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Understanding Language Acquisition by Immigrants in the American Midwest, 1850-1914.

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Contents

Preface

The topic and question of this thesis have been inspired by the content of the MITRA course "Global Encounters 1850- 2010 - Transnational Movements of People, Ideas and Commodities", which was primarily taught by Kim Christian Priemel, who then also became the supervisor of this thesis. After much deliberation and reformulation of the topic, the thesis became a product of the transnational orientation of the MITRA programme and my personal interest in language acquisition in the context of migration. After my original question of how immigrants acquired the English language turned out to be exceeding the scope of a master's thesis, the topic was modified to "Understanding Language Acquisition in the American Midwest". Thereby I hoped the thesis could be embedded in the larger historical debates about immigration in the history of the United States, reflect on the methodological possibilities to research language acquisition, as well as the manner in which language proficiency has been used in the existing research.

I want to thank everyone who helped to make the punctual completion of this thesis possible, in one or another way: My parents, Sylvia and Robert Kelle, who made it possible for me to attend this master's programme, my fiancé Brandon Pedersen who read and corrected every draft and eventually the whole thesis as well as supported me in every other aspect of my life so that I was able to devote as much time as possible to this project, my supervisor Kim Christian Priemel who read all my drafts quickly, helped solve all problems I encountered and made this thesis readable, Margaret Pedersen who helped me to fix the last linguistic problems before submission, and all MITRA students of the first generation, without whom I would not have had any lunch or coffee breaks in the research and writing process.

Abstract

This thesis examines the research on English language acquisition by German and Scandinavian immigrants who came to the American Midwest between 1850 and 1914. Quantitative as well as qualitative approaches from recent research are considered, as well as a selection of primary sources, to find out which factor or factors had the strongest influence on the immigrants' decision to learn English. Thereby, four different points are addressed:

(1) In previous research, language acquisition has been treated as one of the most accurate indicators for how far adapted an immigrant is to Anglo-American society. Additionally, the same factors that are used to determine adaptation are used to assess the likelihood of language acquisition. Therefore, language acquisition and adaptation are in effect treated and examined equally. This thesis points out in which regards this practice is problematic and should be reconsidered.

(2) Qualitative and quantitative approaches use different factors to determine the likelihood of, or possible motivations for, language acquisition and attach different degrees of importance to the separate factors that influence language acquisition.

(3) A discussion of the different approaches shows that "identity" and "self-identification" with the United States usually accompanied the immigrants' wish to learn English. "Identity" is also one of the least tangible factors and is difficult to examine with a quantitative method, especially given the lack of relevant quantitative data from this time.

(4) Most importantly, migration research is most fruitful when it treats immigrants as actors with agency, acknowledges the contingency of the immigration process, and asks why immigrants decided to learn English instead of which group of immigrants was most likely to learn English.

Introduction

In the scholarly debate surrounding the history of the United States, as well as the history of some European countries, the large-scale migration from Europe to the United States between 1850 and 1914 has been a major topic for around a century. For the history of the United States, the social impact of immigrants on the American society has been the primary focus. Since the early twentieth century, many historians and other scholars have attempted to develop theories and models that explain the immigrants' interactions with the Anglo-American dominated society. The scholarly debate about this subject is still ongoing, due to the large number of factors that need to be considered like the diversity both among the immigrants and among the society in the United States. In addition, different trends and developments in the historical research have opened new perspectives on this long-researched topic. When scholars try to measure the immigrants' adaptation to what is thought of as the mainstream Anglo-American culture, the immigrants' knowledge of the English language is considered the most reliable indicator of how far immigrants have adapted to the host society. Studies that focus on the English acquisition of immigrants use the same factors that are used to explain adaptation itself, even though these contain the English proficiency itself as a factor.[1]

