stronger attachment children have with the Italian context. In fact, if first generations have to mediate between themselves and their country of origin, second generations have to find a balance between their parents (and their atavic culture) and their friends and birth-land. Even though new family roots have been presented as the main motivation of residency, it may be true that such claims hide deeper motivation (adaptation to the host country, new opportunities, new social ties, etc.). MOI "Mia madre la tratteniamo noi. Se potesse tornerebbe in Egitto, almeno così lei dice. Io non ci credo, sono talmente abituati. Sono talmente tanti anni... E quindi per loro sarebbe difficilissimo tornare in Egitto, anche se mia madre dice sempre che quando noi saremo sistemati e sarà tutto a posto, lei tornerà in Egitto" (MOI "We keep our mother from leaving. If she could, she would go back to Egypt, at least that's what she says. But I don't believe it, they are so familiar here. It's so many years... It would be very difficult for them going back to Egypt, also if my mother always goes on saying she'll return to Egypt as soon as we'll be settled down and everything will be ok.");
2. *identification with the new cultural context*. Once tasted, the new cultural context may be a non-reversing temptation. The experience of freedom, safety, and respect have been acknowledged as recurrent traits of the "Italian life". HAS "Mi sono trovato tanto bene perché altre cose, come i comportamenti con le persone, sono

meglio di quelle che c'abbiamo noi. Se è uno per strada o un collega di lavoro c'è sempre rispetto, noi non ce l'abbiamo. Avete questo rispetto più di noi" (HAS "I feel so well here because certain things, such as the way people behave, are much better than ours. There is always respect, it doesn't matter if he's a person in the street or a colleague, and we don't have it. You have this kind of respect more than us");

3. *Italy as a launching pad.* Occasionally, Italy has been presented as the land of opportunities. Having an European visa allows a free circulation and a wider experience across cultures. *MGI "Se io sono in Egitto, e chiedo il visto per andare a Parigi, non me lo daranno mai. Però adesso sono libero di andare dove voglio" (MGI "If I were in Egypt and asked a visa to go to Paris, they would never give it to me").*

The migratory project does not show a direct and unidirectional effect on the exits of cultural adaptation. Goals and stability, in fact, are not steadily associated to given adaptation strategies. The main impact of migratory project is through its absence, that is, in case of undefined and unstable determination of duration and goals.

5.6 Socio-cultural integration

5.6.1 Family rejoinings

Most of the situations observed show a stage of mature family rejoining, which typically involves wife and, if present, children. In no situation the migrants' parents are rejoined, or wives anticipated their husbands in the migration flow.

Very frequently a single person assumes the role of leading his family members to Italy. The emotional states attached to that role include both a strong sense of responsibility, which refers to the achievement of rejoining and to the person's capability of providing family members with legal documents and safe transport, and a sentiment of pride. *WIL "Ho portato in Italia tutta la famiglia: sono cinque fratelli maschi, più me, e tutti i nipotini, i figli della sorella. Però tutti sono arrivati tutti regolarmente, assolutamente sistemati. Nessuno mai è entrato clandestinamente. Questa è una legge mia, non di Bossi. Così come sono io il capofamiglia, allora è stata una scelta rigida in quel senso" (WIL "I brought here all my family, that is: five brothers, and all the nephews, my sister's children. But everyone arrived with regular documents, all absolutely settled down. No one of them had entered without documents. That's my law, not Bossi's one. Being the head of my family, it has been a compulsory choice").*

An interesting point emerged over time in different migrants' narratives. Those of them who arrived in Italy and spent a period alone tend to admit that family rejoinings radically transformed their Italian staying. *IB "Anche se io ho la mia moglie, la vado a prendere per farla stare qua, abbiamo tutto, la casa, per sistemarci tranquilli la vita e andare avanti. Quando vivi con la moglie la*

vita cambia, capito? Cambia 100%. Capito?" (IB "Having a wife, I go and take her to Italy, to make her stay here, we have all here, a house to settle down and go on with our peaceful life. Do you understand? When you live with your wife, life changes, it changes completely. Can you understand me?").

In their representation, having a wife and eventually children constitute the greatest chance of reflecting on cultures and merging them into new forms. In fact, the lack of consorts may play a double role: first of all, it can slow down the migration project, because the single individual play alone in the tricky stage of migration; furthermore, it subtracts stimuli to a mature reflection over cultures. Partners, more than friends, seem to enforce a critical evaluation of one's life on cultural borders. Wives and husbands are reciprocally a mirror in which a person can reflect his/her stage and typology of cultural self elaboration. This state is experienced whenever a partner anticipates the other in migration, or in the fragile relationship between first and second generations. One's partner, therefore, can be framed, from time to time, as an alter ego, an "enemy" to engage a war with, or an allied in the adventure of cultural travel.

Summarizing, family rejoinings does not have a direct impact on the exits of cultural adaptation, but certainly play a significant role in terms of stability for the migratory project.

5.6.2 Date of arrival in Italy

The Egyptian ethnic group has a long tradition of migration to Italy. In fact, first movers came since the early Seventies, and the flow has never stopped so far. Among the interviewees it was possible to isolate opposite situations: on one hand, a relatively large sample of subjects with more than 20 years of residency in Italy; on the other, a smaller group of recent comers (one year up to a few weeks). Years of residency turn out to be a necessary but not sufficient condition to cultural alternation. In fact, a lack of staying dramatically decreases the chances of gaining cultural competence in the host culture, whereas even a long residency may not be enough to lead to a mature alternation, which in fact relies on a set of extended and intertwined factors.

Date of arrival turns out to be salient also for a further aspect: Egyptian culture of earlier comers is far from being comparable to those of recent immigrants. In the case of Egyptians, this is two times true. If cultures, by definition, change over time,

Egyptian culture has been strongly affected by drastic political changes in the late Seventies, when a religious resurgence took place and Copts-Muslims coexistence started to be affected by an increasing number of discrimination behaviors.

5.6.3 Language use

Despite the use of language has so far been researched across situations (when a migrant uses his/her mother tongue or the host country language), this way of looking at things seem to be relatively fruitless. In fact, it seems quite obvious that an Egyptian may shift to Arabian in presence of other Arabians, especially when the counterparts have a limited knowledge in the Italian language, and adopts Italian with reference to autochthons or other migrants of different ethnic origin. In addition, several respondents claim a preference for the use of English, which contrasts with the actual possibility of finding people able to have a conversation in that language.

Therefore, concrete limitations arisen by counterparts in a conversation seem to be the strongest motivation of language use. A much more interesting way to put things is, then, to consider not the “what” of linguistic consumption (Italian versus Arabian), but the “how” of language consumption (cognitive versus emotional use). On this side, Italian and Arabian languages tend to be instrumental for cognitive or emotional purposes.

Starting from the cognitive side, languages have been presented as useful devices in order to:

1. *increase communication effectiveness*. A given language, according to the counterpart’s linguistic skills, is used in order to clarify the content of communication and even increase the chances of achieving the goal attributed to the communication process itself. AM “*Con papà ma ho sempre il timore che non capisca qualche parola e quindi devo parlare sempre in arabo, se voglio dire qualcosa di serio (...) Cerco di allenarlo io (riferito al fratello) parlando sempre in italiano con lui*” (AM “*With daddy, I’m always worried he doesn’t get some words, so I always have to speak Arabian, if I have something relevant to say. (...) I always try to train him (referring to her brother) speaking in Italian.*”);
2. *train in a culture*. The use of a language is an effective way to introduce a person in a deep understanding of a certain culture. Italian can be used to lead a family member inside the host culture, as well as Arabian can be exploited to tie second generations to their atavic culture. MAS “*Mio figlio piaciuto*

sempre parlare con me l'italiano. Va beh, io capisce italiano, però quando lui andare in Egitto lui non parla egiziano e allora non va bene. Allora quando parla con me, parla egiziano, quando parla con voi, con la scuola, con l'amico e così, parla italiano" (MAS "My son has always been happy to speak Italian with me. Well, I understand Italian, but if he goes on this way, as soon as he goes back to Egypt, he won't be able to speak Egyptian and that's no good. Therefore, when he speaks with me, he uses Egyptian, when he has to speak with you, or at school or with a friend, he speaks Italian");

3. **stay in a culture.** Mother tongue can be used to maintain linguistic skills and emotional affiliation. INT *"Come lingua, quale lingua preferisce parlare con, ad esempio, suo marito?"* EL *"L'arabo se no lo dimentico!"* (INT *"What's the language you prefer to use in order to speak, for example, to your husband?"* EL *"Arabian. Arabian, otherwise I'm going to lose it!"*);
4. **exclude others.** Languages can be intentionally framed as barriers in order to keep others away from one's conversation. An Algerian interviewee's friend defined a language as a "weapon", both being a way to force oneself inside and keep others outside. JO *"Nel momento in cui vuoi comunicare una cosa che vuoi che sappia solo il gruppo usi l'arabo"* (JO *"As far as you want to communicate something you only want your group to know, then you use Arabian."*);
5. **reassure others.** The linguistic weapon can also be deposed and serve as a common base to meet others' requirements. Many respondents openly state that Italians seem to be scared by the use of Arabian, which reminds terrorist threats to many autochthonous. MAS *"Con un amico che lavora in un ristorante, quando andare io di là parla italiano, questo è giusto. Davanti al capo del ristorante non si può parlare egiziano, forse lui dice parla male...e allora si parla italiano"* (MAS *"I have a friend who works in a restaurant and, when I go to see him, we always speak Italian, and that's right. We cannot speak Egyptian in front of his restaurant boss, because he may think we're saying something bad about him, so you have to speak Italian"*);
6. **work.** From time to time, certain words have been learnt in Italy, under the effect of the work performed, and are missing in the mother tongue. OS2 *"Quando vado a comprare il materiale parlo in italiano...non ho mai fatto questo lavoro in Egitto, non so neanche come si chiamano in materiali in egiziano"* (OS2 *"When I go buying raw materials, I speak Italian. I've never made this kind of job in Egypt, so I don't even know how they are called in Egyptian"*).

On the emotional side, languages reveal to have a strong connection to the world of respondents' feelings. In detail, the emotional use of languages emerged in terms of:

1. **sense of belonging.** Speaking and teaching a language is feeling at home. JO *"Nel momento in cui c'è la voglia di far gruppo anche all'interno di un ristorante, di farci gli affari nostri, parliamo in arabo"* (JO *"Whenever you want the group to feel closer, you speak Arabian, if you are in a restaurant. If we want to discuss personal things, we speak Arabian"*);

2. *ancestral emotions*. Ancestral emotions, such as anger, work as a “shift” factor in the linguistic use. MAI “*Dipende dall'argomento, perché se urlo con loro, urlo in arabo... Se no, si parla di più l'italiano*” (MAI “*It depends on the situation, because if I shout at my children, I shout in Arabian... Otherwise, we speak Italian*”);
3. *brotherhood*. A language is a device to make others feel closer and protected. MAI “*Quando vedo che sono arabi in difficoltà, venuti qua per qualche lavoro o ragazzi che sono appena arrivati e allora vedo che sono in difficoltà, e allora si parla in arabo*” (MAI “*When I understand they are Arabians in pains, who are looking for a job or have just come to Italy, then I'll speak Arabian with them, because they may have problems.*”);
4. *loss*. Sometimes, using a language may even generate a negative feeling in the user, as it happens when Italian language comes first. This has been depicted as a natural outcome of extended staying, but it is lived as a symptom of detachment and irreversible transformation with reference to the culture of origin. MO2 “*Ho il problema, e lo vedo, che l'italiano arriva sempre per primo. Qualche termine, qualche parola... E sogno, sogno in italiano*” (MO2 “*I have one problem, and I see it clearly: Italian always comes first. Some words, some expressions... And I dream, I dream in Italian*”);
5. *limitations*. When a language comes from a free choice, its use may generate positive feelings, whereas its compulsory adoption can enforce negative emotions. A respondent openly acknowledged his wife’s limited linguistic skills, which mark his use of Arabian with a negative sensation.

A final remark refers to the possibility of mixing languages, as a symptom of hybridization and alternation. Such a mixed use of languages may take a double form. Sometimes, it turns out in the combination of Italian and Arabian words in the same sentence, under the pressure of habit and selection of the best word available for one’s expressive goals. In other circumstances, hybridization appears in the attribution of distinctive linguistic roles to the different parties involved in conversation. EL “*Anche con i miei figli parlo l'arabo, solo che loro mi rispondono in italiano. È più facile per loro. Sanno cosa sto dicendo, però...per cercare la parola è lunga, allora rispondono in italiano*” (EL “*I speak Arabian with my children too, but they answer me in Italian. It's easier for them. They understand what I'm saying, but finding out the right Arabian word would take a long time to them. That's why they answer in Italian*”).

5.6.4 Linguistic preference

Surprisingly one quarter of the respondents declared a strong preference neither for Arabian nor Italian tongues, but for the English language. Expressed motivations refer to its superior elegance and its connection to the beloved job done in Egypt before migration, whereas possible subconscious rationales may be linked to the use of English as a status marker and its fungibility in order to gain access to different cultural groups.

As a general trend, interviewees tend to prefer Arabian to Italian, and show strongly different feelings associated to these languages. In detail, Arabian tongue has been perceived superior in terms of:

1. *naturality, usefulness, and self-confidence.* On a functional base, mother tongue is frequently presented as the easiest way of communication. Such a statement only occurs in first generations, and directly refers to the first language learnt;
2. *seriousness, radication, and profundity.* On an emotional stage, Arabian tongue is strongly rooted in the inner identity bundle, and presented as the "mother tongue". Consistently with that, it recalls a strong feeling of respect and a sort of sacredness. Fully disposing of a language makes a person feels the power of that language. OS1 "*To la lingua la capisco, perciò so dove c'è la potenza della lingua araba. Infatti mi piace sempre di dire la lingua non il dialetto, tutto qua*" (OS1 "*I do understand the language, so I know where the power of Arabian language is. In fact, I always prefer to use the language instead of the dialect. That's all.*");
3. *shades.* Interviewees described their mother tongue as richer in shades and synonyms. A frequent example quoted was the availability of almost 90 different ways of naming the "lion". At the same time, Arabian supposed superiority in terms of shades can at least partially be justified in terms of the respondents' higher knowledge of that language. One of them, in fact, admitted this answer may be biased by her limited knowledge of Italian
4. *violation.* Occasionally, the Arabian tongue has been associated to negative feelings, which derive from the political domination of Arabians on Copt Egyptians. OS2 "*Sono abituato con questa lingua, a me non piace. Tu non conosci il mio luogo di nascita... Siamo obbligati a parlare questa lingua. Hanno cancellato la nostra cultura. In Egitto si parlava il copto, l'antica lingua dei faraoni. Poi sono arrivati gli arabi e hanno obbligato tutti a parlare la loro lingua*" (OS2 "*I got accustomed to speaking this language, still I don't like it. You don't know*");

anything about my birthplace... We are forced to speak this language. They have erased our culture. In Egypt everybody spoke Copt, the old pharaohs' language. Then Arabians came, and forced everyone to use their tongue.").

Symmetrically, emotions risen by Italian use have been:

1. *naturality and self-confidence*. If Arabian tongue represents the shortest path to communication for first generations, Italian plays a reverse function to second generations;
2. *lack of linguistic competence*. Feelings of deprivation and limitation have been described as a result of linguistic deficits in Italian;
3. *beauty and musicality*. Finally, Italian language has been metaphorically elaborated as a song, which has expressed an enchanting effect on respondents. MGI *"Mi ha colpito perché è come una musica, perché io sono sempre stato geloso di questi miei amici, guide turistiche in Egitto, che parlavano italiano. Così ho sentito che non è proprio una lingua, è una canzone"* (MGI *"It stroke me, as it sounds like a music, and I've always been envious of my friends, some tourist guides in Egypt, who could speak Italian. Therefore, I felt that it's not definitely a language, it's rather a song."*).

5.6.5 Social ties

One possible lens through which cultural alternation can be detected has been traditionally reported to social ties, in terms of extension and inner variety. Almost all interviewees present a balanced equilibrium between Italian and Egyptian ties, which has been frequently enriched by friends of other ethnic groups (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Eritrea, East Europe, South America, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Far East, etc.). In some situations, the same family unit derives from the merging of different ethnicities (Italian-Egyptian, Egyptian-Ukraine). A relatively different state is systematically experienced by second generation respondents, who declare to have a higher presence of Italian friends among their social ties.

The way social ties have been built turn out to be closely similar to those of autochthonous: job, neighborhoods, school and training courses, religious sites (churches and mosques), and leisure time (bar). On the opposite, some interviewees quote the difficulties in meeting Italian preferences in terms of spare-time. In fact, Egyptians more likely have limitations both in terms of time and money, or do have different cultural

preferences enforcing a gap between them and the host country. MGI *"Gli amici italiani diciamo che non è proprio amicizia, è conoscenza diciamo, perché...siamo diciamo abbastanza diversi. Perché un italiano sabato sera vuole andare in discoteca, vuole andare a mangiare in un ristorante, non so, elegante, io non... Mi capisci?"* (MGI *"With Italians it's not a real friendship. Let's say, it's more an acquaintance, because we are quite different. It depends on the fact Italians like going to the disco on Saturday night or having dinner in a cool restaurant... I don't... Can you get my point?"*).

Furthermore, friendship is lived as a sacred and solid value. The basic assumption is that "good and bad fellows are everywhere". MO2 *"La regola è di dirci che i bravi e i cattivi ci sono dappertutto. Non trattiamo in base alla razza e alla nazionalità, ma in quanto persone, esseri umani"* (MO2 *"Our rule is to say that good and bad people are everywhere. We don't treat relying on race or citizenship, but on human basis."*). On the basis of that critical selection, friends can then be found without any national or ethnic limitation. WIL *"La differenza tra un uomo e l'altro è il cervello, non il documento."* (WIL *"The difference between a man and another is in his mind, not in his document"*). In addition, some respondents have also pointed out that the chance of having Italian friends is, in a way, liberatory. In fact, friendship among immigrants tends to be impaired by the state of need and the mutual recognition of the migration experience. This case has a double salience: on one hand, it asks more integrated migrants to take care and help new comers; on the other, it put migrants in chains, as they are constantly pushed backwards in their migratory path. MAG *"Con gli stranieri, tutti, non solo gli egiziani ma tutti gli altri extracomunitari, diventa come un patto di solidarietà, che a volte è anche un po' spiacevole perché magari pretendono in un momento in cui tu non puoi. Ecco, c'è questo prevalente codice mentale"* (MAG *"With foreigners, all foreigners not only Egyptians, with all extra-communitarians, it's more a sort of solidarity agreement, which is sometimes quite annoying, because they may claim your help in the wrong moment. Well, that's the prevailing mental approach."*).

Summarizing, social ties are strongly related to other explanatory variables, which have already been presented: years of residency, which are an obvious pre-condition to the opportunity of meeting friends; linguistic skills, given the instrumental nature of any language; and openness to alterity, which may sustain or bound the variety of social ties. At the same time, the connection between social ties and cultural alternation (and adaptation strategies at large) is confirmed, but it can be presumably shaped in terms of a circular and reciprocal systemic connection. In fact, a cause-effect relationship seems to miss a sound analysis of this couple of variables. Social ties are, at the same time, a determinant of alternation and a mirror in which alternation reflects itself.

5.6.6 Frequency of social relations

From empirical analysis, frequency of social relations is not a function of nationality, that is, respondents do not increase the frequency of visits relying on the ethnic appurtenance of their friends. On the opposite, frequency of visits is much more linked to resources available (mainly time and money) and preferences fit with alternative friends. Finally, on its own, this variable does not show a relevant impact on cultural alternation, even though frequency may represent a necessary chance to multiply the occasions of gaining cultural competence in the host context.

5.6.7 Media consumption

Media diet is largely dominated by television consumption, both Italian and Arabian through an extensive penetration of parabolic antennas. The diffusion of television, which is perhaps consistent with the European habits, can also be justified in terms of TV easiness, quick availability, low cost, and rich experience, being a combination of visual, sonorous, and informational contents. At the same time, most respondents present a relatively significant consumption of free press, thanks to its capillary diffusion and absence of costs. Referring to other media, radio is seldom selected as a regular or relevant source of information or entertainment, whereas books are prominently bounded to the religious sphere, both for Copts and Muslims. Internet is consumed as a low-cost and immediate tool of communication, via e-mails, and becomes a source of entertainment only to second generations, which more extensively show higher criticism in media selection at large. Despite a state of good availability of Arabian media (television, radio, newspapers, music, web-site, etc.), television is so far the only area presenting a significant consumption tied to ethnic origins.

