Life Cycle of an Ethnic Community

Ethnic communities—and the neighborhoods that contain them—change for each generation. Immigrant grandparents, first generation parents, and their second generation children experience America differently. Ethnic neighborhoods can go through the same stages, or repeat the process all over again when another group arrives.

1. **read** "Peopling Pennsylvania" and first-generation interviews;
2. **look** carefully at the photo galleries of families and communities;
3. **write** down what you find out about the three generations below.

Generation >	Immigrants to America	1st Generation American-born	2nd Generation and beyond
How they're often described	**Foreigner; Alien** **Strangers in a Strange Land** **Newcomers** **The Uprooted; Transplanted**	**Between two worlds** **One foot in the old, one in the new** **New Americans, "Native born"** **"Hunkies," "Garlic eaters," other nasty labels**	**"Americans"** **Assimilated** **Hyphenated Americans (Italian-American)** **"Moving up"**
Personal experience	■ For the first time, they are "foreign" -- different than the majority ■ Challenge to survive in a strange land were you can't communicate, etc. ■ Experience the most "culture shock," moving from country to cities Usually changing careers, as well as home -- work in mills and mines very different than farming or craft work. ■ May or may not become naturalized citizens ■ The Old Country is "back home"	■ By definition, they are "native born" American citizens. They have no memories of the "Old Country," since they were never there. America is home. ■ Bilingual, adopt English for practical reasons in school, parents native language at home. Bilingual parochial schools common. ■ May dress "American" for work; "ethnic" for worship/holidays ■ May become the go-between/interpreter/navigator/negotiator between their parents and authorities, majority culture (sometimes undermine parental authority)	■ English is first language. ■ May understand, but not speak grandparents' native language. ■ Often receive more education that previous generations with the hope that they will "better themselves." Or they be expected to do the same work as parents and grandparents, because that was traditional in the "Old Country."
Family	■ Depending on family or group values, they may encourage children to assimilate as soon as possible or enforce Old Country ways. ■ Often marry someone from the same town or region "back home." ■ Traditional foods, i.e., kosher	■ Family may or may not "enforce" Old Country ways. ■ Usually marry within the ethnic/language group (since those are the people they know from neighborhood school and church), but don't worry about regional differences "back home." ■ May add more "American" food	■ Traditional recipes may be lost, especially in the male line. Food traditions follow females. ■ Ethnic or religious foods and traditions come out on holidays, but otherwise they eat foods from many different cultures (many have become "American", like pizza, hotdogs, tacos) ■ Likely to "intermarry" with other ethnic groups, and later, even religions.

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Generation >	Immigrants to America	1st Generation American-born	2nd Generation and beyond
Ethnic identity ***Organizations, traditions*** ***Group pride*** ***Stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination***	■ All know their native tongue. Many never become fluent in English. For them, ethnic neighborhood is a necessity; ■ Strong ethnic identity is not an option: they stand out as "foreign," easily identified as belonging to the group through language, sometimes dress, customs. ■ Fraternal clubs provide safety net to newcomers: insurance, charity	■ May actively distance themselves from anything "foreign" or they may preserve identity within the majority population. ■ May change --"Anglicize" or "Americanize" -- name to fit in. "Wallechinsky" > "Wallace" ■ Ethnic clubs become more social, less of a necessity: sports teams, bands, singing societies, etc.	■ Ethnic identity becomes more voluntary: May keep ethnic pride through clubs or leave behind all hints of ethnic background. ■ Depending on how "visible" ethnicity is, discrimination may keep them from "assimilating" ■ Later generations sometimes change Anglicized names back to the original: "Wallace" > "Wallechinsky"
Neighborhood	■ Move into or create a community where they can be with others in the same situation = birth of the ethnic neighborhood, a physical place. ■ Each immigrant group has own church, schools, hospital (possibly), groceries, banks, bars, etc.	■ Neighborhood itself begins to change, as residents speak English ■ Some stay in the neighborhood, some leave ("move out" or "move up") ■ Public schools speed up assimilation with English and citizen classes; parochial schools maintain language and traditions	■ Ethnic neighborhoods change, sometimes "disappear" or change hands, becoming home to the next new migrants ■ Clubs become social clubs: Food, dances, etc. ■ Churches merge, English-only services ■ Banks, schools, hospitals merge or close

Additional reading:

IN THE novel ***Out of this Furnace***, author Thomas Bell turns this pattern into a great story!

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Personal experience			
Family			
Ethnic identity *Organizations, traditions* *Group pride* *Stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination*			
Neighborhood			

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