This thesis pursues two goals: First, it examines the immigrants' language acquisition and which factors were considered by immigrants when they decided to learn English or not. Second, it reflects critically on theories and methods of the recent research in the field, as the chosen approaches for the analyses use similar factors but come to different interpretations. An example for this is the different evaluation of the factor "ethnic community" by qualitative and quantitative approaches, which results in the opposing interpretations of ethnic communities as either obstacles or necessities for adaptation. This thesis attempts to clarify the role language acquisition played in the adaptation process, and thereby to contribute to the bigger question about the role immigration has played in the history of the United States.[2]

[1] Philip Gleason gives a good overview of the development of the scholarly debate and the use of terminology in Gleason, 1992; Desmond King uses the immigrants' acceptance of the English language as a representation for their willingness to assimilate. It is also one of three measures the Dillingham Commission in 1911 listed to assess assimilation. King, 2000. 22, 64.

[2] As examples, one could take Labov's quantitative study, which concludes that ethnic communities are the biggest obstacle for immigrants to learn English and Conzen study, where the ethnic community is necessary for successful migration as it offers the immigrants initial accommodation and familiar surroundings. Labov, 1998. 392; Conzen, 1976. 3.

This thesis limits itself geographically by analyzing the American Midwest, which at the time was mainly settled by immigrants from North-Western Europe, such as Germans and Scandinavians. The reason for this limitation lies in the role of the Midwest as the, in most cases, both intended and final destination for the immigrants. Even though there were large numbers of immigrants in the cities on the East coast, many were only there temporarily to earn money or wait for a chance to continue their journey. The Midwest on the other hand offered affordable farm land, small towns, as well as large cities, and the immigrants who came to the United States often immediately went to specific places in the Midwest, as their intention was to join family, friends, or former neighbors, who had already established an existence there. This is important for the analysis of language acquisition, as the ethnically homogenous communities were able to provide a space where learning English was not a necessity and therefore made learning English a choice. In these surroundings it can be examined why immigrants did or did not chose to learn English. It needs to be pointed out that Anglo-Americans at the time thought only white Europeans were assimilable into their society, and as white Europeans they understood only North-Western Europeans. This is also reflected in sources, such as the census data, which uses "foreign white stock" as an analytical category. Therefore, this thesis focuses mainly on ethnic German, Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish immigrants.[3]

Another limitation in this thesis is the focus on first-generation immigrants. They were the ones who had to actively decide to learn the English language. The second generation, or those immigrants who arrived in the United States at a very young age, learned English at school. The focus on the time period from 1850 to 1914 is determined by the large-scale migration that began after 1850. At the time, the number of immigrants was already substantial enough to build ethnic communities the newly arriving immigrants could integrate into. The time before 1850 was mainly determined by stage migration, which means that the immigrants had to settle early on in ethnically diverse or Anglo-American communities, which often made a quick acquisition of the language inevitable. After 1914, with the beginning of the First World War, the pressure grew on immigrants, especially German immigrants, to let go of their language and culture and to learn English.[4]

[3] For examples of settlement patterns in the Midwest, see Gjerde, 1997. 25-26, 81, 88-90, 97-98, 101; Joranger, 2008. 150-152; Aengenvoort, 1999. 156-157; for the racial categorization of immigrants at the time, see Daniels, 2002. 121; King, 2000. 14-15, 17-18.
[4] Daniels, 2002. 159-160. Conzen, 1976. 17-18, 35-38.

Terminology

The scholarly debate on the topic has not just produced several theoretical models of adaptation, but also a range of terms that describe different developments. Some of these terms are used interchangeably or mean different things in different contexts, so that the terms used in this thesis require explanation and specification:

Even though many studies talk about the *national backgrounds* of immigrants or their *nationality*, the term *ethnic* is used in this thesis instead. One of the reasons is that the concept of a nation state in Europe was still in the making at the time. There was, for example, no German state before 1871, and the different German states were only loosely connected and experienced development and social change to different times. This again influenced where from the greater German area most ethnic German immigrants came from to a certain point in time. Usually, people registered as German would have come from the area described by the post-1871 borders of Germany, even if they actually belonged to, for example, a Polish minority. German minorities from outside these borders would not be registered as German. In some sources, the countries of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark are listed either separately or together as "Scandinavia", depending on the year in question. This is due to the smaller number of immigrants from these countries, or that they shared certain cultural and linguistic traits, but was also connected to the entangled historical and political situations of the countries. Therefore, this thesis refers to ethnic Germans and Scandinavians and only to the specific countries of their origin when the information is available.[5]