Media usage has been implicitly described in an instrumental light, where media consumed may meet the following recurrent needs:

1. *curiosity*. Media, being both a source of information and potential entertainment, can be exploited in order to get rid of curiosity. Besides, the selection of a new media category, where Internet represents the typical case, is by itself an expression of curiosity;

2. *critical comparison*. Cultural alternation reveals to be a critical device to compare and contrast information provided by Italian and Arabian networks. Arabian media have been often depicted as politically biased and unfair in the presentation of facts. OS2 *"Non mi piace la Tv araba. Quando arriva una notizia brutta non dicono la cosa vera, raccontano bugie. Invece qui raccontano la realtà"* (OS2 *"I don't like Arabian television. When a bad news comes, they won't tell you the truth, they will lie to you. On the opposite, here they tell the truth."*);
3. *information and representation of life*. Media supply information and, by doing so, provide a representation of facts, consistently with any constructivist idea of reality. Life can be experienced in a direct form. By the way, any life experience can be mediated through media consumption. IB *"Quando ho tempo libero, non esco di casa! Sto dentro alla casa a guardare il telegiornale arabo o italiano, così vedi come va la vita"* (IB *"When I have some spare-time, I don't go out! I stay at home watching Arabian or Italian news in order to see how life goes."*);
4. *training and education*. Media have also been one of the most useful devices in the acquisition of linguistic and cultural skills in the host culture. Television and books have played the strongest effect on that side. More rarely, books have also been a source for gaining access to job new skills. OSM *"Magari, se ho un'oretta, leggo un libro di cucina per studiare sempre, migliorare. Siccome è un lavoro diverso rispetto a quello per cui ho studiato, devo imparare anche questo"* (OSM *"If I have one free hour, I may read a recipes book, I always study in order to improve. Being a different job from the one I studied for, I must learn as well."*);
5. *sense of belonging*. Through media usage, a migrant consumer may rejuvenate his/her ethnic affiliation, and honour his/her attachment to those who remained in the country of origin. OSM *"Quando c'è tempo, io guardo un po' di qua e di là. Sì, bisogna guardare anche questi qualche volta. Ho ancora tanti amici di là"* (OSM *"When I have time, I watch the two of them, Arabians and Italians. Yes, it's because sometimes you have to look also the other ones. I still have many friends there."*).

Once media instrumental use has been acknowledged, another relevant side of media consumption is represented by its expressive nature. In fact, the way individuals construct their media diet can be read as a representation of:

1. *hybridization*. Once double cultural competence has been gained, it may leak out through media usage. This is true both in situation of pure consumption (Italian media versus Arabian media), or in case of contextual combination of the two;

2. *personal life-stages*. At the same time, media selection can even be expressive of peculiar events in the migratory experience. An example is provided by the identification of Arabian television with the husband figure. Feelings attached to the marriage dimension can be later transferred to the personal attribution of sense to media. MAG *"Quando il mio ex marito aveva imposto la parabola, c'erano soltanto programmi stupidi. Era vivere, avere un piacere che arrivava da una cosa che era non reale. Infatti lui, il suo difetto, che ha scatenato tutto, era che lui era rimasto lì con tutto. Si era fermato. Io guardavo sempre avanti, fin da quando ero in Egitto."* (MAG *"When my ex-husband imposed us the parabolic antenna, there were only stupid programs on television. It was like living and finding pleasure from something that was not real. In fact, his fault, the one that was at the basis of all our matters, was that he had remained there at all. He stopped his life. I've always been looking ahead, since I was in Egypt."*);
3. *personal preferences and tastes*. As a matter of fact, any typology of consumption, media included, is a representation of consumers' personal preferences. Therefore, lovers of poetry are willing to read poetry books, music fans will have a richer consumption of radio and CDs, and so forth.

Finally, respondents present possible barriers to media usage. The most largely acknowledged is lack of time, due to family and work responsibilities, which can be complemented by scarce availability of Arabian media. Some more atypical obstacles emerged in linguistic barriers, not only for a basic understanding of media, but also for a more mature pleasure in appreciating all the shades of Italian tongue, or in the perceived risk of losing cultural competence through a contamination of rival media. MAG *"Io avevo un insegnante di madrelingua araba, che mi ha fatto veramente capire qual è il piacere di gustare la poesia (...) Non ho a mia volta studiato un perfetto italiano, così da poter cogliere le sfumature. Posso intuire a livello personale, ma non ho la padronanza"* (MAG *"I had an Arabian mother-tongue teacher who really made me understand the pleasure of tasting poetry. (...) I've not studied a perfect Italian, so I'm not able to get the shadowed meanings. I can sense at a personal stage, but I don't completely control the language."*).

Nevertheless, no barrier seems to be insurmountable if associated to strong motivations. In fact, regardless of time penury, central interests are pursued beyond tiredness and scarcity.

Summarizing, as already pointed out in the discussion about social ties, also media usage show a circular connection to cultural alternation. On one side, it represents a tool to achieve cultural alternation, whereas on the other it can be read as an expression of this adaptation exit. In addition, media usage seems to provide a richer

interpretation of individual processes of socio-cultural integration than a rich lecture of transversal patterns.

5.6.8 Spare-time

The role and nature of this variable is largely included in the discussion over social ties, frequency of social relations, and media consumption. In fact, time free from work and family needs is essentially devoted to friends and media usage. In particular, typologies of interests expressed in spare-time are strongly linked both to the respondents' socio-cultural level, and to their generation of appurtenance. Second generations, in fact, show consumption patterns closely related to those of young Italian consumers: drinks, happy-hours, discos, cinema, and so forth.

Two main differences emerge with reference to the Italian use of leisure time: a frequent use of parks and gardens, and a large reliance on religious sites.

Finally, this research enlightened an absolute absence of Egyptian aggregation places. This can be read as a symptom of social integration: in-group attachment can be more easily dismissed once rooted in the new cultural context. At the same time, this fact enlightens the lack of a structured Egyptian community, which makes it tougher to exert a collective action in terms of political or cultural pressure on the host country.

5.6.9 Felt Italian ethnicity

The way "felt Italian ethnicity" has been measured and ethnographically analyzed follows the approach already presented on "felt Egyptian ethnicity".

The main difference between the two rests on a higher variance in terms of self-affiliation to the Italian context. In fact, more or less all the five points in the Likert scale have been selected, with strong concentration on the intermediate levels. A further significant aspect refers then to a sort of dyscrasia between some numerical answers and the qualitative motivations later supplied. For example, the lowest observed evaluation on that scale (affiliation = 1,5) has been accompanied by a strong sense of identification in the host country. *MGI "Quando sono andato a casa nelle vacanze, non dico che vado in Italia quando finisce la vacanza. Io dico che ritorno. Perché penso che c'è qualcosa che mi ha attratto qua, questa è diventata la nostra seconda terra"* (MGI "When I go back home for holidays, as soon as holidays are over, I

don't tell myself: 'I go to Italy' but 'I return to Italy', because I think that there is something here that attracted me, this has become our second land." On average, second generations tend to show a stronger tie to the Italian context, which, for the majority of them, represent the birth-land.

Once again, a fruitful way to look at the strength of affiliation to the host culture consists in marking a twofold distinction:

1. *adaptive versus proactive acceptance of the host culture.* Some respondents tend to privilege an adaptive lecture to their acquisition of Italian cultural traits, which are presented as a natural outcome of an inevitable process. OSM "E' una cosa di natura, una cosa di natura... Se tu prendi un animale selvaggio, un leone dalla foresta, e lo porti al circo, anche se non è lo spazio per lui, lo fanno imparare a lavorare. Anche se non vuoi, lo fai per forza lo stesso. E' di natura" (OSM "It's natural, really natural... If you take a wild animal, a lion, from a forest and you bring it to the circus, people will train it even though it's not its natural environment. Also if you don't want, you make it, you must. It's natural..."). On the opposite, other interviewees are more willing to admit their direct and conscious involvement in this process of cultural integration, which is engaged at the light of a critical lecture of the two cultures. MOI "Ci sono certe cose in tutte e due le culture che mi danno fastidio" (MOI "There are things in both cultures which bother me.");
2. *cognitive (opposing) versus emotional presentation of Italian cultural competence.* Interviewees have been split into two when observing the way they present their Italian affiliation. Some of them tend to limit their sense of belonging to the host context (opposing function), whereas others warmly accept to be part of the new cultural environment. MAI "Ormai sento più italiana di egiziana, però cerco sempre di essere più quello che sarei io" (MAI "By now, I feel more Italian than Egyptian, but I always try to be what I would be."). - MAG "Io so che il mio futuro è italiano. Il mio presente e il mio futuro" (MAG "I know that my future is Italian, my present and my future.").

Finally, respondents have shown a stronger concern and resistance in assessing their rate of affiliation to the Italian culture than they did when asked to state their belonging to their mother culture. Such a concern emerged through a discrepancy of their answers, which rationally tend to reduce the sense of Italian appurtenance, while, on the opposite, show an emotional attachment in everyday life. Why should Egyptian consumers feel stronger resistance in admitting their Italian belonging? On one hand, it may be a problem of self representation and personal acceptance of structural changes occurred in the migratory project: most of them wish to return to Egypt, and stronger

Italian ties can be interpreted as a definite barrier to that goal. On the other hand, this resistance can also be linked to problems of social acceptance in the Egyptian community: being “too much” Italian means betraying Egyptian origins and acknowledging a victory of the Italian way of life.

5.6.10 Culinary appraisal

Culinary appraisal is paradigmatic of the way cultures are tasted and filtered along the migration process. Schematically speaking, culinary appraisal can be framed in two main steps:

1. *culinary clash*. At the very beginning, most respondents had bad experiences with Italian food, which was presented as strange both in its taste and way of being cooked. HAN “*Carne col vino, e si mette la farina, questa è una cosa strana perché è la prima volta che vedo il vino dentro al mangiare... E' così un po' strano. (...) Ho pensato 'cosa fa questa qua?'*” (HAN “*Meat and wine, never heard, this was a strange thing, it was the first time I saw dropping wine into foods... It was a bit strange... I told myself: 'what is she doing?'*”). This sensation mostly arose from a state of extraneousness or a bad preparation of Italian dishes, due to lacks of competence. GRA “*Mio marito è venuto prima di me e voleva introdurre il cibo italiano nella nostra tavola e allora quando faceva qualche piatto era un disastro unico (...) Quando si fanno le cose bene, si mangiano volentieri*” (GRA “*My husband came first, and he wanted to introduce Italian foods into our diet. So he tried to prepare some dishes, but it was a total disaster. (...) When you make things in the proper way, then you are happy to taste them.*”);
2. *joyful table*. Despite personal tastes, all interviewees show a positive attachment to Italian food, which sometimes is even preferred to the Egyptian one. Typically, these positive feelings have been achieved through the already described paths (adaptive versus proactive). In its adaptive declination, culinary appraisal results from habit and progressive acceptance of new tastes, whereas in its proactive form it comes out from a process of selection and iterative learning. The result of appraisal emerges in terms of superior perceived lightness, high quality, pleasant taste, and familiarity.

By the way, curiosity and positive stereotypes attached to Mediterranean diet and Italian dishes have played as supportive reinforcement in getting rid of initial culinary clashes.

5.6.11 Acculturation medium

The “acculturation medium” variable was not originally included in the a-priori model, and emerged through extensive comparison across interviews. In particular, what comes out of empirical analysis is a process of cultural learning and adaptation mediated through individuals and artifacts. Cultures are not tasted in an abstract or pure form, being met in contextualized and fragmented ways. Therefore, the way individuals, and migrants in detail, define a culture and make sense of it is largely a resultant of people they have been interacting with and artifacts they have experienced. The emotions and cognitions attached to these cultural media are then transferred to culture itself.

Through interviews cross-analysis, the more frequently quoted cultural media can be led to two macro-categories:

1. *human acculturation media (relational acculturation media)*. Norms, behaviors, experiences, values, or cognitive schemata of individuals that migrants encountered in their country of origin or in the host context leave an indelible trace in the way cultures are shaped and evaluated. Each migrant’s resources in terms of critical sense adjust the influence of these stimuli, which may be retained, elaborated, and even rejected. The more recurrent relational media include family partner, second generations, relatives, friends, job colleagues, neighbors, and people belonging to the same religious community. In some observed cases, a culture has been precisely identified with a given person, typically represented by the father. *MAN “L’Egitto era mio padre.” (MAN “Egypt was my father.”)*. For example, a second generation respondent, who had an Italian mother and an Egyptian father, has developed a strong feeling of denial towards Egyptian culture as a result of its strong identification with her father’s figure and her mined relationship with him. *MER “Secondo me comunque dipende molto dal tuo genitore. (...) Ho avuto un genitore a stento e quindi non è che posso dire di essere stra-fortunata, quindi non... Cioè tutto quello che ho me l’ha dato mia mamma, mia mamma avendo la cultura italiana mi ha inculcato la cultura italiana. Per esempio imparare la lingua sarebbe stata una bellissima cosa, perchè comunque secondo me cresci, a livello proprio culturale. Però non avendo un padre che comunque mi stava dietro...” (MER “In my opinion, it depends on your parents. (...) I hardly had a father, and therefore I wouldn’t say I was very lucky, so... All I have inside came from my mother. She had an Italian culture and that’s what she gave to me. I would have liked to learn Arabian language, because it helps your growth, culturally speaking. But without having a father who looked after me...”);*

2. *artifacts (consumable acculturation media)*. Cultures, then, are explored and appraised also through continuous interactions with material and intangible cultural depositories. Literally speaking, cultures are tasted through food, but can also be met through music, language, or media consumption (television, books, etc.), as frequently observed on the field. *OS1 "La mia moglie magari, sentendo in televisione o seguendo qualche programma specifico per il campo della cucina riesce a copiare qualche piatto, allora ce lo prepara" (OS1 "From time to time, my wife succeeds in imitating some dishes through television or culinary programs. And she cooks for us.")*.

Accepting that cultures are filtered through acculturation media takes to some key considerations. First of all, Egyptian culture each respondent shows is potentially different from those of other respondents, because each migrant has been exposed to different acculturation media both in the country of origin and in the host country. Therefore, treating Egyptians as if they were carriers of the same cultural content can be a myopic way to look at things. Paradoxically, we may detect as much Egyptian cultures as the number of Egyptian respondents observed.

A second implication deals with the distorting effect of acculturation media. Given that cultures are appraised through them, it may be concluded that the fewer the number of acculturation media a person is exposed to, the higher the risk of appraising a partial and distorted version of a given culture. This may be particularly relevant with reference to the encounter with the host culture, where acculturation chances are more limited, or in the case of second generations with their ethnic origins. In the example above - the second generation girl of Egyptian origins - it was showed that she had the chance of meeting Egyptian culture exclusively through her father. This factor has strongly biased both her cultural competence and her perception of that culture.

Finally and as a result of previous considerations, the quality of acculturation media matters. On this side, an interviewee strongly pointed out that, given the unqualified work opportunities a migrant finds in Italy, he had the chance of meeting low educated Italians only. This had an impact on the perception and depth of Italian culture he could taste. *MO2 "I primi tempi era troppo difficile per raggiungere un'altra società, per capire come trattare la gente. Il pensiero della gente. Anche mettere nel mio pensiero che questa non è la mentalità egiziana in generale. Anche perché noi come operai trattiamo con la gente al più basso livello della società italiana. Raramente si contatta una persona colta, come un avvocato, un dottore."* (*MO2 "At the beginning, it was really hard reaching another culture, in order to understand how to approach people, and their way of thinking. It was also difficult to persuade myself with the idea that*

this is not Egyptian mentality. This was also related to the fact that we, as workers, only interact with people at the lowest levels of Italian society. It's very uncommon to contact a high-educated person, such as a lawyer or a doctor.”).

Summing up, acculturation medium shows a direct impact on the forms and quality of cultural alternation, and can be assumed as one of the most influential variables within the empirical model.

5.6.12 Negotiation in the host culture

“Negotiation in the host culture” is, once again, a variable empirically derived and definable as the migrant’s capability of negotiating with autochthonous the meanings both of his culture of origin and of the host one. In different words, mature alternation can be enforced and emerges from the person’s ability of defending these double facets of his/her cultural selves. Instead of adaptively accepting the idea others have of him/herself or literally learning new cultural stimuli, a person high in negotiation power will defend his/her identity and critically judge the new cultural context.

On the base of empirical observations, praxes of negotiation in the host culture can present a double nature:

1. *defense strategies*. In that case, negotiation is mainly pursued in order to protect the cultural pillars in a person’s identity. In particular, this feeling has been frequently related to the fight against stereotypes. Copt Egyptians claim to be different from Muslim Egyptians, who suffer the post September 11th effect. Egyptians feel to be discriminated as immigrants, and try to overcome this problem showing they behave even more correctly than Italian citizens do (i.e., they leave the seat to ladies on public transports, they show contents of their bags if this may generate concern around them, and so forth). They even show pictures of their country in order to give a different feeling of what Egypt is like. *EL “Quando parliamo dell’Egitto e gli faccio vedere le foto del mare, della casa di qua e di là... per far vedere o per cambiare le idee che c’hanno in testa. (...) Se tu vedi i film sugli arabi, deserti, cammelli, oasi e basta!” (El “When we talk about Egypt, I always show them pictures and photographs of the sea, of my house, in order to make them understand and change their minds. (...) If you watch at films on Arabians, you only see deserts, camels, oasis, and that’s all!”).* Defense strategies also occur whenever respondents take precautions to preserve their religious principles. For example, buying food in Italian shops may be risky if these

products contain traces of alcohol or pork-derived components, which are forbidden by the Islamic religion. At the same time, another expression of self-respect emerged in the narratives of those women who have chosen to wear the veil, frequently against the more or less explicit request of being more “westernized”. *GRA* “Comunque per gli altri sei assurda, perché ti dicono: “dopo tutti questi anni ti devi modernizzare non..”. Dopo tutti questi anni io non sono regressa, ho più coscienza di quello che voglio fare.” (*GRA* “Anyway, other people think you’re absurd, because they tell you: ‘after all these years you should modernized, not...’ After all these years, I didn’t go backwards, I am only more conscious of what I want to do.”);

2. *offensive strategies*. In that case, negotiation in the host culture presents the willingness of changing things both on the side of immigrants and on that of Italians. Any action aiming at an empowerment of Egyptian people can be framed as an attempt of emancipation and active role in the host country. For example, one of respondents has taken part to the start-up of a non profit organization, which sustains the migrants’ self-entrepreneurship. At the same time, negotiation may also be finalized to a more structural change in the mind of Italians. In that light, the political active participation to elections of an Egyptian candidate expresses the need of collaborating from the inside to the transformation of the socio-political life of the host context.