An important object of the analysis in this thesis is the *ethnic community*. It describes a community inside a settlement, like a village, town, or city, that is ethnically homogenous. There could be several immigrant communities of different ethnicities in one settlement. In small villages these communities could make up the majority of the population. The differences between ethnic communities and their role for language acquisition are a main argument within both quantitative and qualitative studies.[6]

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[5] Conzen, 1976. 27. Daniels, 147, 164-165.
Ethnicity itself is a contested term, as there is no generally accepted definition. Nevertheless, it is employed in different fields of research, as it remains a relevant, if still vague, concept. Ethnicity is not just an analytical category; its relevance also derives from its impact on peoples' social lives. "[I]t has historically served as a major means whereby humans divide themselves into groups deeply committed to their own 'kind'." On the one hand, it furthers group identity, on the other causes social fragmentation or friction between different groups. "Ethnicity", *Dictionary of American Immigration History*. 210-212.
[6] Gjerde, 1997. 241-242.

The century-long debate about immigrants assimilating into, acculturating to, or living next to the Anglo-American part of society causes difficulties in the use of these terms. There are different understandings of what these terms mean, and they are burdened with associations to political views. The choice of words can thus not just be connected to theoretical assumptions but also personal opinions about immigration. As this thesis argues, there is no universal employability of the concepts assimilation and acculturation to immigrants in the United States, due to the diversity among the immigrants and inside the American "mainstream" society. In this thesis the term *adaptation* will be used to describe the process most immigrants went through, as they integrated into the Anglo-American society. Using the term adaptation brings the advantage that a gradual process can be described, and assimilation as a result of the adaptation process is possible but not necessary. Another advantage of the term adaptation is that it does not necessitate that immigrants lost any of their former cultures and languages. Assimilation implies that the immigrants did not just adapt to American society, but also lost every trace of the culture of their country of origin. Acculturation is sometimes used as a weaker term, similar to adaptation, and sometimes as a synonym for assimilation. A last term that needs to be explained is *Anglo-American society*. It describes those who were part of the mainstream American culture and those who had fully adapted to it. It remains a difficult term, as the mainstream culture the immigrants were adapting to was not static but followed its own development and scholars disagree, whether or not this mainstream was oriented on the Anglo-American society.[7]

Theoretical background

The theories on assimilation and acculturation or adaptation, that were formulated from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1970s, fail to cover all types of immigrants and an assimilation process that stretches over several generations. They all contain elements, though, that can explain at least a part of the process. A theory that tries to explain these processes needs to consider that the society the immigrants were adapting to was also changing and evolving. Therefore, most theories can help to analyze part of the process,

[7] As Milton Gordon describes the ides of Anglo-conformity, American culture and society are understood as being built on English institutions, modified after the American independence, and the English language and English-oriented cultural patterns. Gordon, 1972. 88; for more information on modern theories on the changing Anglo-American mainstream, see Grøngaard Jeppesen, 2017. 44-47; for a discussion and history of the terms assimilation, acculturation, and cultural pluralism, see: Gleason, 1992. 55-56.

but the large number of factors, quantifiable and non-quantifiable, that influenced the adaptation process, make it difficult to identify universal patterns.[8]

In the 1970s, the cultural turn also impacted the immigration research. Historians such as Conzen, Höndgen, and Gjerde, for example, focus in their analyses on the impact of religious, socio-economic, and regional homogeneity, and the local creation of culture in the ethnic community. All these factors influenced the immigrants' social and cultural lives, and thereby also how far and how quickly they adapted to American society. The same factors influenced the homogeneity of the ethnic community, which impacted how long the culture and language of the immigrants' countries of origin was able to endure in the United States. Another change that occurred in the historical research in the 1970s was to view the immigrants as actors with an agency. Previously, immigrants were often treated as only moved by "push" and "pull" factors, and full assimilation into American society was the eventual outcome of the adaptation process. The "new immigration history" considers immigrants as actors with an agency, assimilation as not inevitable, and acknowledges cultural change as contingent. This thesis follows the new approach in immigration history, and will therefore examine what influenced the immigrants' decision to learn English, rather than which factors influenced the likelihood of immigrants to learn English.[9]

Methodology

Considering the large amount of data on immigration to the United States, this thesis limits itself largely to secondary sources, namely quantitative and qualitative studies on adaptation, which include English proficiency as a factor or study English acquisition itself. In the search for factors that determine the language acquisition of immigrants, quantitative and qualitative studies are examined in terms of their achievements and shortcomings. This provides conclusions about their applicability and limitations. Not all studies can be divided into either qualitative or quantitative studies, as they use both methods, but these studies can demonstrate how these methods can complement each other. This thesis considers different groups of factors that can have an impact on language acquisition. Each chapter discusses a group of factors, how quantitative and qualitative studies

[8] Grøngaard Jeppesen, 2017. 134, 137-138.
[9] On the homogeneity of ethnic communities, see Aengenvoort, 1999; Conzen, 1990; Höndgen [Aengenvoort], 2004; on the theory behind the term "new immigration history", see Gjerde, 2002. 14-15; Daniels, 2002. 214.

are able to use these factors, and what impact the respective group of factors had on language acquisition. Only the conclusion of this thesis considers the factors as a whole and in relation to each other.

When it comes to quantitative studies, there is a difficulty in the source material that cannot be avoided: the lack of data apart from demographic characteristics. As Grøngaard Jeppesen's study shows, information on political views, religion, and self-identification are highly relevant, but do not exist for the period under consideration, at least not in the form of census data or survey results. This is where the strength of qualitative studies lies; they are able to use a different set of sources that possibly contain pertinent information. The advantage of the quantitative study is the large number of cases that can be evaluated, which gives indications of what was the norm and what was the exception.[10]

The intention behind the structure of this thesis and the use of material is to (1) point out the respective importance of single factors, (2) find out which approaches are able to account for which factors, and (3) reflect on the meaning of language acquisition in the context of adaptation. This is specifically motivated by the general assumption of scholars, that language proficiency is an indication for the level of adaptation, and that likelihood of language acquisition is influenced by the same factors as likelihood of adaptation.[11]

As Helbich and Kamphoefner point out, it is common that historians who are working on the topic of migration usually focus on members of their own ethnic group or country. This is also the case in this thesis, largely due to language skills which determine the access to material. In this case, literature in German, English, Norwegian, and Danish is used, to examine North-Western Europeans' migration to the United States. This limits the results of the thesis to this specific region and the chosen groups of immigrants. Other ethnic groups and other regions of the United States might have experienced the interactions between immigrants and the rest of society quite differently. Additionally, other ethnic groups could be subject to racism and exclusion, which would put them in a very

[10] On quantifiable factors and their availability, see Grøngaard Jeppesen, 2002. 50-57.

[11] Desmond King uses the immigrants' acceptance of the English language as a representation for their willingness to assimilate. It is also one of three measures the Dillingham Commission in 1911 listed to assess assimilation. King, 2000. 22, 64; Grøngaard Jeppesen uses the census data on the immigrants' knowledge of English to examine their level of assimilation. Grøngaard Jeppesen, 2002. 56-62; Helbich uses the knowledge of the English language, or the degree of the immigrants' proficiency, as a category in his analysis of immigrant letters, with the goal to determine the level of adaptation they reached during the period in which they wrote their letters. Helbich, 1997. 409.

different situation from the North-Western European immigrants who are considered in this thesis.[12]