5.6.13 Negotiation in the culture of origin

“Negotiation in the culture of origin” is again an empirically derived variable and complements the acculturation framework. In fact, those migrants who show double cultural competence manifest a negotiation tendency both in the host and in the original cultures. In that case, negotiation takes the sense of:

1. *accepting and making acceptable one’s changes in terms of cultural identities*. With a few exceptions, respondents tend to acknowledge the stable and structural nature of changes occurred in their identity. First of all, this requires a personal acceptance of transformation, which has to be elaborated as a sound response to life opportunities and not as a betrayal of original culture. *MGI* “Penso che adesso la mia mentalità è cambiata tanto. Riguardo tutta la libertà che c’è qua...sono cambiate tante cose. Però per esempio in Egitto si parla di tante cose, per esempio le tradizioni molto integraliste (...) molto forti, che adesso non mi piacciono (...) perché anche nella cultura egiziana ci sono delle cose sbagliatissime che fanno male alla gente. Per esempio questa è

una cosa fondamentale che annoia la società egiziana, soprattutto il matrimonio: ci sono questi che fino a 40 anni non hanno soldi per sposarsi e nello stesso tempo non possono far niente, per esempio questa è una cosa fondamentale.” (MGI “Now I think my mind has changed a lot. Because of all this freedom here... A lot of things have changed. In Egypt everybody talks about many things, for instance extremist traditions (...) so strong traditions which I don't like anymore (...), because also in Egyptian culture there are wrong things, which are unhealthy to people. For example, wedding is a very important thing that bores Egyptian society, because there are these 40 years old men who don't have enough money to get married, and until then they can't do anything else. This is a vital thing.”). At the same time, identity changes have to be motivated and negotiated with family member, particularly if not involved in the migration process. MAN “I parenti. Un giorno qua, un giorno là. Non puoi staccarti da loro. Questa è la regola. Ognuno tira fuori il suo problema e ti viene una testa così!” (MAN “Family! Each day a different visit. You cannot get rid of them... This is the rule. Everyone proposes his problem, and drives you crazy!”);

2. *accepting or mediating others' changes in terms of cultural identities.* Contemporaneously, migration changes can occur in different ways or at distinct paces within a given household. This is typically the case of first and second generations' dynamics. To quote an example, children are grown up in a cultural context, the Italian one, where differences between sexes are shadowing (or supposed to be shadowing), whereas in the Egyptian culture the sex-based definition of roles is still strongly felt. INT “Se i vostri figli decidessero di fermarsi in Italia per lavorare, per vivere, voi comunque pensate di tornare lo stesso in Egitto?” EL “sì, almeno io sì. Cioè, il maschio lo lascio stare se vuole star qua, la femmina non la lascio! Deve seguirmi... Il maschio se vuole rimanere rimane.” (INT “Should your children decide to stay in Italy to work or forever, would you still go back to Egypt?” EL “Yes. At least, I'll do. That is, the boy can stay here if he wants to stay, but I won't leave the girl, she must follow me... Yes, the son can stay.”). If children may look too “modern” to their parents, the reverse does occur and may take to analogously profound relational misunderstandings. GRA “Ho iniziato a tenere il cappellino, io vedevo che a mio figlio non gli andava bene, non era d'accordo... Però lui sapeva che c'era un problema che stavo curando. (...) Poi è iniziato il mese del Ramadan, non l'ho tolto, lui se n'è reso conto. (...) E io allora gli ho detto: “ma non hai capito che non lo tolgo più?... perché ormai lo tengo”. È' stata così. All'inizio mi ha chiesto se sono diventata suora.” (GRA “I started wearing a hat, and I saw my son didn't agree with me... But he knew I had a health problem to manage. (...) Then Ramadan came, and I didn't take it off, and he understood. (...) And so I said: ‘didn't you understand I'm not going to take it off anymore? I'll keep it’. That's how things went. At the beginning, he asked me if I became a nun.”). In some cases, this intergenerational relationship has been framed as a fight, where one has to lose for the benefit of the other. JO “La prima generazione ha dovuto perdere, cioè, c'è stato un rapporto win-lose nella prima generazione, ok? Qualcuno deve perderci, qualcuno deve mollare la cinta, altrimenti torni a casa... ok?”

Allora in quel caso o molla la cinto la prima generazione e ti lascia spazio, o perde la seconda generazione, che si lega alla prima in tutto e per tutto e fa quello che vuole papà.” (JO “First generation has to lose, that is, there’s been a win-lose relation with the first generation. Someone has to lose, someone has to unlock the belt, otherwise you go back home. Therefore, in similar cases either first generation unlocks its belt giving you room, or second generation loses, and stays totally tied to the first one and behaves as daddy wants.”).

Negotiation turns out to be a relevant variable of the cultural adaptation process. Its presence, on one hand, is a trace of double competence and cultural alternation potentialities. At the same, negotiation plays also as reinforce to alternation behaviors.

5.7 Rituals and situational variables

5.7.1 Places of consumption

Food preparation and consumption have largely been connected to “home”. Egyptian respondents, in fact, show a strong preference for the domestic dimension when they have to evaluate place alternatives for their culinary consumption. On one hand, as it has been depicted by an expert in their culture, Egyptians are not used to going out for lunch or dinner. On the other, the Italian context does not provide them with irresistible or affordable temptations both for the Italian and the Egyptian foods. In detail:

1. *Egyptian food.* Italy does not have traditional Egyptian restaurants, as well as Egypt does not provide a true Italian coffee or pizza. Therefore, migrants, if interested in Egyptian cuisine, tend to prefer their house for a more traditional preparation of dishes. It is not by chance that some of them admitted to love going out for an Egyptian dinner only in their homeland, thanks to a combination of tastes, atmospheres, and companionship. *WIL “Ogni tanto, quello che dicevo prima, lo facciamo in casa. E poi, quando capita in Egitto, per fare qualcosa di tradizionale, accompagnato con il narghilè, per fumare il narghilè. È divertimento, un divertimento molto allegro” (WIL “As I was saying, sometimes we cook at home. Sometimes, if it happens, we do it also in Egypt, if we want to do something traditional, with the narghilè. It’s a very joyful amusement.”);*
2. *Italian food.* At the same time, with the sole exception of Italian friends’ invitations, respondents are not willing to go out for an Italian launch. Motivations are relatively varied and combine emotional and rational considerations, such as: long time required, high costs, different Italian habits

of waiting between dishes instead of presenting all dishes together, and religious ties in terms of food ingredients (alcohol and pork-derived components). HAS *"Io sono quello che non si fida di mangiare nel ristorante. (...) Qua in Italia non mi fido per tante cose, perché tante ricette lo so che devono mettere il liquore e io non lo metto. Allora se gli dici "senza liquore", ti dice "sì" e poi ce lo mette."* (HAS *"I normally don't trust restaurant food. (...) Here in Italy I don't trust them for many reasons. I know many recipes, and I know you should use some alcohol for certain recipes. I don't use alcohol. And if you tell them: 'please without alcohol', they would answer you 'yes', but then they'll use it anyway."*).

Summarizing, the "place" dimension of consumption does not seem to be highly related to any ritual within the Egyptian community.

5.7.2 Occasions of consumption

Differently from place of consumption, occasions seem to play a higher explanatory role in describing Egyptian rituals. In fact, food selection and consumption present strong ties to lifetimes or periods of the year. If in everyday life the choice between Italian versus Egyptian dishes may be irrelevant and even tedious, from time to time it acquires higher salience and expressive relevance.

The closest connection is between food selection and religious moments or celebrations: Ramadan, the sacrifice celebration, Copts' Christmas (celebrated each January, 6th), Akika (Muslim religious rite to celebrate the birth of a new child) are all occasions in which Egyptians tend to show a strong preference for their home cuisine. OSI *"Un mese come Ramadan sì, si va quasi tutto sulla cucina egiziana. Oltre nelle feste, nelle nostre feste, si usa la cucina egiziana. Per i giorni normali è indifferente"* (OSI *"On Ramadan month, almost all we eat is Egyptian. The same occurs during our religious celebrations. On other days, it makes no difference."*). Furthermore, some respondents also tend to make a personal use of Italian religious celebrations, which are not consumed in their religious sense, but invested of new meanings and culinary traditions. MAN *"Qui il Natale è molto bello. Senti il gusto di festa, anche se mangi poche cose."* (MAN *"Here Christmas is very beautiful. You can feel the festive taste also eating a few things."*). - MOI *"Per me Pasqua: è l'uovo di Pasqua! Quindi per forza. Natale: è il pandoro. Il bello di questo è che io non li festeggio, ma dico: "fantastico! Adesso ci sono tante uova di Pasqua da mangiare, che non finiscono più". Poi dopo c'è il pandoro durante il Natale. E' così per me."* (MOI *"Easter is the Easter egg! It's a must. Christmas: pandoro. The beautiful side of this is that I don't celebrate them, but I tell myself: 'great! Now there are endless quantities of Easter eggs to eat'."*).

Why Egyptian food consumption is so strongly intertwined with life-stages and religious rites? A first, relatively obvious answer rests on an emotional base: Egyptian food is used to enforce one's attachment to the homeland during religious celebrations, which, on their own, frequently increase the sense of lack of mother land. *GRA* "*Nelle feste religiose giusto per sentire la festa qua perché appena finita la preghiera non c'è più festa perché non avendo familiari...*" (*GRA* "*During religious celebrations, just in order to feel the festivity, because absence of family members there shortens celebrations as soon as prayers end...*"). Besides, more normative structures of personality tend to invest food of a religious duty: Egyptian dishes have to be preferred to others in given moments of life. *HAS* "*Quando c'è la nascita, mangio volentieri perché per la religione noi dobbiamo mangiare volentieri questo.*" (*HAS* "*When a bay is born, I love eating (Egyptian), because our religion states we have to eat a certain dish with pleasure.*").

At the same time, more functional explanations have been given to that question. In particular, during the Ramadan month that imposes a complete abstention from food during daylight, migrants go back to Egyptian food thanks to its higher content in fat and nutrients. In fact, Egyptian cuisine has almost always been described as heavier than Italian one, and this property turns out to be useful to contrast the pain of fasting. *MAI* "*Siccome devi fare il digiuno tanto tempo, il cibo egiziano riesci a tenerlo nella pancia più dell'italiano.*" (*MAI* "*As far as you fast for a long time, Egyptian food lasts more than Italian in the stomach.*").

5.7.3 People to consume with

If "occasions of consumption" have a relevant connection to rites, the "people to consume with" variable helps detecting the several functions food meets for the Egyptian community. Needless to say, food represents the major device to grant individuals' survival. At the same time, it plays many other functions, being:

1. *a bridge between the past and the present.* The sense attributed by interviewees to Egyptian cuisine dramatically changes according to the persons involved in the consumption process. In that light, consuming Egyptian food with other Egyptians is a way to mark an appurtenance and enforce a sense of connection to past and tradition. Other Egyptians do not have to be trained in food appraisal and more easily share sensations and experiences. On the other side, consuming Egyptian dishes with Italians is a way to build or renew a bridge with the host country. Tasting and being tasted is the way cultures are learnt. *EL* "*Italiani quando vengono da noi sempre vogliono sempre mangiare la cucina egiziana. Anche per cambiare gusto... anche per cambiare, gli ho sempre fatto cucina egiziana e gli è sempre*

piaciuta. Però quando vengono gli egiziani faccio le lasagne o arrosto." (EL "When Italian friends come to visit us, they always want to eat Egyptian food, maybe to change tastes. I always cook Egyptian dishes to them, and they always like it. But when Egyptian friends come, I cook lasagna or roast for them.");

2. *an expression of culinary competence and a tool of greeting friends.* Respondents declare to be good in cooking specific dishes, the nationality of dishes being irrelevant. Once culinary competence has been attributed to a person (I am good in cooking lasagne, or rice, etc.), migrants feel free to cook a pizza (or whatever) to Italians as a way of expressing love, affiliation, and care. INT "Le lasagne gliele fa quando gliele chiedono?" HAS "Sì, poi al Ramadan sono abituati che gliele devo fare almeno una volta, devo invitarli o il sabato o la domenica." INT "E che significato ha per lei fare le lasagne per i suoi amici egiziani?" HAS "Sono contento perché mi dicono che sono capace a farle, dicono "bravo!" (INT "Do you prepare lasagna on request?" HAS "Yes, I do. During Ramadan, I have to cook them at least once, and I invite friends on Saturday or Sunday because they are used to." INT "And what does it mean to you cooking lasagna for your Egyptian friends?" HAS "I am happy, because they tell me I am good cook, they tell me 'well done!'");
3. *a key to enter the door.* Food can also be a rational tool to mark proximity and therefore facilitate the emersion of a sense of closeness. JO "Io ero a cena a contrattare per conto di mio padre un lavoro a Venezia, qualche tempo fa, e fuori dovevo mettermi sostanzialmente nei panni dell'arabo, quindi...dire certe cose, fare certe cose, bere certe cose, mangiare certe cose." (JO "I was in Venice having dinner, a business dinner on behalf of my father. So I had to play the role of the Arabian, that is, I had to talk in certain ways, I had to do certain things, I had to drink or eat some kind of foods.");
4. *an expression of cool trends.* Second generations are more aware that ethnic cuisines are nowadays trendy. On that base, food selection and consumption can simply be a status or style symbol to use in outer-directed consumption processes. MER "Adesso va molto di moda: "andiamo a mangiare...che ne so...messicano o indiano", ultimamente" (MER "Now it's very cool. 'Let's go and have a Mexican dinner or an Indian lunch. It frequently happens.");
5. *the frame in friendship's picture.* Finally, food may lose relevance when centrality is attributed to the individuals involved in food consumption. If friends are the heart of consumption, anything then may go. OSI "C'ho degli amici un po', diciamo...intimi, nel senso, ormai ci frequentiamo, parliamo come fossimo fratelli. Per cui il discorso mangiare, cibo, è indifferente per noi. Nel senso, mangio roba con loro italiana, mangiano la roba egiziana con me, è indifferente." (OSI "Now I have some close friends, we talk and meet as brothers do. In that case, the question of food doesn't make any difference. I mean, I eat Italian food with them as well as they eat Egyptian food with me, it has no importance to me.").

In that perspective, the way individuals lay their tables is a mirror of the experiences they passed through, the people they met and loved, the processes of cultural adaptation they lived. *INT "E con i suoi amici, ci sono dei cibi che preferisce mangiare?" IR "Dipende da quali amici. Quando capita, siccome non siamo tutti di una nazionalità, cerchiamo di mediare. Un po' di ogni paese." (INT "What about eating with your friends? Is there any kind of food you prefer to eat with them?" IR "It depends on the kind of friends. From time to time, not being of the same nationalities, we try to mediate: something from each country.").* Laying one's table is laying one's life.

5.7.4 Gift

A peculiar form of rituals is the "gift", which can be framed as a combination of the two variables previously examined. In fact, gift takes into account, at the same time, the interpersonal dimension (people to consume with) and the situational component (occasions of consumption). In given moments and to selected individuals a person may wish to make a gift. Food is simply one of the possible contents a gift can have. In particular, when food is attributed a gift connotation, it typically consists in sweets and cakes. Almost all respondents, in fact, affirm to use sweets as presents. In addition, they also tend to give either those dishes they have specialized in (cannelloni, pizzoccheri, pizza, meat, etc.) or those products that are rare and difficult to find (crops imported from Egypt, dishes requiring long times of preparations, etc.).

Furthermore, when food is made a gift, it enforces its totally instrumental nature. It looks as a form of exchanging attentions, a way to capture others' curiosity for a given culture, a device to acquire trust, or a bridge to shorten distances. *JO "Tendenzialmente si fa per essere accettati, no? Tipo, io ti do una cosa, ti piace, ti piaccio io, ti piaccio io nella mia cultura, accetti me e la mia cultura e quello che ti ho dato, ok?...Lo fai sì, spesso e volentieri anche per questo." (JO "You typically do it in order to be accepted, don't you? For instance, I give something to you, and you like it, so this means that you like me, and you like me within my culture. This also means you accept me and my culture as well, and what I gave to you. Yes, you frequently do it also for this reason.").* In all that cases, the nationality of food is only instrumental, and attention is prominently left on the meanings and effects of the gift, that is, on the "how" of consumption (Holt, 1997).

By the way, some respondents pointed out certain limitations in using Egyptian food as a gift. On one hand, it is acknowledged the heavier nature of the Egyptian cuisine, which may be harmful to an untrained palate. *IB "Il problema è per lo stomaco loro, perchè è abituato a mangiare leggero qua. Capito? Se faccio qualcosa li mando all'ospedale!" (IB "The problem is for their stomach, because here they are used to eat light foods. Can you understand? If I cook something for them, I send them to*

hospital!"). On the other, giving food is a very personal action, as it means entering a private sphere of others' lives. MAG "E' una sacralità a condividere cibi. Ma viene interpretata male qui in Occidente, perché a volte la prendono come una offesa, a volte si sentono invadere, a volte dicono: "ho la sensazione che se non mi piace, che cosa faccio?". Allora divento cauta (...) Sono la prima a riconoscere che è una cosa molto intima il cibo, molto legato a sapori e ricordi. Proprio entri in una sfera abbastanza personale." (MAG "Sharing foods is a holy moment. But here, in the West, it can be misunderstood, because sometimes they feel offended by this, sometimes they feel as if they were invaded, and they may say 'If I didn't like it, what could I do then?' So I started being cautious. (...) I am the first to know that food is a very private thing, because it's highly tied to tastes and memories. You really enter one's personal sphere.").

5.7.5 Facilitators of alternation shift

The exploration of places, occasions, and partners of consumption, together with the sphere of gifts, have been the main way situational effects on cultural alternation have been explored during field analysis. The role and relevance of these traditionally acknowledged situational factors have been presented in the previous paragraphs.

Nevertheless, field observation has provided researchers with some unexpected findings in terms of other facilitators of alternation shift. In different words, if the role of places, occasions, partners and gifts is not questioned, migrants presenting alternation patterns of life and consumption have presented other factors justifying their continuous shift between the two cultures being dominated. These further facilitators of alternation shift include:

1. *goals to be achieved.* According to the goal infused in the migrant's actions, a shift between original or appraised cultural behaviors may be observed. As an example, a linguistic shift can be motivated on the base of being more effective in pursuing a goal, or Egyptian dishes may be preferred when food has to last for some days. In all that cases, cultures provide a wider set of solutions to a given problem, and are instrumentally selected to increase the migrant's chances of achieving his/her finality;
2. *nostalgia and desire.* In other circumstances, alternation is simply guided by desires and nostalgia. Even migrants showing highest rates of affiliation to Italian cuisine may, from time to time, wish to taste a traditional dish. MAN "A volte mi viene la nostalgia di mangiare una cosa nostra al 100%" (MAN "Sometimes I feel nostalgic and need to eat something 100% Egyptian.");

3. *cultural competence*. According to the selected task, migrant's self-evaluation of his/her cultural competence in Egyptian/Italian cultures leads to prefer those culture richer in terms of his/her competences for the task. In a way, it can read as a transposition of distinctive competitive advantage roots to human behaviors (Arnould & Thompson, 2005);
4. *uncontrolled and instinctual emotions*. Frequently, respondents admitted that anger or other strong uncontrolled emotions took them to adopting the more instinctual cultural base;
5. *negotiation between cultures*. An interesting activator is represented by the ability of mediating between the two cultures in which a migrant shows competence. In these situations, this person acts as an out-group member in the in-group, therefore being engaged into a cyclical alternation between cultures. Being detached from the original culture may be instrumentally used to help other in-groups to use chances embedded in the host environment.

Summarizing, situational factors play a key role in the activation of different cultural identities. As suggested by previous research, occasions, places and partners of consumption impact on alternation. At the same time, new facilitating factors emerge, including cultural competence and goal setting, nostalgic or instinctual emotions, and even out-group/in-group dynamics, which probably reflect the most mature forms of cultural alternation.

5.8 Barriers

5.8.1 Felt discrimination

A preliminary consideration on felt discrimination relates to the matter of social desirability. Respondents tend to filter their actual experience of discrimination in direct questions, whereas it emerges from side exemplifications or considerations. Given the ethnic distance between interviewees and interviewers, answers may have been biased in different ways: respect for interviewers' ethnicity, presentation of themselves as "good immigrants", maintenance of a good relationship with interviewers or, vice versa, provocative impact on them, and so forth.

In addition to that, discrimination has been presented as a trait characterizing both the mother and the host countries. In Egypt discrimination is essentially linked to the religious sphere, where Copt minority is more and more jeopardized by Muslim majority, in its extremist fringes. As a complement to that, Italy has sometimes renewed the experience of being discriminated, even though this country has not been presented as one of the worst cases in Europe. MO2 "*Per me gli italiani sono i meno razzisti tra i paesi in Europa, se paragonati per esempio ai tedeschi. I tedeschi sono... anche gli inglesi! E gli olandesi...*" (MO2 "*I personally think that Italian people are the less racist among European people, if compared, for example, to Germans. Germans are... And if compared to English people! And Dutch people too*").