Scholarly Debate

From the vast material that covers the topic of migration to the United States, this thesis mainly employs those studies which concern themselves with issues of language acquisition as well as adaptation. From among the purely quantitative analyses mainly two examples are used: one that focuses only on the immigrants' language acquisition on a national scale, and one that focuses on the adaptation of Scandinavian migrants to the mainstream Anglo-American society. The former is Teresa Labov's study from 1998 that analyzes a sample of the 1910 United States census data to determine the impact of different factors on the immigrants' likelihood to learn English. The latter study was conducted by Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen in 2017 and discusses different theories of assimilation based on United States' census data. Both studies employ a quantitative method but take different approaches on how to work with the available data. While Labov tries to determine mathematically the respective impact of each factor, with a special focus on the immigrants' first language, Grøngaard Jeppesen examines the Scandinavian immigrants' adaptation process by testing different theories on the available data.[13]

The use of purely quantitative approaches for migration research has been criticized in the newer research. The reason being that quantitative studies tend to portray immigrants as being mere objects, whose decision to migrate or likelihood to adapt was mainly influenced by their environment and demographic characteristics like age, sex, economic situation, or country of origin. Quantitative studies can rarely account for immigrants as actors with agency and that decisions and developments concerning the migration process are contingent.[14]

Qualitative studies on immigrants often take a cultural approach to examine language acquisition and adaptation, and employ sources like letters, chronicles, newspapers, diaries, and other records to not find out what influenced the immigrants' likelihood to learn English, but rather what influenced their decision to do or not do so. Many of these studies are microstudies of individuals and small groups from specific places in Europe

[12] Helbich, Kamphoefner, 2004. xv-xxvi; On selective discrimination towards immigrants, see Daniels, 2002. 121, 283; Gordon, 1972. 88-89; Gjerde, 2002. 17.
[13] For example: cultural pluralism, segmented assimilation, and assimilation into a changing mainstream. Grøngaard Jeppesen, 2017. 47; Labov, 1998.
[14] Gjerde, 2002. 14-15.

to specific areas in the Midwest, which allow a better understanding of migration processes. Jon Gjerde has written several studies on this topic, often with a focus on Scandinavian migration. His main focus lies on mechanisms of migration and patterns of settlement, as well as interactions of ethnic groups with each other and the Anglo-American society. His works show the dynamics and structures of immigrant communities, and thereby offer insights into the immigrants' migration experience. Odd Lovoll's study on Norwegian immigrants in the Midwest, points to the fact that even though Norwegian immigrants settled together with others with the same regional background, they never made up 100% of a settlement's inhabitants, which forced them to interact with Anglo-Americans or immigrants of other ethnic groups. This means that a complete seclusion from the rest of society never occurred. Additionally, he conducted a study on Norwegian immigrants' lives in Chicago, especially their social lives. Terje Mikael Hasle Joranger has analyzed the Norwegian immigrants' ethnic identities, in terms of their connection to their country of origin, the specific region they were from, the United States, and in how far they identified with the United States and their ethnic community. But he also reflects on a shared Scandinavian identity, that was relevant until the end of 19th century.[15]

There are several studies on German immigrants' patterns of settlement and community formation in the United States, for example by Kathleen Conzen, Anne Höndgen, Heike Bungert, and Reinhard Doerries. Their studies point to the diversity of the German immigrants and the factors that were more important than shared ethnicity or nationality in binding communities together. Therefore, they focus on the immigrants' regional background, religion, and family ties. Additionally, based on Conzen's works, these studies consider the establishment or invention of the local culture in the communities itself. One of Conzen's main arguments is that every ethnic community was homogenous to different degrees and had its own local culture that was different from that of other ethnic communities. Nevertheless, most of them are based on a shared language and religion that was transplanted from the country of origin. In this thesis, these studies are used at first to explain the differences between ethnic communities and later to assess the importance of cultural and religious backgrounds.[16]

Two additional studies by Walter Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Helbich discuss the authenticity and evaluation of German immigrants' letters. Helbich's study includes an evaluation of letters from 50 immigrants, who he then classifies into different stages