Through observation, discrimination assumes various faces:

1. *stereotypes*. The most frequently quoted example of discrimination relates to stereotypes on immigrants at large, and Muslims in particular. The identification of Arabian people with terrorists is a clear picture of that concept;
2. *distorted media information*. Some respondents claim to be discriminated through media communication, which often elaborates a stereotyped description of immigrants and sustains social discourse;
3. *job opportunities*. A peculiar expression of discrimination emerges in terms of job opportunities, which are limited and under-qualified for the majority of migrants workers;
4. *bureaucratic obstacles*. Many respondents presented a strong discrimination within those public institutions that control the legalization processes of migrants. Times of regularization, delays in obtaining visa, and public officers behaviors have been quoted as salient traits of Italian racism;
5. *psychological and physical harassments*. Second generations at school, but also women wearing the veil, have accounted episodes of open threat, despite limited in number. By the way, these situations have occurred to Copts also in their country of origin.

Given this brief picture of the main expressions of discrimination, further variables may enforce the risks of prejudice and reduce migrants' chances to get rid of it. In particular, these conditioning factors include:

1. *linguistic shortages*. Limited competence in the host language makes it tougher to negotiate meanings and sustain one's interests;
2. *provocative behaviors*. Defense against discrimination or self-determination can be read as provocative attacks to the host culture. A respondent explicitly quoted that her decision of being veiled was long suspended as a result of being perceived as a refusal or, even worse, a contestation against Italian culture;
3. *tiredness*. Years of struggle can reduce migrants' willingness to contrast prejudice;
4. *time-related effects*. On one hand, old generations have been frequently depicted as the hardest depositories of prejudice against immigrants, whereas new generations seem to be more permeable to cultural exchanges. On the other, specific events (September 11th, Nassyria terrorist attack, etc.) may influence the risks of being discriminated.

Nevertheless, instead of accepting prejudice and other conditioning factors, the majority of respondents told stories and gave examples of strategies contrasting discrimination. These anti-discriminatory actions include language training, regularization through visa acquisition, citizenship selection, or request of support and protection to the appointed public offices. Furthermore, a couple of strategies need a deeper analysis. A first peculiar strategy can be labelled "*in-group - out-group*" approach. Prejudices, in fact, can be contrasted by self-identifying as an in-group member in the Italian community and/or as an out-group member with reference to the Egyptian group. In a way, cultural alternation expressed through in-group/out-group shift can be used as an anti-discriminatory device.

A final way to overcome or, more precisely, read discrimination in its real light is to define *reciprocal conditions of coexistence*. Some migrants seem to know that prejudice is part of social life, and that it does not only belong to the Italian community. On that base, rules of coexistence can and have to be negotiated.

Summarizing, empirical observation does not sustain any hypothesis that felt discrimination by itself may impede the achievement of alternation exists. In fact, even though it can put further obstacles along the path of migrants' socio-cultural

integration, it can also be elaborated by them and, through that, it can even increase cultural competence, identity salience, and negotiation skills.

5.8.2 Barriers to purchase

A further potentially limiting factor that was explicitly taken into consideration in the a-priori model refers to barriers to purchase. In that case, empirical findings more or less have confirmed researchers' hypotheses in terms of number and typologies of these barriers. From a representational point of view, it is easier to state that barriers to purchase, that is, factors that can obstacle migrants' opportunity of purchasing and consuming products they actually prefer, are reducible to two main categories:

1. *ethnically specific barriers*. In that case, along the purchase process Egyptian consumers, in their quality of immigrants, may experience difficulties a native consumer does not have. In detail, these ethnically bounded impediments include: religious ties in food selection (products containing alcohol or pork-derived ingredients, halal meat, etc.), assortment limitations for Egyptian items (absence of desired products, delays in supply, etc.), unavailability of Egyptian cooking techniques, or lower quality of Egyptian imported products;
2. *ethnically unspecific barriers*. On the opposite, other obstacles cannot be considered specific of ethnic consumers, even though migrants may be more exposed to these barriers. I mainly refer to time and money constraints that limit the set of available choices for Egyptian consumers. To quote an example, Italian shops if compared to Islamic ones have been presented as always close, having more limited opening hours.

Barriers to purchase do not play a major impact on cultural adaptation strategies, even though they can help migrants in actively enacting their Egyptian cultural identity. At the same time, the possibility of finding Egyptian foods in Italian points of sale give migrants the chance of gradually operating a process of adaptation in the new culture, and can also be read as a symbol of their legitimation in the host country.

5.8.3 Ethnic stigmata

Finally, an empirically derived variable is represented by what I call “ethnic stigmata”, which can be defined as structural and hardly modifiable aspects that tend to unwillingly tie Egyptian people to their conditions of immigrants and foreigners.

Three prevailing ethnic stigmata emerged through a cross-analysis of ethnographic interviews:

1. *somatic traits*. Somatic traits can be considered, by definition, the most indelible trace of ethnic appurtenance. Some respondents openly admitted that they did not suffer from strong discrimination also thanks to a whiter skin color, their blue eyes, and European somatic analogies at large. Second generations tend to feel ever more the castrating effect of somatic traits, being born in Italy and frequently perceiving themselves as truly Italians;
2. *names and surnames*. Arabian names/surnames attest ethnic origins. This can have severe implications in commercial praxis, if the nationality of bargainers is perceived to be salient information and a criterion of selection of the commercial counterpart. It is not by chance that some respondents have decided to give their children Italian or American names (Massimo, Stefano, Mary, John, etc.), in order to limit the effects of ethnic stigmata;
3. *foreigners forever*. Year after year, migrants may start to be part of the host society, and feel in-group members in the host community. But over their heads, the threat of outside observers, who can recall their migratory origin, may be lived as an out-group condemn. On the opposite, mature forms of alternation tend to build a sense of double belonging: migrants are willing to admit they have two homes.

Summing up, ethnic stigmata play an antagonist role of facilitators of alternation. In fact, if facilitators sustain shifts between cultures, ethnic stigmata tend to crystallize migrants’ belonging to the sole original culture, and can therefore be a heavy burden along their life-path.

5.9 Consumer Behavior phases

5.9.1 Purchase motivations

Field observation and narration have been devoted to consumption rationales, and in particular to food preferences. In terms of purchase motivations, two main aspects have been collected: preferred products in the two culinary traditions, and motivations of preference for the Italian/Egyptian cuisine.

In terms of *products preferences*, among the most frequently quoted Italian dishes it is possible to account those belonging to the positive Italian stereotypes: pasta, pizza, lasagne, and cannelloni. More rarely, Italian fruits have been quoted, thanks to their lower cost, and ham, which is again closely related to Italian culinary tradition. On the side of beloved Egyptian foods, the list is much longer, including Islamic meat, kebab, Syrian bread (a sort of subtle and tender bread, with a circular shape), Egyptian vegetables (banja and broad beans, in particular) and fruits (mangos, bananas, dates, and guava), sweets, even though some respondents find them “too sweet”. In addition, Egyptian butter and cheese, tea, and rice are particularly appreciated. One respondent, who was unable to find Egyptian fresh cheese in Italy, has learnt to cook it at home. In fact, some of these foods are not easily present in Italian point of sales, as it happens in the case of Egyptian mangos, whose taste and perfume is far from being comparable to Italian ones.

Referring to *motivations of purchase*, it is interesting to notice that things are clearly cut: Egyptian products are selected for nostalgia and pleasure of eating something that belongs to the motherland, whereas Italian products are preferred both for rational and emotional reasons. On the cognitive side, Italian cuisine has been presented as quicker to cook, lighter, more various and hygienic, of high quality, and cheaper. At the same time, another rational motivation, but driven by necessity, consists in the selection of Italian products given the unavailability of their Egyptian equivalents. INT “*Quando lei compra dei prodotti italiani, dei cibi italiani, che cosa motiva prevalentemente la sua scelta di prodotti italiani? La facilità con cui li può acquistare, il fatto che siano più convenienti rispetto ai cibi egiziani, il fatto che abbiano una qualità diversa, migliore o peggiore rispetto a quelli egiziani, la marca dei cibi italiani, il gusto dei cibi italiani, il piacere di mangiare italiano, il fatto di potersi sentire parte della comunità italiana...? MAI* “*La facilità di fare il mangiare italiano! Questa non l’ha scritta e gliela dico io!*” (INT “*When you buy Italian products, that is, Italian food, what does motivate your buying decision? For*

example: easiness to buy, higher convenience than Egyptian foods, different quality - better or worse -, Italian brands, taste, desire to eat Italian, willingness to feel part of the Italian community...?" MAI "Easiness to cook Italian! This was not in your list, and I tell you!").

On the emotional level, then, Italian foods are preferred for their taste, pleasantness, or fantasy. INT "Facendo riferimento ai prodotti italiani, per quale ragione comperi cibi italiani: facilità di acquisto, marca, qualità, costo...?" MO1 "Certe sono assurde. La marca! Non lo so, boh. Perché comperi la pasta? Perché è buona la pasta!" (INT "Referring to Italian products, why do you buy Italian food: easiness to find it, brand, quality, cost...?" MO1 "Some alternatives are absurd. The brand! I don't know, boh... Why do you buy pasta? Because pasta is good!").

Only the issue of healthiness tends to split interviewees into two groups. Some of them claim Italian cuisine is preferable, and acknowledge the famous "Mediterranean diet", whereas others associate Italian crops to industrialized production and chemical sophistication. Therefore, if Italian tradition can be interpreted as preferable in the way things are cooked, ingredients seem to be more natural and healthy in the Egyptian market. Emblematic is the case of one respondent - by the way, a cook and restaurant owner - that assumes a vegetarian style of consumption in Italy, and goes back to meat and fish consumption once in Egypt.

On that base, it is possible to find a sort of "file rouge" across food preferences: respondents, who possess a double cultural competence, tend to show a strong preference for those foods who distinctively belong to one cuisine (Italian pasta and pizza, Egyptian kebab, molokheya, and sweets). For example, Egyptian pizza is likely to be discarded as well as Italian rice has been frequently considered with a certain suspect.

In addition, most of respondents tend to admit that Italian cuisine represents their stable and "normal" way of eating. On the opposite, Egyptian dishes are used in some occasions or under the pressure of desire and nostalgia. IR "Perché ormai si vive qua, si mangia quello che c'è qua, perché non si può poi anche cucinare con la maniera che vogliono loro. Sì, una volta ogni tanto..." (IR "By the way, now we live there, we eat what is available there, because we cannot cook in the way they want. Yes, from time to time...").

5.9.2 Point of sales and frequency of purchase

Once cognitive and emotional motivations of consumption have been pointed out, purchase behaviors have been observed in terms of their frequency and points of sales preferences.

On the side of point of sales preferences the set of available alternatives migrants systematically combine includes:

1. *supermarkets (or hypermarkets)*. In fact, for the largest majority of their consumptions, Egyptian respondents have assessed a strong attachment to European (Carrefour, Metro, Lidl, etc.) or Italian (Esselunga, GS, Coop, SMA, Penny Market) commercial flags, which are presented as relatively low-cost, rich in assortments, and time-saving. In particular, Esselunga represents the most well known and appreciated flag, and its loyalty programs have been quoted from time to time. In OS2's words Esselunga is the best alternative *"Primo perché hanno l'iniziativa, sono quelli che hanno iniziato con la carta e poi gli altri hanno fatto concorrenza. Secondo per i prezzi: alcuni supermercati infatti vendono a poco ma roba non buona, invece li no."* (first of all, because they started with the fidelity card, and they have then been imitated by competitors. Secondly, for their prices: some supermarkets in fact are low cost but products are bad quality. This does not occur at Esselunga");
2. *local markets*. Fruits, vegetables, and fish are more frequently bought at local markets, which give Egyptian respondents the perception of higher freshness and convenience;
3. *Islamic commercial flags*. Finally, Egyptian respondents point out their strong attachment to Islamic butcher's shops for meat and other typical Egyptian foods (fruit juices, Syrian bread, sweets, etc.). Within the Muslim community, Islamic shops represent a necessity in order to meet religious requirements, whereas to Copt Egyptians they represent the chance of finding home tastes. It is interesting to point out that, also within the Islamic shops category, the diffusion of commercial flags is starting to spread. In Milan, in fact, it is nowadays present a commercial chain of Islamic butcher's shops called "El Mulk Lillah", which recalls, on a different scale, the distributive patterns of European flags.

The way and rationales of this point of sales set of alternatives is clearly declared by OS1: *"Allora, ci sono tre posti: per la spesa generale o l'Esselunga oppure GS. Per la verdura, diciamo che*

si occupa lei del mercato, e anche la frutta. Ovviamente la carne e le altre cose dalla macelleria” (OS
“Well, there are three places: for the general shopping, Esselunga or GS. For vegetables and also fruits,
let's say my wife is appointed for local markets. Obviously, meat and other things are bought at the
butcher's shop”).

In terms of *frequency of purchase*, a striking analogy was observed across interviewees. In fact, almost all of them claim to go shopping once a week. Frequency of visits to supermarkets and local markets is therefore relatively regular, whereas Islamic shops are visited in a more unstable way. In fact, they are selected when Egyptian consumers feel a specific desire for home tastes, or during religious celebrations, which enforce the sense of ethnic affiliation: OS 1 *“Ci sono dei periodi che praticamente vado ogni due-tre settimane. Ci sono dei periodi, come Ramadan ad esempio, sono trenta giorni, sono stato lì sei/sette volte, per dire...” (“There are periods I go to the butcher's shop two times per month or less. In other periods, for example as it happens during Ramadan that lasts thirty days, I may go there seven or eight times in a month”).*

Summing up, Egyptian consumers demonstrate an easy and quick process of adoption of Italian habits in terms of point of sales preferences and frequency of purchase. The main differences with the Italian community can be detected in a higher reliance on local markets, Islamic shops, and also a higher propensity to food stocks. Stocks, in fact, allow them both to capitalize on commercial special offers, and to store those foods they can less frequently buy for time-constraints (i.e., halal meat, which is bought in large quantity and then frozen). Furthermore, respondents have largely confirmed their scarce attention to brands, being more price-driven in their processes of alternatives selection. In that light, it is easy to conclude that Egyptian consumers mainly show a hybridization of shopping behaviors, combining some original preferences (local markets and fresh products) with Italian opportunities and ties (supermarkets and hypermarkets).

5.9.3 Cooking habits

In terms of cooking habits, observation has led to two main findings. First of all, Egyptian respondents present, as perhaps confirmed by local markets large use, an unshakeable preference for fresh ingredients. Frozen products are marginally used, but they are typically the result of fresh products that have been bought in big quantity and then frozen (i.e., the stocks example already described). On the opposite, ready dishes and canned products are drastically refused. The denial for this last category of foods,

which have effectively penetrated the Italian metropolitan target, is even more surprising when it is expressed by men, who were totally unskilled in food preparation in their home country, by singles, or by respondents claiming their hate for cooking.

INT "Come ti piace cucinare, o meglio..." MAG "A me non piace proprio cucinare!" INT "Diciamo allora: quando cucini, preferisci utilizzare ingredienti freschi, piatti già pronti, o piatti surgelati?" MAG "No, preferisco i freschi. Decisamente i freschi! Anche se sono molto più laboriosi..." (INT "How do you like cooking? MAG "I hate cooking!" INT "Well, let's then say: when cooking, do you prefer to use fresh ingredients, frozen products, or ready dishes?" MAG "No, I prefer fresh ingredients. Definitely fresh! Even if they may be more time-consuming...").

On average, young consumers tend to be more open to ready foods, but they still mark their preference for fresh products.

A second empirical finding refers to the adoption of Egyptian tools in food preparation. Respondents claim to use a limited but existing set of kitchen utensils they brought from homeland, including: tweezers for Ramadan biscuits, digging tools to empty potatoes or courgettes, special pots for broad beans preparation, small moccas for Arabian coffee, khollas (peculiar bottles for water oxygenation), and wood mortars. In particular, an intriguing aspect that emerged from interviewees' descriptions refers to their propensity to attributing kitchen tools an Egyptian origin if associated to the preparation of traditional Egyptian dishes. The case of wood mortars, which is spread in many different countries, can be emblematic. Given that garlic is highly employed in Arabian cuisine, and being softly cut through the use of pestle and mortar, almost all respondents tended to give it an Egyptian origin. Sometimes this magic transpositional attitude is openly acknowledges, but still in few cases. A second generation guy, for example, perceives certain objects as "truly Egyptian", even though he rationally knows they were not invented in his home country. MO1: "Per fare la zuppa di erbette, che si chiama molokheja, per tritarla serve la mezzaluna. Quando vedo la mezzaluna, mi viene in mente l'Egitto. Tra l'altro da piccolo pensavo che fosse una cosa che si trovava solo in Egitto, la mezzaluna. (...) Certe cose mi fanno pensare più all'Egitto che all'Italia. Cose anche normali: il bricco del the. Perché noi il the lo beviamo tantissimo." ("In order to cook molokheja, a bietola soup, a mincing knife is required. By the way, when I was a child I thought mincing knife only existed in Egypt. (...) Some things make me think more to Egypt than to Italy. Even banal things: tea pot, because we drink a lot of tea").

In other cases, this awareness is less emotional and more rational, as in the situation of an import-expert Egyptian businessman. INT: "Per esempio ci facevano alcuni casi: la pentola per cucinare le fave che è particolare..." WILL "La comperano dall'Italia. La vendevo io. Davvero. I prodotti in acciaio sono quasi, soprattutto italiani. Poi la tecnologia è stata esportata, ma è un'altra

cosa.” (INT “For example, we were told that the pot to cook broad beans is peculiar...” WIL “They import it from Italy. I sold it. Really. Steel objects are almost all Italian. Technology has then been exported, but it is another thing.”

Once again, cooking habits have shown a strong form of hybridization, as it happens for point of sales preferences and frequency of purchase.

5.9.4 Cooking emotions

As it is going to be discussed later on, food and culture in general can be used as instrumental or terminal values (Rokeach, 1973). When food and the pleasure around its preparation are more terminal in nature, that is, when migrants cook not only to satisfy their hunger but to feel emotions associated to a given dish (“food per se”), empirical analysis has enlightened different sets of emotions attributed to Italian and Egyptian foods:

1. *Italian foods.* The most frequently quoted feelings associated to the preparation of Italian dishes include happiness, daily nature, curiosity, uncertainty on preparation and results, passion, fun, sense of creativity, and even rebellion. MAG “Quando voglio fare la ribelle, cucino italiano. Quando voglio mettermi in pace un po’ con gli spiriti dei miei antenati, allora mi ricollego, mi ricordo questo piatto e quando mangiavamo insieme. (...) E quando lo faccio e mi viene bene dico: ah, quasi il sapore di mia madre...” (“When I want to feel a rebel, I cook Italian. When I want to be in peace with my ancestors’ spirits, then I tuned myself, I recall this dish and when we ate it together. (...) And when I cook it and I succeed, I tell myself: ah, almost my mother’s taste...”).
2. *Egyptian foods.* The other side of the moon is populated by different emotions, which contain joy, special event, proud, safety, and reconciliation with one’s roots. HAS “Quello italiano lo faccio per passione, quello egiziano lo faccio per essere soddisfatto, per far vedere che l’Egitto è un paese che ha anche da mangiare buono. Ieri ho fatto un tipo di minestra egiziana che è piaciuta a tutti.” (“I cook Italian food for passion, Egyptian food to be proud, to show that Egypt is a country having a good cuisine. Yesterday I cooked a vegetables soup that everyone loved”).

On the opposite, when food preparation is *instrumental* for something else (for example, to make something good for friends), the ethnic connotation of food is, on its own, instrumental and emotions tend to align, independently on what is going to be cooked. IR “Cioè, quando cucino per me, per le persone che stanno con me, è tutto un piacere per fare

una cosa buona per quelli che stanno con me ("That is, when I cook for myself, for the people that are close to me, everything is a pleasure if I do something good for those who stay with me").

In that light, also cooking emotions can be seen as a mirror of cultural alternation competences and states, both in food instrumental or terminal interpretation.

5.9.5 Flow experience with Italian food

A final consideration on the process of food evaluation, purchase, and consumption has been in the direction of the best way Italian food can be tasted. In fact, when discussing the "places" of food consumption, the domestic sphere has largely turned out to be the prevailing one in migrants' everyday life. Then, should we argue that Italian food is better tasted within Egyptian home boundaries, or are their desiderata in terms of Italian cuisine different than this?

This question has been approached through the interpretative lens of "flow experience" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), which tries to detect the rationales and expressions of optimal states perceived by individuals with reference to an inquired sphere of their life. Once Italian food consumption becomes the observed phenomenon, Egyptian respondents have systematically presented a gap between their actual behavior (consuming Italian cuisine at home) and their desiderata (the best way to eat Italian). Almost everyone, in fact, has quoted Italian restaurants as the best way to fully taste Italian dishes, both for intrinsic motives associated to Italian restaurants (traditional preparation, high quality ingredients, Italian atmosphere) and for lateral reasons that more generally belong to the going out experience (finding ready and giving oneself a moment of reward).

Therefore, it can be concluded that Egyptians find limitations in the achievement of their desiderata. Triangulating information on flow experience with other observations, the more probable explanation can be led to money shortages, which has always been presented as a central driver in their consumption choices (low income, necessity to save in order to fulfill the migratory goals, etc.).

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Cultural adaptation exits

Once different typologies of explanatory variables have been presented and discussed, it is possible to complement empirical findings in terms of “outcome” observations. In particular, the exits of cultural adaptation processes have been explored, and are going to be presented in this and the following paragraphs. First of all, a general picture of observed adaptation strategies is going to be illustrated, having particular attention for cultural alternation exits. Later on, more punctual considerations are going to be implemented, in terms of: ways of expression of cultural alternation, meta-strategies used to combine cultural competences, phases of adaptation, use of cultures, and dynamics between cultures.

Adaptation exits have been inferred through direct questions (scales of double ethnic affiliation) and many more observations or indirect questions. On this last side, in particular, adaptation strategies have inductively emerged from:

1. *food consumption preferences and habits*. The way migrants lay their tables, and the types of cuisines they taste are a first indicator of their orientation among cultures they have been exposed to. Needless to say, observation was principally devoted to the Italian/Egyptian axis, but from time to time respondents also introduced experiences linked to different cuisines (Indian, Chinese, South-American, Moroccan, etc.);
2. *occupation*, which has already been discussed;
3. *leisure time activities*. The way spare-time is spent and the forms of media consumption have been a further indicator of the relationship with cultures;
4. *social and family ties*. Friendships and family sphere are key mirrors of the way individuals move across cultures. For example, family rejoinings, couple ethnic composition, and first-second generations dynamics give useful information on the adaptation strategies;
5. *language skills and use*. Linguistic double competence represents another important element of integration, but, in a way, a even more interesting aspect emerges from the use of the first or the second person in sentences structure. Almost all migrants presenting an alternation exit have been

shifting from first to second person, and vice versa, during interviewees. This has been read, together with further observations, as an index of belonging to both cultures;

6. *religious praxes*. It has been interesting to observe the way religion mediates social life and filter world interpretation. For example, it has been frequently associated to openness to alterity;
7. *acquisition of cultural competence in the host culture*. As theorized by LaFramboise et al. (1993), cultural competence in the host culture is a dominant requirement and an expressive trait of alternation. The issue of culture competence is going to be better explored in the following lines, but an example may be useful to get the meaning of the variable. One respondent claim she read Italian milestone authors, including Dante, Boccaccio, and Manzoni, and she expressed the wish to complete this list. GRA *"D'estate ho letto tutto il "Purgatorio" e tutto il "Paradiso", che non mi son piaciuti, e tutto l'"Inferno" e non è di dovere! Ma è difficile. "I promessi sposi" nel primo biennio era solo da leggere qualche capitolo, io l'ho letto tutto perché proprio...io desideravo da prima di andare a scuola di leggere queste grandi opere (...) E invece queste sono le cose che mi sono piaciute di più e anche Boccaccio. Io aspetto di riuscire a leggere tutte le novelle."* (GRA *"Last summer I read all "Paradiso" and "Purgatorio", which I didn't like, and all "Inferno", which was not compulsory. It was hard. During the school first biennium, we only had to read some selected chapters of "Promessi Sposi", but I read it all... I had wished to read it so long before going to school. (...). These are the things I loved most, Boccaccio included. I am looking forward to finishing all his novels."*).

Given that premise on indicators of adaptation exits, a few comments are required in terms of observed exits. This research project accounts 21 ethnographic interviews. On that base, researchers observed strategies of alternation in 17 cases, whereas the remaining four situations were addressed as assimilation (1 case), polarized opposition (2 cases), and acculturation (1 case, see § 2.4.2). By the way, these last four situations showed some traces of alternation too, for example in terms of culinary habits, but characteristics of different adaptation strategies largely recurred.

In detail, a definition of what is labelled "cultural alternance" can be left to a second generation respondent's words: INT *"E tu ti definiresti italiano o egiziano, o qualcos'altro?"* MO1 *"Entrambi, entrambi, totalmente, perché sono talmente mescolati dentro di me, che... Ma anche per i miei fratelli, perché non c'è distinzione. Molte volte mi è stato detto: "se succedesse una guerra tra Italia ed Egitto, tu cosa sceglieresti?" Non lo so, perché sono talmente tutte e*

due dentro che avrei davvero il dubbio. Poi magari la scelta si baserebbe sul punto di vista politico, ma non su quello che sento io dentro" (INT "How would you define yourself: Italian, Egyptian, or something else?" MO1 "I don't know, I really don't know, because there everything is so mixed up inside of me. Also for my brothers, because there is no distinction. Many times they told me: if a war between Egypt and Italy occurred, what party would you select? I don't know, because they are both so deeply rooted that I will have doubts. Probably, then, my choice would be based on political rationales, not on what I feel inside").

Analogously, respondents' words can be more effective than any theoretical definition in presenting the sense of polarized opposition or assimilation. In terms of polarization, an Egyptian migrant, who has been living in Italy for the last twelve years, said: IB "no, uguale, non cambia niente, sono uguale come prima di venire qua, lo stesso, non è cambiato niente." (IB "No, I'm the same, it's the same. I'm the same person I was before getting there. The same, nothing has changed").

On the side of assimilation, a recent comer showed a normative need of abandoning his previous identity to fit into the new Italian suit: AMI "lo penso che siamo in Italia e quindi dobbiamo vivere come italiani. Lasciamo la nostra tradizione" (AMI "I think we are in Italy, and we therefore have to live as Italians. We have to leave our traditions").

After this preliminary description of indicators and observed outcomes, cross-analysis of interviews offers a deeper feeling of what alternation is. In different words, cultural alternation has been presented as a status characterized both by a cognitive and an emotional dimension, and by a certain stability and social visibility. If the issue of stability has already been separately analyzed, visibility has emerged at different stages of previous discussion: relational ties, leisure activities, job experiences, religious praxes, and so forth. On the opposite, the cognitive and emotional basis of cultural alternation still ask for a more detailed presentation.

Starting from the *cognitive dimension*, double cultural attachment has been rationally motivated, even though in different forms. Referring to culture of origin, migrants' affiliation has been frequently justified as something necessary, natural, and even structural. Egypt exerts a sort of imprinting on his children, as any other land does. A sort of inevitability and fatalistic acceptance dominates this sense of appurtenance. Differently from that, Italian culture is accepted and retained for other rational motives. In particular, Italy has somehow been depicted as an Eldorado, in the way America may appear to Italian emigrants in the past. MAS "Prima un'altra cosa, adesso c'ho tutto, ho trovato tutto..." (MAS "Before it was different, but now I have all, I have found everything"). MAN: "Quando ti abitui a una cosa bella, andare in giù non è facile" (MAN "When you get accustomed to

something beautiful, going down is not easy"). At the same time, this wonderland may be a place to stay and may give higher chances of getting rid of one's aspirations, but still represent a threat to migrants, who have to learn a new language, new lifestyles, and miss all their socio-cultural ties. In that light, the "Italian dream" can be fascinating, and even convincing, but still presents its price. In some cases, Egyptian respondents identified this price in what they lost of their original culture. OS1 "*Per cui si è aumentato questo italiano e si è diminuito dalla cultura egiziana. Questa è una cosa...la ritengo...non giusta...ma logica.*" ("Therefore, I have increased my Italian side, and decreased my Egyptian culture. This is something..., I think, ... something not right, but logical."). In other cases, the main cost stands up from the necessity of living in a land different from the one a person belongs to and aspires to. One respondent, who has spent more than twenty years in Italy and who has an Italian wife and two Italian children (as he calls them), metaphorically got the point, when he described living in Italy as being at the cirque for a lion that was captured in the jungle. OSM "*Se parli al leone e gli dici: "vuoi tornare nella giungla", ... magari ti dice: "no, perché qua trovo da mangiare". Qui lavora. Cosa frega a lui andare a cacciare, ad ammazzare? (...) Sì, lo hanno fatto imparare, lo hanno fatto giocare, gli hanno dato da mangiare, lo hanno fatto dormire, lo hanno fatto visitare se si sente male... nella giungla non lo visita nessuno.*" ("If you speak to the lion and you ask: "do you want to go back to jungle? ", ... it may say to you: "no, because here I find to eat", Here it has a job. Why should it care of going to hunt or to kill? (...) Yes, they trained it, they made it play, they fed it, they made it sleep, they assisted it when it was ill... in the jungle none takes care of it").

The cognitive side of alternation, which has been briefly outlined, has been also observed through respondents' double cultural competence. In fact, many answers and comments specifically throw light on the way they perceive the Egyptian or the Italian context. With reference to the Egyptian society, the most frequently observed information address the religious sphere (distinction between Copts and Muslims, five pillars of Islamism, Copts' rituals and traditions, Ramadan, etc.), but also include Egypt fundamental cultural traits (hierarchy, sense of respect for elderly people, strong neighbourhood and familiar ties, strong distinction of sex roles, etc.), food traditions, and Egyptian lifestyles and rhythms (Cairo description has recurred many times). Analogously, respondents also show cultural competence about the Egyptian community in Milan, in terms of places of meeting, religious sites, occupations, and relational preferences. With reference to the Italian culture, major comments are oriented towards: Italian people, who have been described as generous, open, and ready to help; social changes in the Italian context (EL "*Non ci sono più italiani, quasi tutti stranieri!*" - "Italians are almost no more present, only foreigners!"); political parties; market rules and commercial

opportunities; or Italian lifestyles, which is described as too frenetic and stressful. OSM *"Sì, sì, si perde proprio il rapporto con le persone stesse. Io ho sentito questa cosa qua, perché sempre lavorare, sempre pagare, sempre da fare."* (OSM *"Yes, social ties are lost. I felt it in Italy, because there is only time to work, pay, and do things"*).

Summing up, the cognitive dimension of alternation is reflected in terms of migrant's capability of taking distance and feeling close to two cultures at the same time. Cultural alternation is then definable as the individual capability of alternating distance and proximity.

The emotional side of alternation enlightens the warmest contents of this adaptation exit. In that case, it is possible to account both positive and negative feelings that alternating migrants perceive or that are experienced by people living close to them. Cross-analysis helps pointing out some recurrent emotions associated to alternation, which at least include:

1. *feeling at home*. The easiest proof of cultural competence in the host culture is offered by this perception of feeling at home in the new context. At the same time, in the case of alternation, migrants acquire the sense of belonging (being at home, being in-groups, not being foreigners) both in the original and host cultures. EL *"E' proprio come la seconda terra. Quando sono in Egitto sto per tornare e sento che se non torno a casa non... cioè, sono molto contenta quando vado in Egitto però quando finisce la vacanza non mi dispiace, torno a casa. Per far la vita...cioè, è la seconda casa. (...) Sì, sì, viviamo benissimo e non mi sento più straniera."* (EL *"It is like my second homeland. When I am back to Egypt and I have to return to Italy, I feel that if I don't return I... That is, I am very happy when I go to Egypt, but when holidays are over I don't complain, I go home. To live... it's my second home. (...) Yes, we do live very well here and I feel foreigner no more."*);
2. *empathy or loss with original culture*. Another key emotion associated to alternation is represented by the feeling of maintenance and loss of one's cultural roots. Alternation, in fact, is often accompanied by a negotiation in the two cultures, and may lead to a critical renounce to some original cultural traits. By the way, this does not mean that alternation enforces a subtractive relationship between cultures, as it will be discussed at the end of this chapter. At the same time, also functional and accepted changes still keep a better-sweet taste, because a form of renounce has to be elaborated. MAG *"Un po' come la crescita di un pitone, un paragone un po' così... la pelle vecchia, assolutamente preziosa e utile, la tengo come un tesoro, come qualcosa che mi appartiene. Sono convinta*

che ha anche avuto un merito nella mia vita, ma le circostanze, l'ambiente, anche certe scelte ti portano ad avere investito in direzioni nuove. Non so se più belle o..." (MAG "More or less, it is like a python's growth, an unusual parallelism... Old skin, which is completely useful and precious to me, is kept as a treasure, as something that belongs to me. I am convinced it had a role in my life, but circumstances, environment, and even certain choices take you to invest in different directions. I don't know if more beautiful or...");

3. *fatiguing uncertainty.* Being alternant means lacking of a single and stable identity locus. This may create uncertainty both to the subject under alternation and to the individuals interacting with him/her. In fact, social categorization is one of the most diffused and simplifying processes of human life. If a person can no longer be easily placed within a cell of the socially constructed world, it may then represent a threat to the stability of the system. This is the case of an Egyptian woman who has spent most of her life in Italy. Some years ago, she decided to wear the veil, and therefore changed the way she was perceived by her family members and friends, who were even more destabilized thanks to her former "westernized style". GRA *"Io inizialmente ho parlato con le mie amiche più intime. Allora, ho parlato alla mia amica più intima e ha detto "io non ti conosco", ho detto "bene, se non mi conosci più vuol dire che siamo arrivati alla fine...". Però, nonostante che le ho risposto in questo modo, mi ha messo un po' in difficoltà, per questo non l'ho fatto subito"* (GRA *"I started talking to my closest friends. I spoke to my closest friend, and she told me: I don't know you any longer. I replied: well, if you don't know me any longer, it means we come to the end. Nevertheless, despite my answer, she created me problems. That's why I didn't do that at once"*). Contextually, this uncertainty and shadowed self-location can be fatiguing to the single migrant, as pointed out by a second generation guy. JO *"Nel senso, come ti senti? Avendo viaggiato spesso e volentieri, cosa vuol dire "ti senti"? Non ho radici in Italia e non ho futuro in Egitto, quindi non ti senti. Rimani nel limbo. Ed è il problema che hanno molti di noi per sposarsi: sembra una cosa idiota però...mi sposo un'italiana o mi sposo un'egiziana?"* (JO *"How do you feel? Having travelled a lot, what does it mean "how do you feel"? I don't have Italian roots and I have no future in Egypt, therefore you don't feel yourself. You stay suspended in the Limbo. And that's the problem many of us have to get married: it seems stupid, but should I get married with an Italian girl or with an Egyptian one?"*). For all these reasons, the feelings that can be attached to double cultural competence may, at the same time, include both curiosity and fear;
4. *sense of power.* Double competence can also enforce a sentiment of power and capability to change things. This point has emerged in different interviews, but can be clearly depicted in the case of an Egyptian cook, who

graduated in Economics in his country. When he came to Italy, he started working as dish-washer in a restaurant. Being dissatisfied, he started observing cooks at work, and finally started to wake up earlier in the morning in order to reach the restaurant and assist cooks during their work. He proposed to cook for the restaurant personnel and, once trained in the new profession, he moved to a new restaurant as a cook. He also has been involved in the start-up of a bakery shop;

5. *openness to otherness*. Very frequently, alternating respondents depicted their life as open to diversity and alterity. This seems to be “the” lesson learnt along their adaptation path. INT “*E cosa significa per lei accettare le regole di un paese?*” IR “*Significa rispettare intanto la gente. E le regole, nel senso che ogni paese ha le sue regole: se non si lavora la domenica, non si lavora la domenica. Si vive in un paese culturalmente, secondo com’è la cultura di un paese si deve vivere. Non vengo qua a dettare legge.*” (INT “*In your opinion, what does it mean accepting a country’s rules?*” IR “*First, it means to respect people. And rule, in the sense that each country has its own rules: if they don’t work on Sunday, you don’t work on Sunday. You culturally live in a country, consistently with the culture of that country. I don’t come to impose my laws.*”).

This list is a synthetic review of the main observations suggested by field analysis, but it does not claim to be exhaustive or comprehensive. In fact, some other emotions associated to alternation more occasionally emerged, such as sense of enrichment, spontaneity, and joy. Next step explicitly addresses the forms of expression of cultural alternation: polarization versus hybridization.

6.2 Alternation manifestation

Indexes of cultural alternation have already been listed at the beginning of the previous paragraph. Therefore, by “alternation manifestation” I do not refer to the ways this adaptation exit can be observed and, in researchers’ words, measured. Differently, I consider the way alternation is pursued by individual consumers: a “polarized” alternation will be encountered if a person, in a given moment and situation, acts accordingly to one of his/her cultural identities, whereas a “hybridized” alternation will be depicted in case of simultaneous employment of two (or more) cultural identities.

Field observation has sustained this hypothesized classification of alternation. Examples of polarization or hybridization have been principally detected in terms of:

1. *media consumption*. In that case, media category showing highest rates of hybridization is television, where the largest majority of respondents possesses parabolic antennas, which enable them to define a culturally varied TV diet. Within numerous households, Arabian and Italian TV programs are implemented with American and English ones, being English a relatively well known and often appreciated language to Egyptian consumers. On the opposite radio and newspapers consumption is much more polarized around the Italian supply, with fortuitous integration of Arabian newspapers. In terms of media consumption, it is therefore easy to conclude that the way alternation is manifested is highly bounded to supply limitations;
2. *language use*. Language use provides richer findings. A cross-characteristic of language production seems to be related to counterparts' cultural competences. In fact, when parties involved in the conversation tend to share a single language, selection is then forced and takes to polarized expressions of alternation (that is, only Egyptian versus only Italian language). An example has been offered by MGI, a young and well-educated Egyptian man engaged with a Ukraine girl. When they go out with his Egyptian friends, they all shift to Italian language which represent a common ground to everyone. On the opposite, if parties in the conversation share double linguistic competences, it is more frequently observed a hybridized use of language. IB *"Quando c'è una cosa un film magari in televisione, quando non si capisce qualcosa magari ci spieghiamo, parliamo un po' in italiano."* (IB *"When there is something on television, for example a movie, and we don't understand something, we speak some Italian to understand."*). This process of hybridization may be, at the same time, something functional because two languages increase the set of available alternative, or something natural, when individuals interchangeably dispose of the languages. MO1 *"E' un vero lusso, perché il bello è di conoscere tutte e due le culture. La prima parola che ti viene in mente, anche perché ci sono certi concetti che non esistono nella lingua italiana e certi che non esistono in quella araba. E quindi tu fai questo mix totale. (...) Per esempio prendo una parola in italiano, poi una in arabo, e poi una ancora in italiano. La prima parola che mi viene in mente, la metto."* (MO1 *"It's a real richness, because the beautiful thing is that you know both cultures. You use the first word that comes to your mind, also because there are concepts that do not exist in the Italian language and others that do not exist in the Arabian one. And so you make this complete mix. (...) For example, I take an Italian word, then an Arabian word, and then an Italian word once more. The first word that comes to my mind is the one I use"*);

3. *food consumption*. Finally, food preparation and consumption is a further mirror of the way alternation occurs. Within that sphere, polarization seems to be strongly related to the “occasions of consumption” variable, because respondents have frequently admitted to prefer an Egyptian diet in certain moments of life (i.e., Akika) or religious celebrations (Ramadan, Copts’ Christmas, sacrifice celebration, etc.). On the other hand, hybridized forms of food consumption seem to be much more the rule, and can consist of both the simultaneous combination of Italian and Egyptian dishes, or the preparation of Egyptian food starting from Italian ingredients. In the latter case, hybridization refers more to the process of cooking than to the result of this activity of preparation. MAN “*Quando ho voglia di fare cucina nostra, usi i cibi italiani, ma li faccio come i nostri.*” (MAN “*When I desire to cook something of our tradition, I use Italian food, but I cook them in the Egyptian way.*”).

6.3 Meta level: principles of reconciliation of cultural selves

A fundamental question was not openly taken into account in the a priori model and, therefore, it was originally ignored in terms of ethnographic grid and research goals definition. Nevertheless, quite soon interviews and field work in general have arisen the following point: given that double cultural competence and multiple cultural identities increase complexity, how do alternating migrants reconcile these double soul? In fact, the hidden assumption of cultural alternation is that it represents a functional and healthy answer to cultural adaptation, whereas multiple self may also flow into pathological states (Elster, 1995). In that light, it was clear enough that migrants have to find a way to combine their double cultural competence and attribute it a profound meaning. This personal strategy, which represents a meta-level of cultures elaboration, is what I call “principles of reconciliation of cultural selves”.

Empirical data, which have been actively stimulated on that side, have led to the detection of a relatively varied list of solutions Egyptian migrants have elaborated overtime, including:

1. *hierarchical ranking*. A first possibility to combine cultural selves is to attribute them a different importance and, therefore, a distinctive positioning within a personal ranking of priorities. In that light and according to personal

life-stories, each individual is going to state a prominence to his/her culture of origin versus host culture. When values conflict in the cultural selves, the hierarchically dominating self will easily solve any conflict, being by definition the dominating one. In a way, this principle has the disadvantage of rigidity, absence of learning, and possibility of leading to sub-optimal choices, but it gives a sense of stability, easiness, and order. MAN *"Tengo la mia cultura e imparo la cultura italiana."* (MAN *"I keep my culture and I learn the Italian culture."*). In a less prescriptive way, it can be wonderfully captured in the following statement, which defines a clear life-goal: OS1 *"Ovvero io sto cercando di vivere la vita italiana al modo egiziano, ma non il contrario. Non sto cercando di vivere la vita egiziana al modo italiano perché li sarebbe sbagliato"* (OS1 *"This is to say that I am trying to live my Italian life in the Egyptian manner, not the reverse. I am not trying to live the Egyptian life in the Italian way, because this would be wrong"*);

2. *religious focalization*. Some respondents tend to invest religion of the highest importance, and identify what is right on the sole base of religious mandates. In that cases, religion is a filter to what can be accepted in the two cultures, and show a variation on the previously described principle of hierarchical ranking. IB *"Non cambia niente. Ci sono tante cose ma io c'ho una legge, il Corano. Non è il problema del cristiano, capito? Ci sono cose qua che non mi sono piaciute, quindi io non cambio, non sono cambiato per niente. La famiglia mi ha insegnato così."* (IB *"Nothing changes. There are a lot of things, but I have a law, the Koran. It is not the problem of Christians, do you understand? There are things there I don't like, therefore I don't change, I haven't changed at all. This is my family's teaching."*).
3. *critical selection and ethnocentric renounce*. Probably, the most frequently quoted principle of reconciliation is the one based on a critical selection of what is good and bad in the two cultures. Cultures are critically compared, and only good traits are retained along the migration process. This process shows several advantages: it is more flexible, given its subjective basis; it allows changes overtime, and therefore acknowledges individual learning; it justifies cultural changes due to migration on an ethical base, because what is lost in the original culture had to be dismissed as wrong; it sustains openness to alterity and negotiation in the two cultures, increasing individual empowerment. At the same time, it represents a much more sophisticated and resource consuming process, and it attributes the individual the moral responsibility of results achieved. JO, referring to people who do not sustain

the responsibility for their destiny, say: *"E' brutto. Ti toglie il problema dell'insuccesso. (...) Cioè tu sei autorizzato a non avere successo, perché è stato Dio a volere che tu non lo avessi. Non mi piace..."* (JO *"It's bad. It sets you free from the problem of being unsuccessful. (...) That is, you are authorized to be unsuccessful, because God wanted you to be unsuccessful. I don't like it..."*). The precondition to critical judgement of cultures is represented by a full renounce to ethnocentrism and an overcoming of imposed categories. Only those individuals who openly admit that no culture can be considered as superior to others can completely exploit the potential of this principle. IR *"Vedo il male dell'una e il male dell'altra. Il male c'è dappertutto. Non è che io, perché sono egiziano, dico: la cultura egiziana è migliore. No! Ci sono tante cose in Egitto che non mi piacciono. Però diciamo che questo è il mondo e viaggia così... E poi altre culture: quando guardo la cultura, di tutti i paesi che ho conosciuto, io vivo la cultura, applico certe cose perché ci sono cose giuste. Giuste magari per me... Ma non è che perché sono egiziano, la cultura egiziana è tutto per me. No, non è tutto ci sono cose che, essendo nato lì, mi piacciono. E cose no. Magari mi piacevano prima, e col crescere non mi piacciono più. È così."* (IR *"I see the bad in the one and in the other. Bad is everywhere. Being Egyptian, I don't say: Egyptian culture is the best. No! There are so many things I don't like in Egypt. But let's say this is the world and it travels like this... And other cultures: when I look to cultures of all the countries I have seen, I live the cultures, I use some things because there are good things everywhere. At least, good to me... But, being Egyptian, culture is not all to me. No, it's not all, there are things that, because I was born there, I like. And others I don't like. Maybe I liked them in the past, and growing up I don't like them anymore. It like this."*);

4. *introspection and clean observation*. Differently from previous cases, other respondents seem to succeed in the conjugation of distinct cultural selves by means of introspective elaboration of these cultures. Calm and observation are recurrent requirements for the task. AM *"Calma, calma, calma. Anche perché io mi innervosisco quando trovo qualcuno davanti a me che cerca di convincermi e non mi capisce."* (AM *"Calm, calm, calm. Also because I get nervous when I find someone who tries to convince me without understanding me."*). Observation plays its part, because, as it should happen in ethnographic research, it provides a lecture from the inside of human phenomena. INT *"Secondo lei come si impara una cultura, come ci si avvicina a una cultura?"* IR *"Mah, vivendo con la gente, rispettandola, non chiedendole troppe spiegazioni... (...) Nel tempo libero mi piace, a me piace guardare nel vuoto. (...) Questo guardare nel vuoto mi riempie... Mi fa vedere lontano tante cose. (...). La vita è piena di cose belle, di cose brutte. E poi dipende sempre dalla persona, se riesce a sopportare. Perché se la persona riesce a sopportare, se ha la forza di sopportare le cose, fa ragionamenti sani dentro a se stessa: accetta le cose che non si possono cambiare e cambia quelle che si possono*

cambiare” (INT “In your opinion, how can we learn a culture, how can we get close to a culture?” IR “Ehm, living with people, respecting them, not making them too many questions...(…) In my spare-time, I like to look at the empty space. (...) This looking at the empty space fills me... I makes me see many things in the distance. (...) Life is full of good and bad things. And then it's up to you: if you can afford things and you make sound reasoning inside of you. Accept things you cannot change, and change things that are changeable”). If successful, this process of personal elaboration and introspection leads to a perfectly fitting suit, but it is a tough process that lasts all life. MAG “Un po' di autocritica ogni tanto devo farla a me stessa... (...) Hai solo quello che tu sei. Io sono caduta in depressione, probabilmente, perché non avevo un rapporto molto chiaro con me stessa. Una donna che è stata schiantata praticamente dalla sua casa e... (...) No, sono ora autonoma. Anzi abuso moltissimo di questa possibilità adesso. Abuso nel senso che ho tirato fuori quello che era nascosto, quella bambina e ho imparato a prenderla in braccio e a coccolarla. Magari avere esattamente la convinzione di chi sono. Perciò non ho conflitti, non ho traumi, non ho questa sofferenza. Sicuramente il quotidiano da dover affrontare tutti giorni è faticoso, però è più difficile portare fardelli così, convivere con gli altri problemi.” (MAG “From time to time I have to be self-critical. (...) You only have what you are. I passed through depression probably because I didn't have a very clear relationship with myself. A woman that has been eradicated from her home... (...) No, I am autonomous now. Indeed, I abuse of this possibility now. I abuse in the sense I keep out what was hidden inside, the little girl, and I have learnt to take her in my arms and rock her. For sure, everyday life is hard to be managed, but it is harder to carry weights like these, living with these further problems.”);

5. *metaphorical elaboration.* One possible way to conclude the introspective process is through the elaboration of metaphors and images, which infuse migrations and alternation with profound meanings. In one case, the connection between Egypt and Italy has been transposed into the dynamics mother-son. You may feel close to your mother, but, at a given stage, you have to detach to appreciate the joy of growing up and discovering the world. In other cases, Egypt has been associated to a tree, and its fruits have served as the transferable cultural component along migration process. Finally, another metaphorical interpretation has been associated to the host country, which has been depicted as the land of freedom. Living in a free land means you can feel free of making changes in your cultural identity and more easily move across cultural boundaries;
6. *pleasure.* Another possibility to reconcile cultural selves is to look for and to find pleasure in the adaptation process. MAG “No, non è un segreto. È trovare piacere nelle cose che si fanno. Non si tratta di segreti personali, ma se io sono soddisfatta di quello

« che faccio, lo faccio con meno fatica. Proprio ieri sentivo l'intervista a Bill Gates: "tu, che sei arrivato miliardario, qual è il consiglio che dai?". "Ma io, so che mi divertivo facendo questo". Io ho trovato il piacere nel contatto con gli altri. Ho trovato piacere anche del commerciale, che è un dono, un saper fare. E ho scoperto quanto è bello intrecciare amicizie, crescita, strumenti. C'è sempre qualcosa da imparare, qualcosa per poter andare avanti, da stimolo." (MAG "No, there's no secret. It's feeling pleasure in the things you do. It's not a question of personal secrets, but if I am satisfied with what I do, I do it more easily. Yesterday I was listening to Bill Gates' interview: "being millionaire, what is the suggestion you give?" "Well, I know I enjoyed myself". I found fun also in the commercial activity, which is a gift, a know-how. And I discovered how lovely is to set friendships, to grow up, and get tools. There is always something to learn, something to go on for, a spur.");

7. *necessity*. Finally, some respondents got the point of alternation. Without being a panacea to migration sufferings, it represents the best alternative available, under contextual constraints. OSM "Per me è stato obbligatorio farlo: se sei da solo, non nel tuo paese, il ladro non lo posso fare e cosa devo fare? Devo imparare. Ho studiato un'altra cosa. Mi sono fatto degli amici nell'ambito della raccolta dell'uva. Ho imparato a fare il cuoco e ho fatto il cuoco. Che cosa dovevo fare? Io, per me, ho trovato solo quello. (...) Soffri, prendi dal carattere, prendi dal carattere... Mi sono trovato così, cosa dovevo fare? (...) Non c'era scelta per me. In poche parole, quando Maometto ha fatto la guerra di religione ed è andato in Spagna, in Andalusia, Maometto ha fatto passare tutti i soldati attraverso il mare dell'Andalusia per fare la guerra in Spagna, perché l'Andalusia è araba. Poi, per far fare ai soldati la guerra - c'è scritto nel Corano -, Maometto ha detto: "davanti ci sono i nemici, dietro c'è il mare. Non potete tornare". (OSM "I was forced to behave like this: if you are alone and in a foreign country, you cannot be a thief, what should I do? I had to learn. I studied something else. I met friends in the wine-harvesting. I learnt to be a cook and I have been working as a cook. I only found that way for me. (...) You have pains, you rely on your spirit... I was in that situation, what should I do? (...) There was no choice for me. In different words, when Mohamed engaged the religious war against Spain, in Andalusia, Mohamed made soldiers pass through the Andalusia sea in order to fight against Spain, being Andalusia Arabian. Then, in order to make soldiers fight - it's written in the Koran - Mohamed said: in front of you the enemies, beyond you the sea. You cannot go back.").

Summing up, the meta-level of elaboration of cultural selves presents a plurality of strategies migrants may follow in order to reduce cultural conflicts and reconcile alternating identities. It has to be said that these principles are not mutually exclusive: the same person, in fact, may rely on a combination of principles, as emerged by field observation. A further point refers to the nature of these principles. Some of them, in detail, are more outer directed and can be labelled as "self-to-context" driven (critical

selection, and necessity). Others are more inner oriented, and define the “self-to-self” sphere (introspection, hierarchical ranking, religious focalization, metaphorical elaboration, and pleasure). By the way, this distinction is not clearly cut, but may help categorizing different observed reconciliation techniques.

6.4 Phases to alternation

A side result of field analysis is represented by a preliminary exploration of the main phases that increase the chances of getting to alternation exits.

On one hand, some *necessary steps (phases)* have been recurrently pointed out. The first stage is represented by the definition of migration goals, and therefore has to be performed in the mother country or at the earliest stages of migration. Lack of migratory goals impeaches the possibility of coagulating cultural competence around a center that infuses sense and finalization to the adaptation process. Later stages include: acquisition of linguistic skills, which have been presented as a phase even more relevant than finding a job; family rejoinings, which dramatically transform life and give stability and projectuality to migration; job occupation and work empowerment; legalization through visa achievement; housing; and reconstruction of social ties.

These necessary and almost shared steps leading towards a more mature adaptation in the new cultural context are then assisted by a *subjective path*. In that case, I refer to the way each person tend to elaborate the loss of migration, and negotiate both inside and outside of him/her the transformations occurring in terms of cultural identities. In different words, this subjective dimension is the one already described in terms of reconciliation principles.

The exit of adaptation seem then to be a resultant of necessary steps, subjective paths, personal resources, and environmental forces.

6.5 Instrumental use of cultures

Consumer behavior studies have been accustomed to the distinction between instrumental and terminal values since Rokeach's preliminary work (1973), the idea being that individual conducts may be driven by values searched per se (terminal values), or used as devices to achieve other goals (instrumental values). In the same

light, migrants, and people at large, seem to approach the cultural discourse. In some situations - and that was the dominant finding of empirical analysis -, consumers consciously or subconsciously employ cultures as tools, in order to achieve various prominent results (i.e. express sense of belonging, gratify someone, etc.). In other cases, on the opposite, cultures are used as an untouchable aegis, and turn out to be freestanding and self-referential motivations of human conducts.

The following considerations try to investigate this distinction in terms of cultures use. In fact, this pair of glasses seems to be a key critical lens through which cultural studies can be re-read and interpreted. A very frequent mistake of cultural researchers is to provide a cultural explanation of any human phenomenon under investigation. In a way, cultural researchers, who proceed relying on this approach, make on their turn a terminal use of culture. By the way, empirical findings have enlightened the centrality of culture, but they have also depicted an even higher centrality of individuals within or across cultures. Therefore, if the role of culture is not questioned at all, the relevance of human determination and the subjective lecture and use of cultures is perceived as the missing part of the picture.

Starting from the instrumental side, ethnographic analysis has led to the identification of recurrent tools enabling consumers in an instrumental use of cultures. Given research focalization, food has been frequently described as a device to achieve further results: pleasure, joy, fun, lightness, celebration, sacrality, and so forth. At the same time, also language has been described in instrumental terms, being the most sophisticated medium of communication. More atypically, country or place selection have also been quoted as tools to achieve higher objectives. So in the words of a mid-age successful Egyptian businessman: INT *"Rispetto al suo futuro, dove immagina di voler vivere tra dieci anni?"* WIL *"Una domanda da 100 milioni di euro! Ma, ormai la mia vita è stabilita in Italia. Però, se posso scegliere, andare a vivere in un posto tranquillo dove non c'è nessuno, dove non c'è razza, dove non c'è guerra, dove non c'è gente di certi tipi. Dove c'è solo mare, sole, libri e musica. Basta..."* (INT *"Planning your future, where do you think you prefer to live by ten years?"* WIL *"It's a 100 millions euro question! Well, my life has already be settled in Italy. Nevertheless, should I be able to choose, I woul live in a peaceful place, where none is there, no race, no war, no people of a certain kind. Only sea, sun, books, and music. Nothing else..."*). Cultural competence itself has been presented as a device to meet people of different origins and souls: what has been labelled openness to alterity.

What are, then, the main uses of culture and cultural artefacts? Through interviews cross-analysis, some recurrent forms of cultural disposition emerged, including culture as a:

1. *communicational medium*. Culture can be a way to understand others and to make others understand us. IR "Io non condivido la cultura italiana con un altro egiziano. Se incontro un altro egiziano che si vuole comportare da italiano con me, non la condivido con lui. La condivido con un altro italiano, non con un egiziano perché per me sarebbe falso. Sarebbe falso se tra due egiziani ci mettiamo lì a parlare italiano..." (IR "I don't share Italian culture with another Egyptian. If I meet an Egyptian who wants to behave as an Italian with me, I don't share it with him. I share it with another Italian, not with an Egyptian, because it would sound false. It would be false if two Egyptians started speaking Italian..."). It is also a device that can be employed to introduce others to our world. INT "Che significato ha per te cucinare piatti Egiziani?" AM "Far conoscere agli altri anche altri sapori e allo stesso momento mangiarli io" (INT "What does it mean to you cooking Egyptian dishes?" AM "To make other learn other tastes and, at the same time, taste them on my own");
2. *affective and relational medium*. Culture can also be used to greet others and provide them with something they love. INT "Cosa significa per te regalare dei prodotti arabi?" MO1 "Sinceramente niente. Perché magari loro sono venuti a casa mia una volta e l'hanno provato. Ad alcuni è piaciuto di brutto, e mi fa piacere che sia contento di mangiare una cosa che gli piaccia. Se gli fosse piaciuto pane e cioccolato glielo avrei fatto lo stesso, sarebbe stato indifferente. Ma siccome so che a lui piace mangiare quello e non è tanto facile trovarlo, quindi..." (INT "What does it mean to you give Egyptian gifts?" MO1 "To be sincere, nothing. It may happen someone came to me once and tasted something. Some of them loved it a lot, and I feel happy they can eat something they like. If they had loved bread and chocolate, I would have prepared that, it would have been the same. But, knowing he likes that and it's not easy to find it, then..."). At the same time, artefacts can be used to consolidate relationships and feel closer to others. HAS "Io quando ci sono le feste sempre mangio con la mia mamma in Egitto. Qui in Italia con i miei amici." (HAS "I always eat with my mother in Egypt during religious celebrations. Here in Italy, I eat with friends.");
3. *variety medium*. Double cultural competence can also turn out to be fruitful in providing migrants' with a wider set of alternatives, which on their turn support variety and new stimuli. IB "Di solito faccio egiziano. Una volta ogni tanto faccio italiano quando loro mi dicono "tu sei il cuoco, devi fare qualcosa di nuovo per noi". Capito? Per cambiare il discorso dello stomaco." (IB "I usually do Egyptian. I occasionally do Italian, when they tell me: you are the cook, you have to do something new for us. Do you understand? It's to change the stomach's discourse.");

4. *commercial medium*. Living with two cultures provide individuals with the capability of reading two socio-economical contexts. This is a powerful lever to exploit commercial potentialities. To an Egyptian pizzaiolo, the menu selection has been arranged in order to create variety and offer customers exotic alternatives for their palates. Second generations have always presented their linguistic skills as something driving their decisions both in terms of university studies and work opportunities. JO *"E tendenzialmente vorrei usare l'arabo come valore aggiunto, per una questione...non so se è brutto dirlo però anche economica. Nel senso, se è un mark up notevole perché non utilizzarlo?"* (JO *"More or less, I would like to use Arabian as an added value, driven by an... - I don't know if it's nice to admit - economic motivation. In different words, if it represents a remarkable mark up, why don't use it?"*).

A final consideration is required. In fact, previous discussion over instrumental uses of culture and cultural artefacts have mostly acknowledged positive and functional forms of exploitation. Needless to say, culture and cultural artefacts are neutral in se, whereas individuals can infuse them with positive or negative finalities. As a simple exemplification, a respondent quoted the possibility of using cultural competence as a barrier to others, in order to create distance and inaccessibility. In that light, linguistic skills can in fact be used to close Italians out of a conversation.

Therefore, cultural competence can be effective also in strategies aiming at impeding communication, offending others, destroying relationships, limiting variety, and so forth. Fortunately enough, people we met seem to make sounder uses of cultures.

6.6 Terminal use of cultures

More rarely, ethnographic work has also enlightened a symmetrically opposite way of exploiting cultures, being represented by a terminal use of cultures and their artifacts. In that case, two main situations have been associated to terminal use. First of all, cultures have been used in a *normative and categorical form*, and this leads to their terminal elaboration. This state has been recurrent in presence of a monolithic and unchangeable vision of one's culture. Therefore, it is characterized by absence of

critical analysis, mono-varied lecture of the cultural text, and frequent religious normative domination. In a way, it can be associated to a radical and sometimes deviated application of the hierarchical principle of cultural reconciliation that has already been discussed. The main implication is the creation of a relatively insurmountable distance between cultures, because strong categorization and normative use of stereotypes tend to force individuals in unquestionable clichés. In one case, a respondent gave a personal explanation of his decision of sending his children back to Egypt. This decision was somehow atypical. In fact, if the majority of migrants tend to encourage family rejoinings, this man followed the opposite path. In his elaboration, Italians have been read through the sole religious dimension (mono-varied analysis and religious normative lecture), and have been defined as weak Christians. He clearly stated that their intensity of religious attachment has been the driver of his choice. HAS *"No, io voglio tornare in Italia. Il problema per me è vivere tanto in Italia perché per i miei figli, per un motivo religioso sempre... Perché qua, anche che siete cristiani.. Ma se fossero cristiani cristiani come quelli che ci sono in Egitto problemi per me non c'erano, potevo lasciare i miei figlia qua, studiano... E invece è una cosa proprio al contrario..."* (HAS *"No, I want to be back to Italy. My problem is to live for a long period in Italy, for my children, always for religious motivations... Because there, even though you are Christians... Well, if you were Christians Christians, like those living in Egypt, there wouldn't be problems, and I could have kept my children there, studying... But it's exactly the converse..."*).

A second context in which terminal use of culture has emerged is represented by migrants whose adaptation exit converges towards the "opposite polarization" strategy. In that case, culture is intentionally used in an *oppositional form*, and presented as a shield to contrast risks of contamination in the new cultural context. This state is not necessarily accompanied by a negative description of the host culture, which can be described as partially good in some traits (i.e., paradoxically as more open to otherness). On the opposite and once more, there is a normative and aprioristic judgement of other cultures, whose fault is essentially to be different from the native one. In that light, suspended any critical analysis and opportunity of tasting something new, individuals' concern is prominently devoted to their willingness of keeping entire and uncontaminated their cultural heart. IB *"E qua per questo non mi è piaciuto tanto. Io conosco anche tanti egiziani sposati a italiane, capito? Ha imparato l'italiana come è la vita, non è più italiana, è cambiata, è egiziana, hai capito? Solo questo è il problema."* (IB *"That's why I don't like here. I know lots of Egyptians married with Italians, do you understand? The Italian wife has learnt how life is, she is no more Italian, she changed, she is Egyptian, do you understand? That's the only problem."*). In that light, a mother's choice of sending her third and younger son to the Arabian school is

readable as her attempt to preserve him (or her?). MAI *"Quest'anno ho iscritto il bambino alla scuola araba, perché così, almeno il piccolo..."* (MAI *"This year I submitted my son to the Arabian school, because in that way, at least the youngest..."*).

Summing up, empirical work has largely supported migrants' marked preference for an instrumental use of cultures and cultural artefacts. This is particularly true for those of them presenting a mature alternation exit, whereas different cases (opposing polarization, assimilation, acculturation) seem to use culture in a more terminal way. Not being the goal of this research, any further conclusion has to be suspended and may be the focalization of ad hoc future studies.

6.7 Additive versus subtractive dynamics between cultures

The alternation framework rests on the assumption that individuals may play a win-win game along their process of cultural adaptation. In different words, migrants can acquire new cultural traits without losing or substituting their original cultural competence. In that perspective, cultural merging dynamics can be shaped in terms of additive terms (win-win logic), instead of subtractive terms (win-lose logic), as more traditionally depicted by the monotonicity hypothesis and the principles of assimilation/adaptation.

Under a methodological point of view, these dynamics have been measured through the application of a double scale of ethnic affiliation, observed both for the Italian and the Egyptian cultures along a five point Likert scale. In the numerically prevailing alternation cases, the additive frame was largely supported in terms either of numerical grades or qualitative comments. Under the numerical point of view, the sum of ethnic affiliation to Egyptian culture and to Italian one almost always ranged more than five. This supports the idea that alternation is not a zero-sum (or a negative-sum) game. Conversely, the case that have been identified as an "assimilation" exit presented a total sum equal to 4, assessing a state of cultural deprivation as a result of simultaneous loss in the two cultures.

From a qualitative point of view, one respondent got the meaning of the double scale, and explicitly concluded that merging of cultures provides an enrichment (additive logic) and an increase in individual potentialities. This freestanding case apart, other respondents tended to give motivations for the expressed rate of affiliation

to the Italian and Egyptian cultures. The key through which migrants seem to gain access to an additive path is largely represented by an acceptance of conflict and a full renounce to ethnocentric positions in search of derived ethics (Berry, 1989). AM "All'inizio c'è sempre un po' di conflitto perché ognuno è testardo e va a dire "no, la mia...". Mentre magari, se si va un po' più piano e si comprende, si trovano anche punti in comune." (AM "At the beginning there's always some conflict, because each one is obstinate and says: "no, mine...". But, if people go slower and understand, common ground may be detected"). Once access has been achieved, the way individual go along this street is a question of personal choices and resources, which has already been depicted in terms of reconciliation principles.

How do alternating migrants describe this additive experience? Cross-lecture of field notes and codified transcripts have enlightened both positive and negative feelings. On the side of positive emotions, two have been dominating:

1. *higher understanding of life and proximity to others.* The most widely admitted heritage of adaptation is encountered in the migrants' capability of feeling closer to alterity and having more powerful glasses to look and interpret reality. Referring to his life-experience, a middle-age Egyptian man comments: IR "No, mi ha dato molto! lo comprendo tutte le persone. È questo che mi ha insegnato la cultura: comprendere tutti. Dove si nasce, dove si cresce lascia tante cose nelle persone. lo comprendo tutti, quasi..." (IR "No, it gave me a lot! I understand everyone. This is what culture taught me: understand everyone. Where you are born, the place you grow up leave you so many traces. I understand everyone, almost everyone...");
2. *higher potentialities and energy to spend.* At the same time, the analytical empowerment just presented can be combined to a behavioural support. Alternating migrants seem to have a double energy increasing their capability of planning life and being engaged in new projects (i.e., migrants' higher entrepreneurial propensity can be read also in that light). A second generation guy describes in the following way individuals who have crossed cultures: JO "Vedi negli altri comunque un genio o un'elasticità mentale o una velocità nel pensare...e anche una sensibilità molto diversa. Quindi sono sicuramente rapporti molto costruttivi e rapporti che mi danno molto." (JO "You perceive in others a sort of genius, or a mental flexibility, or a quick way of thinking... and a very distinctive sensitivity. Therefore, these are for sure very supporting relationships that give you a lot."). This has been ideally explained as migrants' awareness of having maintained only the best of cultures. In that light, cultural adaptation becomes a chance of rethinking and improving one's cultural base. MAG "Se geneticamente è il gene più forte che salta

fuori, perché è la natura che vuole questo, sono anche convinta che i valori giusti sopravvivono. Le cose positive vanno avanti, da sole, perché trovano sintonia dappertutto. Allora si che diventa un terreno comune, un'adesione tra popoli e tra persone, tra persone normali, gente." (MAG "Genetically speaking, if it's the strongest gene that comes out, as an expression of nature's willingness, I'm convinced that true values survive. Positive things go on, by themselves, as they find empathy everywhere. And then a common ground appears, a commitment among populations and people, among ordinary people, individuals.").

At the same time, merging cultures evokes some pain and suffering, which have been oriented towards two main directions:

1. *the cost of losing.* Even when cultures are merged through an additive logic, still something in the native culture is dismissed. The pre-rational sensation of losing integrity is structurally associated to a feeling of loss. By the way, how it comes out is a question of individual experiences. Certain respondents, in fact, seem to refuse the idea of loss and claim they have only added something new: INT "Non si sente derubata della sua cultura egiziana?" MAI "No, no perché mi ha dato di più. Se mi dava di meno... Invece mi ha dato di più, perché qua ognuno ha da fare le cose, da finire le cose, può fare le cose che vuole..." (INT "Don't you feel robbed of your Egyptian culture?" MAI "No, no, because it gave me more. If it gave me less... But it gave more, because here everyone has something to do, something to finish, everyone can do what he/she wants."). At the same time, other respondents acknowledge their loss: MAS "No, una porta via qualcosa dell'altra, sì sì." INT "Questo significa che si sente più povero di prima?" MAS "No." (MAS "No, one take something away from the other, yes, of course. INT "Does it mean you feel poorer than before?" MAS "No. "). Finally, other people tend to reframe the problem: it's not a question of losing something, but of changing things. INT "Secondo lei, il fatto di avere due culture è qualcosa che toglie alla sua cultura di origine oppure..." MO2 "No! Viene modificata. (...) Questa cosa aumenta la cultura. (...) Sì, anche per coprire i "gaps", come si chiama?, i buchi fra una lingua e l'altra. Noi abbiamo gli stessi significati, ma con altre espressioni. In questo modo, dire che viene modificata la cultura non diminuisce. Non deve togliere la mia origine. Le mie radici si trovano sempre." (INT "In your mind, having two cultures is something that subtracts parts of your original culture or..." MO2 "No! It is transformed. (...) This thing increases culture. (...) Yes, also in order to fill gaps between one language and the other. We have the same meanings, but with different expressions. That way, saying that culture is modified doesn't mean it is decreased. It shouldn't keep my origin out. My roots can always be found.");
2. *emotional cost.* Migrants may also pursue an additive path, and they can learn from experience. Nevertheless, emotional costs can stay highly present to

their minds. This seems particularly true for people who experienced an expulsive process of migration. Original self-determination, in fact, may attenuate the successive elaboration of migration costs. These are the words of a middle-age Egyptian man who escaped from Egypt in order to avoid his involvement in the Iranian war: OSM *“Io sono contento dell'esperienza che ho fatto. Dell'esperienza che ho fatto, del coraggio. Però se io penso alla fatica che ho fatto, avrei preferito stare là. È diversa la cosa, no? Non avevo scelta, e l'ho fatto. Però, se io dovessi tornare indietro, resterei là. È normale, è una cosa normale.”* (OSM *“I'm happy with my experience. With my experience and my braveness. But, if I think to efforts I faced, I would have preferred to stay there. It's a different way to put things, isn't it? I had no choice, and I did it. But, should I go back, I'd stay there. It's natural, it's a natural thing.”*).

The complex picture that has been drawn through empirical model analysis directly supports my final conclusions, which are going to be presented in the last paragraph of this work.

6.8 Conclusions

This ethnographic research was started on the urgency of three goals: identifying possible drivers of cultural alternation; framing, if possible, different forms of alternation; and coming to an empirical (a posteriori) model of cultural alternation.

Previous discussion has covered the first two goals. Explanatory variables have been fully detected in chapter 5, whereas chapter 6 has given insights on the outcome dimension of cultural adaptation. What is still missing is the presentation of the a posteriori model.

If we compare the a priori model with the empirical one, it is interesting to point out that the original model has not been radically transformed on the side of explanatory variables (first goal), which still have been significantly integrated (8 new variables on 41 total variables inserted in the a priori frame, equivalent to a 20% of increase). On the opposite, the outcome side (second goal) has shown a radical transformation, as 6 new dimensions were added to the 3 initial ones (+ 200% increase). This result can be explained in terms of lack of literature on cultural alternation. In fact, if adaptation processes migrants encounter have been variously framed through assimilation and acculturation literature, on the opposite alternation still seems to be a virgin land.

Table 8 summarizes the total variables included in the final model, and indicates the integration operated on the base of ethnographic work.

Table 8 - Variables included in the a posteriori model

VARIABLES	A PRIORI MODEL	EMPIRICAL MODEL (ADDED)
DEMOGRAPHIC AND INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS	Sex; age; parental nationality; self attributed religion; family composition	
SOCIAL CAPITAL	Education; previous migration experiences; rural/urban origin; job occupation; income; pre-migration exposure to Italian culture	Openness to alterity
ETHNIC AFFILIATION	Self attributed ethnicity; Egyptian felt ethnicity; felt religion; years of residency in Egypt	Frequency of visits to Egypt, family roots in Egypt
MIGRATORY PROJECT	Stability of the project; initial goal of the project; actual goal of the project	
SOCIO-CULTURAL INTEGRATION	Family reuniting; years of residency; spoken language in different contexts; linguistic preference; social ties; frequency of social frequentations; media exposure; leisure time activities; Italian felt ethnicity; food purchase, cooking, and consumption	Acculturation medium, negotiation in the host culture, negotiation in the culture of origin
RITUALS	Places of food consumption; moments of food consumption; partners of food consumption; food as a gift	Facilitators of cultural shift
EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS	Felt discrimination; barriers to purchase (assortments shortages, distance of points of sale, etc.)	Ethnic stigmata
CONSUMER BEHAVIOR PHASES	Motivations to purchase, Frequency and point of sales, cooking habits, emotions, flow experience	
ALTERNANCE	Acculturation strategy, alternation manifestation, subtractive-addictive dynamics	Reconciliation principles, phases of alternation, cultural competence in the host culture, cultural competence in the original culture, instrumental versus terminal use of culture

Exits of cultural adaptation require a systemic lecture. Per se, no single variable has a normative impact on the outcome dimension, nor direction between variables appears to be unilateral and shapable through the "cause-effect" logic. On the opposite, I have

frequently pointed out that a variable can at the same time be read as an influencer of alternation and a mirror reflecting its achievement. Circularity instead of linearity looks as the more promising way to set things, even though it is not the easiest way to look at the world or to control it.

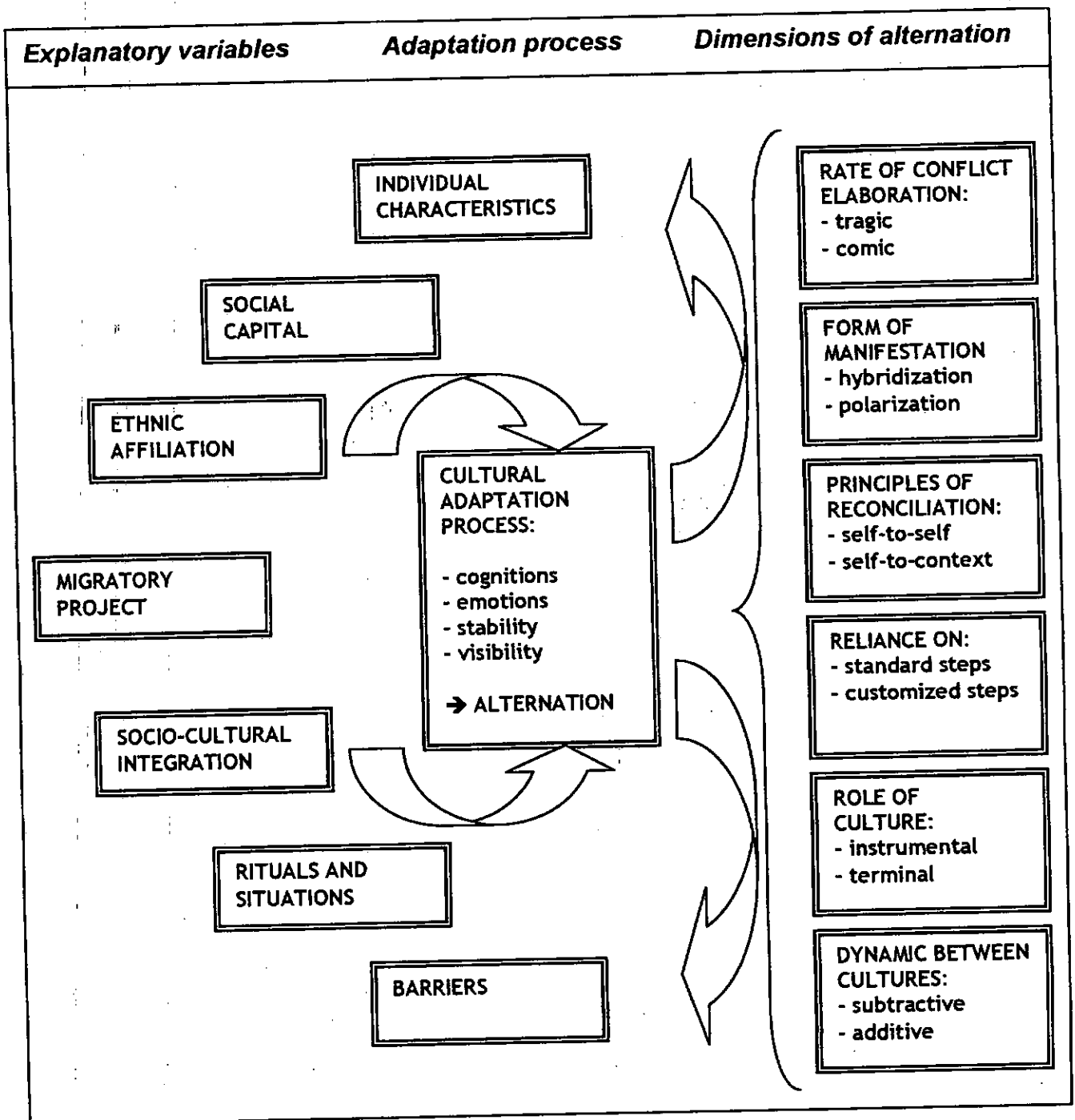
In that light, alternation is one of the possible exits a migrant - and let us say, any individual living in a multicultural world, as postmodernity points out - reaches. On the base of empirical observation, what are then the variables increasing the personal chances of elaborating cultures through an alternating path? I think alternation is the resultant of, at least, the following processes:

1. *achievement of some compulsory steps*. When discussing phases of cultural adaptation (§ 6.4), I firmly concluded that migration process combines a “standard” dimension and a “customized” one. Standards include the necessity of acquiring linguistic skills, finding an occupation (job or study) and a house, going through family rejoinings, and so forth. All these steps define the usual dimensions of modern life, and can be read as erasers of possible barriers to personal realization. Nevertheless, they represent a necessary but not sufficient condition to alternation;
2. *subjective reconciliation of cultural identities*. A fundamental point is then represented by the way individuals read the world and elaborate their experiences in the world. This relatively mysterious and magical dimension plays the difference. Through ethnographic investigation, it was possible to depict some recurrent alternative or complementary strategies our respondents followed to make sense of their lives across boundaries (§ 6.3);
3. *social capital*. How and why do individuals select one strategy of reconciliation instead of others? This question finds a possible answer when individual resources (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) are taken into account. Among individual resources - what I call “social capital” borrowing the label from psychiatric tradition (Ruggeri & Tansella, 1999) - those that appeared to possess higher impact include: openness to alterity, felt religion, definition of a clean migratory goal, family rejoinings, years of residency in Italy, social ties, negotiation skills across cultures, instrumental use of cultures, and additive approach to cultural merging;

4: *environmental interactions*. Finally, environmental conditions (i.e., discrimination, barriers to consumption, etc.) may have a moderating, but not a mediating effect on the process of cultural adaptation. In fact, observation suggests that even hardest contexts have to reduce to a lower rank in front of individual resources and self-determination. A kind of cactus flower image.

All previous considerations are collapsed into the empirical model, presented in figure 26. Main categories of variables and alternation dimensions are summarized, and the circular logic is fully admitted.

Figure 26 - The empirical model of cultural alternation



My work, both theoretically and empirically, has been driven by a sincere interest for the alternation construct, under the assumption that alteration represents the best possible way of cultural adaptation. The connection between alternation and flow experience, on the individual side, and between alternation and multiculturalism, on the socio-political one, have in fact been postulated and documented (Inghilleri, 2004). Nevertheless, I must admit that my initial feeling has changed along field research and its later interpretation. If I am still convinced that alternation is the best and richest exit among the set of available alternatives, at the same time I also think it is not fully associated to a state of perfect well-being. The potentialities of alternation have emerged several times in ethnographic account, and have been brilliantly described by one respondent as the chance of being born several times. IR *"lo sono nato più volte. lo sono nato tante volte. Attualmente io, attualmente sto nascendo, ma come non lo so. Ma veramente, attualmente! Io, negli ultimi sei o sette mesi, sento che sto - sempre per il fatto della cultura - sto entrando in una cosa che... anche se non vedo come. Però ho voglia di... e questo... lo credo che si nasce tutti i giorni. Eh, sì..."* (IR *"I was born more than one time. I was born several times. At the moment, at the moment I am going to born again, but I don't know how. Really, at the moment! In the last six or seven months, I feel, always for cultural reasons, that I am entering something... I cannot see. But I want to... And then, I think we are born every single day. Oh, yes..."*).

On the other hand, alternation cannot erase the pains and sufferings, or the sense of loss that living in a different culture typically induces. A loss can be elaborated, it can be profitably exploited to grow up and learn, to live better. But it is still a loss. INT *"Però poi c'è il problema di mettere insieme le due culture anche con te stesso...come sei riuscito a conciliarle?"* JO *"Chi ti dice che sia riuscito? Ne ho creata una terza...tendenzialmente...non è così, non è così facile riuscirci, cioè, non esiste riuscirci. Tendi a vivere nei due contesti in modo tale che sia nell'uno che nell'altro tu sia accettato."* (INT *"Then, there's the problem of combining the two cultures: how did you succeed in that?"* JO *"Why do you say I succeeded? I have invented a third culture... more or less... It's not, it's not easy at all succeeding. Well, it's not possible succeeding. You tend to live in the two contexts in order to be accepted in both of them."*).

The way cultures merge, the alchemic combination of luck and self-determination, the capability of learning and accepting things, the unpredictable balance between change and stability, all enforce the generative relevance of culture in individuals' and consumers' life. Fascination and importance of cultures stimulate researchers on the way of cultural understanding. But, at the end, it may be wise to leave something unexplained.

IR "Nessuna cultura è migliore, assolutamente. Se io nascono qui, io vedo quello che c'è qui. Ma se io nascono da un'altra parte, vedo quello che c'è da un'altra parte. E tutti quanti noi diciamo: io sono giusto, io sono sbagliato. Però non è così. Dalle culture, quando si mettono insieme, vengono fuori tante cose belle. Ma non c'è una cultura migliore dell'altra, assolutamente. È' molto difficile farlo capire a certe persone che pensano altro. Sì, ci sono culture più aperte, culture più chiuse, ma queste culture si possono unire tutte. Viaggiare tutti insieme, senza problemi, con rispetto. Cioè, io vado alla moschea venerdì, tu vai alla Chiesa la domenica, con molto rispetto. Io, quando ho vissuto in Egitto, avevo amici cristiani. Loro andavano in chiesa, io il venerdì andavo in moschea, però alla fine della serata giocavamo per la strada insieme. (...) Gibran, ad esempio, è un cristiano. Sì, è un cristiano, ma nessuno deve dire: tu sei cristiano, tu sei musulmano. Tu sai quello che sei. Tu sei quello che c'è qua dentro. E basta. Per me, le culture possono vivere insieme tranquillamente. I miei migliori amici, i miei compagni di banco a scuola erano cristiani. Però il fatto che io prego in un modo, loro in un altro, è un fatto molto, molto personale. La nostra cultura poi è uguale. Un cristiano egiziano e un cristiano musulmano sono uguali. Cioè lui dice: i miei antenati sono i faraoni. Io dico: i miei antenati sono i faraoni. Ci sono delle cose molto personali, le abbiamo tutti. Io andavo con una ragazza che era cristiana. Tutte le mattine, alle 7.15, prima di andare a scuola, lei entrava in chiesa, diceva una preghiera, e poi andava a scuola. Non c'erano problemi..." (IR "No culture is better than others, in no way. If I am born there, I see what is there. But, if I were born somewhere else, I would see something else. And all of us say: I am good, I am bad. But it's not true. From cultures, when they are put together, beautiful things come out. But there is no culture better than others, in no way. It's very hard to make it understandable to people who think differently. Of course, there are cultures that are more open, others that are more closed, but all these cultures can come together. We can all travel together, without problems, with great respect. That is, I go to the mosque on Friday, you go to the church on Sunday, with great respect. When I was living in Egypt, I had Christian friends. They went to the church, I went to the mosque on Friday, but at the end of day we were playing together in the streets. (...) Gibran, for example, is a Christian. Yes, he is a Christian, but no one must say: you are a Christian, you are a Muslim. You are what you are. You are what it's inside. Nothing more. In my opinion, cultures can live together in peace. My best friends, my schoolmates were Christians. But the way I pray, the way they pray, it's a very, very personal thing. Besides, our culture is the same. A Christian Egyptian and a Muslim Egyptian are the same. That is, he says: my ancestors are the pharaohs. I say: my ancestors are the pharaohs. There are very personal things, all of us have personal things. I was in love with a Christian girl. Each morning, at 7.15, before going to school she entered a church, said a prayer, and then went to school. There weren't problems...").

APPENDIX

A. Ethnographic grid

0. DOMANDE FILTRO (rinvio a sezione 3.1)

- Verifica che ci siano i presupposti materiali dell'alternanza: tra i prodotti alimentari che consuma, rientrano:
 - solo cibi egiziani
 - solo cibi italiani
 - cibi egiziani e italiani
 - cibi egiziani, italiani e di altri Paesi

- Verifica che il ruolo rivestito nel processo di acquisto-consumo consenta di raccogliere informazioni rilevanti per gli obiettivi di ricerca: le capita di andare a fare la spesa per i prodotti alimentari? O, nel caso di uomini, è lei a dare indicazioni a sua moglie/figli circa i prodotti da comperare?

1. BIOGRAFIA E CONTROLLO SUL CAMPIONE

1. Sesso:
2. Età:
3. Nazionalità dei genitori:
4. Nazionalità: qual è la sua nazionalità?
5. Luogo di nascita: dove è nato (l'intervistato)?:
6. Stato civile:
 - sposato monogamo (specificare nazionalità del coniuge):
 - sposato poligamo (specificare nazionalità delle coniugi):
 - convivente (specificare nazionalità del convivente):
 - divorziato/separato
 - vedovo/a
 - celibe/nubile
7. Figli: ha figli? Se sì, quanti?
 - no
 - sì: quanti?
8. Ricongiungimenti: a Milano, con chi dei suoi parenti stretti è ricongiunto?
 - moglie(mogli)/marito
 - figli
 - genitori
 - altri parenti:
9. Educazione/scolarità: qual è il titolo più alto conseguito? Da integrare, in caso di dubbio, con l'età in cui è stato conseguito e/o il numero di anni di frequenza scolastica:
10. Provenienza: prima di emigrare, qual era il luogo di residenza:
 - rurale

- urbano

11. Anno di arrivo in Italia:

12. Numero di anni vissuti in Egitto (fino a che età ha soggiornato in Egitto?):

13. Altre mete di migrazione: prima di arrivare in Italia, ha soggiornato in altri Paesi? Se sì, quali e per quanto tempo?

14. Occupazione: qual è la sua attuale occupazione in Italia?

status:

- inoccupato
- disoccupato
- lavoro subordinato (a progetto, a tempo indeterminato)
- lavoro autonomo/imprenditore
- lavoro in nero
- studente
- casalinga
- pensionato
- altro

settore:

- servizi:
- industria:

15. Convivenza: con chi vive attualmente?

con quante persone?:

chi sono?

- nucleo monofamiliare
- partner/marito-moglie
- figli
- amici e altri connazionali
- altri parenti (specificare):
- datori di lavoro
- altro (specificare):

16. Religione: rispetto alla vita religiosa, come si definirebbe?

- musulmano
- cristiano copto
- altra fede religiosa (specificare):
- non credente (ateo/agnostico):

17. Reddito: può indicare all'incirca la sua fascia di reddito mensile?

- meno di 500 euro mensili
- 500 - 700 euro mensili
- 701 - 900 euro mensili
- 901 - 1000 euro mensili
- 1001 - 1200 euro mensili
- 1201 - 1400 euro mensili
- oltre 1400 euro mensili
- non indica

2. L'INCONTRO TRA CULTURE: ASSIMILAZIONE, ACCULTURAZIONE, ALTERNANZA

18. **Lingua:** qual è la lingua che usa più spesso?

- in famiglia con il partner:
- in famiglia con i figli:
- con gli amici:
- sul lavoro/scuola:

19. **Preferenza linguistica:** quale lingua ti piace di più parlare?

20. **Relazioni sociali:** qual è la composizione del suo gruppo di amici più stretti?

- esclusivamente egiziani
- prevalentemente egiziani
- egiziani e italiani in uguale misura
- prevalentemente italiani
- esclusivamente italiani
- altro (specificare):

21. **Intensità/frequenza delle relazioni con gli italiani:** con che frequenza si trova a casa di amici italiani o le capita di uscire con loro?

22. **Dieta mediatica:** per ciascun tipo dei media elencati, indichi cortesemente la lingua e la frequenza d'uso (quante ore in una settimana):

- Televisione (TV, DVD, videocassette):
- Radio:
- Giornali (quotidiani, riviste, periodici):
- Libri:
- Siti Internet:

23. **Leisure time:** come o dove preferisce trascorrere il suo tempo libero?

- in casa da solo o con i familiari
- in casa, invitando amici
- a casa di amici
- in luoghi frequentati da connazionali (piazze, circoli culturali, associazioni, luoghi di culto, etc.)
- attività culturali (cinema, mostre, teatri, corsi, concerti, etc.)
- luoghi ricreativi (bar, locali notturni, palestre, sale giochi, biliardi, etc.)
- calcio/sport (specificare per che squadra tifa):
- vacanze (se sì, dove?):
- altro (specificare):

24. **Felt ethnicity 1:** in che misura si sente di appartenere alla cultura egiziana? (dove 1 equivale a "per nulla" e 5 a "moltissimo")

- 1 2 3 4 5

25. **Felt ethnicity 2:** in che misura si sente di appartenere alla cultura italiana? (dove 1 equivale a "per nulla" e 5 a "moltissimo")

- 1 2 3 4 5

26. **Felt religion:** in che misura sente che la sua religione influenzi le sue scelte di consumo alimentare? (dove 1 equivale a "per nulla" e 5 a "moltissimo")

- 1 2 3 4 5

27. **Felt discrimination:** in che misura sente che gli italiani abbiano atteggiamenti di discriminazione nei suoi confronti? (dove 1 equivale a "per nulla e 5 a "moltissimo")
- 1 2 3 4 5
28. **Stabilità del progetto migratorio:** quale di queste possibilità ritiene che descriva meglio i suoi progetti per il futuro (da qui ai prossimi 10 anni)?
- tornerò sicuramente a vivere in Egitto
 probabilmente tornerò a vivere in Egitto
 forse tornerò a vivere in Egitto
 forse resterò a vivere in Italia
 probabilmente resterò a vivere in Italia
 sicuramente resterò a vivere in Italia
29. **Obiettivo originario del progetto migratorio:** qual era il motivo legato alla sua scelta di vivere in Italia?
30. **Obiettivo attuale del progetto migratorio:** qual è oggi il motivo per cui vive in Italia?

3. CONSUMI ALIMENTARI

3.1 ACQUISTO

31. **Motivazioni cognitive/emotive:** cosa motiva prevalentemente la sua scelta di cibi italiani?
- la facilità con cui può acquistare i cibi italiani
 la convenienza dei cibi italiani
 la (migliore) qualità dei cibi italiani
 la marca
 il gusto dei cibi italiani
 il piacere di mangiare italiano
 la possibilità di sentirmi parte della società italiana
 altro (specificare):
32. **Cibi italiani pre-migrazione:** in Egitto, prima del suo arrivo in Italia, aveva già avuto la possibilità di conoscere e/o provare cibi italiani?
- no
 sì (specificare frequenza, tipologia di cibi, fonte: TV, turisti, altro):
33. **Vissuto cognitivo/affettivo del cibo italiano pre-migrazione:** se sì, come definirebbe questa esperienza?
- In termini cognitivi (ex. Potere nutritivo, qualità, convenienza, ...)
In termini affettivi (ex. Emozioni provate)
34. **Categorie di cibi/cultura (win Egitto):** nei suoi acquisti, esistono tipi di cibi egiziani che preferisce stabilmente rispetto a cibi equivalenti italiani (ex. Pane egiziano rispetto a quello italiano, i dolci egiziani rispetto a quelli italiani, la carne, i prodotti confezionati, i prodotti freschi etc.). E perché?
35. **Categorie di cibi/cultura (win Italia):** nei suoi acquisti, esistono tipi di cibi italiani che preferisce stabilmente rispetto a cibi equivalenti egiziani. E perché?
36. **Luoghi d'acquisto:** dove preferisce acquistare i cibi da cucinare per sé e/o per i suoi amici/familiari?
- discount

- ipermercati e grandi centri commerciali
- supermercati e piccoli supermercati
- negozi (panettiere, fruttivendolo, macellaio, droghiere, etc.)
- mercato rionali e bancarelle
- negozi specializzati con marche e prodotti egiziani
- altro (specificare):

37. **Frequenza di acquisto:** quante volta a settimana va a fare la spesa (alimentare)?

- tutti i giorni
- ogni 2-3 giorni
- due volte la settimana
- una volta a settimana
- meno di una volta a settimana

38. **Barriere:** rispetto alla sue preferenze di acquisto alimentare, esistono delle difficoltà ricorrenti che la limitano nel comperare ciò che preferisce? (orari/giorni di apertura, prossimità, prezzi, assortimento, etc.)

39. **Vissuto cognitivo/affettivo del cibo italiano post-migrazione:** e oggi, come definirebbe la sua esperienza di consumatore di cibi italiani? / come è cambiato nel tempo il suo rapporto con la cucina italiana?

- In termini cognitivi (ex. Potere nutritivo, qualità, convenienza, ...)
- In termini affettivi (ex. Emozioni provate)

3.2 PREPARAZIONE, LAVORAZIONE, CONSERVAZIONE

40. **Preparazione:** quali sono le sue prevalenti modalità di preparazione dei cibi?

- utilizzo di cibi già pronti/in scatola
- utilizzo di surgelati, cotti tramite microonde
- preparazione di cibi a partire da ingredienti freschi
- altro (specificare):

41. **Utensili:** per la preparazione dei cibi, utilizza anche utensili appartenenti agli usi egiziani?

- no
- sì (specificare):

42. **Vissuti di preparazione:** in termini di piacere ed emozioni, avverte una differenza nel preparare cibi italiani o cibi della tradizione egiziana?

- no
- sì (perché?):

3.3 CONSUMO

43. **Rituale 1 - Luoghi di consumo:** ci sono luoghi in cui preferisce consumare soprattutto cibi italiani/egiziani? Si faccia ad esempio riferimento alla possibilità di mangiare a casa (in-door) o fuori casa (out-door).

- no
- sì (quali e perché?):

44. **Rituale 2 - Occasioni di consumo:** analogamente, ci sono occasioni in cui avverte una preferenza per il consumo di cibi italiani/egiziani? Si faccia ad esempio riferimento alle festività religiose, ai momenti conviviali vs lavorativi, alla ricorrenze festive, al pranzo vs alla cena, o ad altri eventi (nascite, matrimoni, funerali, compleanni).

- no

- sì (quali e perché?):
45. **Rituale 3 - Persone con cui si consuma:** infine, ci sono persone con cui preferisce consumare cibi italiani/egiziani? Si faccia ad esempio riferimento al consumo di cibo da soli, con il/la partner, con i familiari, con gli amici connazionali, con gli amici italiani, con i colleghi, etc.
- no
- sì (quali e perché?):
46. **Esperienza "ottimale" e dimensione pubblica:** se le capita di mangiare cibi italiani, in quale/i contesti prova più piacere a consumarli?
- a casa sua
- a casa di amici egiziani
- a casa di amici italiani
- in ristoranti con cucina tipica italiana
- in nessun luogo in particolare
- altro (specificare):

3.4 DONO

47. **Dono di cibi egiziani:** se le capita di regalare piatti tipici della cucina egiziana,
- di quali piatti/cibi si tratta?
 - a chi li regala?
 - quale significato ha per lei questo dono?
 - in che occasioni o momenti li regala?
48. **Dono di cibi italiani:** se le capita di regalare piatti tipici della cucina italiana,
- di quali piatti/cibi si tratta?
 - a chi li regala?
 - quale significato ha per lei questo dono?
 - in che occasioni o momenti li regala?

B. Grid for individual field notes

NOME

Data	
Luogo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Città ▪ Casa/Ufficio/Negozi/Altro
Durata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incontri e contatti preliminari ▪ Conversazione ▪ Warm up e follow up
Professione	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professione attuale ▪ Altre occupazioni
Formazione	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formazione in Egitto ▪ Formazione in Italia
Età	
Stato civile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sposato/non sposato ▪ Figli (età, sesso, luogo di nascita, educazione) ▪ Altri parenti in Italia (conviventi e non)
Religione	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appartenenza dichiarata ▪ Intensità di affiliazione ▪ Riflessioni inerenti alla sfera religiosa
Note sull'ambiente	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Descrizione del luogo ▪ Descrizione del contesto dell'intervista ▪ Modalità di formulazione delle domande
Note sulla narrazione	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Padronanza linguistica (comprensione, verbalizzazione) ▪ Astrazione e metaforizzazione ▪ Qualità della narrazione - fluidità, spontaneità della narrazione, sincerità ▪ Preferenza linguistica: ▪ Para-verbale ▪ Persone presenti durante l'intervista
Note sulla alternanza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Esito del processo di adattamento culturale ▪ Note sull'alternanza (cognizioni, affetti, stabilità) ▪ Dimensione del consumo ▪ Apertura all'alterità ▪ Uso della cultura ▪ Forma di alternanza: registro (tragica, comica, fantasy) ▪ Espressione dell'alternanza (ibrida, polarizzata)
Identità meta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presenza/assenza (metafora del viaggio di Ulisse) ▪ Principio di sintesi ▪ Fasi
Variabili esplicative dominanti	

C. Codification grid

VARIABILI ESPLICATIVE	CODICE	
CARATTERISTICHE INDIVIDUALI	Sesso - 1	A1
	Età - 2	A2
	Nazionalità genitori - 3	A3
	Religione dichiarata - 16	A4
	Stato civile - 6	A5
	Figli - 7	A6
CAPITALE SOCIALE	Scolarità - 9	B1
	Altre esperienze di migrazione - 13	B2
	Origine urbana/rurale - 5, 10	B3
	Occupazione(contratto e settore) - 14	B4
	Reddito - 17	B5
	Italianità pre-migrazione - 32, 33	B6
	Apertura alterità - (1 domanda filtro)	B7
AFFILIAZIONE ETNICA	Etnia dichiarata - 4	C1
	Felt ethnicity egiziana - 24	C2
	N. anni vissuti in Egitto - 12	C3
	Felt religion - 26	C4
	Freq. visite in Egitto	C5
	Radici familiari in Egitto	C6
PROGETTO MIGRATORIO	Stabilità - 28	D1
	Obiettivo originario - 29	D2
	Obiettivo attuale - 30	D3
INTEGRAZIONE SOCIO-CULTURALE	Ricongiungimenti fam. - 8, 15	E1
	N. anni di arrivo - 11	E2
	Lingua parlata/contesto - 18	E3
	Preferenza linguistica - 19	E4
	Relazioni sociali - 20	E5
	Freq. relazioni con italiani - 21	E6
	Media - 22	E7

	Tempo libero - 23	E8
	Felt ethnicity italiana - 25	E9
	Apprendimento gustativo - 39	E10
	Medium di acculturazione	E11
	Capacità negoziale cultura accoglienza	E12
	Capacità negoziale cultura originaria	E13
RITUALI	Luoghi di consumo - 43	F1
	Occasioni di consumo - 44	F2
	Persone con cui si consuma - 45	F3
	Dono - 47, 48	F4
	Attivatore di shift	F5
FATTORI LIMITANTI	Felt discrimination - 27	G1
	Barriere all'acquisto - 38	G2
	Stigmate etniche	G3
FASI DEL PROCESSO DI CB	Acquisto - motivazioni - 31, 34, 35	H1
	Acquisto - abitudini (pdv e freq) - 36, 37	H2
	Acquisto - emozioni	H6
	Preparazione - abitudini (cibi e utensili) - 40, 41	H3
	Preparazione - vissuti - 42	H4
	Consumo - flow experience - 46	H5
OUTCOME		
INTEGRAZIONE SOCIO-CULTURALE	Strategia di acculturazione	I1
	Modalità di espressione (ibrida, polarizzata)	I2
	Livello meta (pr. di sintesi)	I3
	Fasi	I4
	Competenza culturale esplicitata origine	I5
	Competenza culturale esplicitata accoglienza	I6
	Cultura come mezzo	I7
	Cultura come fine	I8
	Sottrattività - additività	I9

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