[15] Øverland, 2002; 80. Gjerde, 1985; Gjerde, 1997; Lovoll, 1988; Lovoll, 2006; Joranger, 2010.
[16] Conzen, 1990; Conzen, 1976; Höndgen, 2004; Doerries, 2004; Bungert, 2017.

of adaptation they reached in the term in which they wrote their letters. Helbich's study offers a good overview of how English proficiency is distributed over several levels of adaptation as well as depicting the role of self-identification with a society as decisive for the immigrant's decision to learn English. Together with Ulrike Sommer, Helbich and Kamphoefner have published an edition of immigrant letters, which is supplemented with explanations about general concepts of German immigrants' lives in the United States as well as specific information about the immigrants' biographies as a context for the letters. For a general contextualization and differentiation, more comprehensive works on immigration to the United States, background literature on the emigrants' countries' societies, as well as socio-linguistic studies are used to assess the applicability of this study's findings.[17]

Structure

This thesis is structured according to different groups of factors, which are considered separately. Each group is further subdivided and contains a discussion of quantitative and qualitative approaches to the topic. The first chapter will cover demographic data as well as patterns of settlement and mechanisms of migration. A main focus will lie on some key factors, namely age upon arrival, sex, and first language, as well as the mechanism of chain migration and the ethnically homogenous communities. In particular this last factor, ethnic community, is considered highly relevant for both adaptation and language acquisition by quantitative and qualitative studies.

The second chapter will focus on the immigrants' cultures and religions. The main intent is to show what the immigrants' cultural background from their countries of origin, as well as the cultural and religious life in the United States, implied about their likelihood of language acquisition. The question of the immigrants' identities and self-identification is discussed on the basis of their cultural and religious life. Additionally, it reflects on the difficulties that arise in quantitative analyses when they attempt to account for factors that are not generally quantifiable.

The third chapter examines the immigrants' motives behind their decision to migrate, as well as the intentions and plans they had for their lives in the United States. The chapter is led by the question of what immigrants considered their reasons for migration and how much these reasons implied whether they would learn English or not. Examples

[17] Kamphoefner, 2009; Helbich, 1997; Helbich, 1988. Daniels, 1990; King, 1972. Wehler, 1995, Haugen, 1969, Kamphoefner, 1994.

for possible motives for migration include religious, political, and economic reasons. Each of the three chapters will include a summary that reflects on the usefulness of the factors discussed in it for the analysis of language acquisition.

1. Where Are They From, Where Are They Going, and Who Are They?

This chapter analyzes mainly those factors which are quantifiable and build the basis of most studies on the topics of language acquisition and adaptation. These are demographic characteristics, usually taken from the United States' census, as well as patterns of settlement and mechanisms of migration. The latter two are only somewhat quantifiable. An example is Gjerde's study of Norwegians who moved from Balestrand to the Upper Midwest. He uses quantitative data on the movement on the immigrants to show where they originated and where they settled in the United States, and thereby can account for the importance of chain migration for settlement formation. Höndgen uses a similar method, to trace the migration movements from North-Western Germans to Ohio. In both cases the quantitative analysis of the immigrants' movements is the basis of the analysis, but it is built upon with qualitative data from letters, newspapers, and church chronicles. This chapter will examine how both methods use and interpret the same factors, demographic characteristics as well as settlement patterns, and how significant these factors are for language acquisition.[18]

[18] Höndgen [Aengenvoort], 2004. 18-19, 22, 26-30, 43; Gjerde, 1985. 4-5.

1.1. Age, Sex, and Native Language

This chapter analyzes factors that are mainly used by quantitative analyses to determine the likelihood of language acquisition or adaptation. Two different studies, both of which use a nearly exclusively quantitative approach, serve here as examples. They demonstrate how age, sex, and native language can be used in a quantitative analysis, and to what interpretation these results may lead. Additionally, they are critically reflected upon with reference to cultural studies, to assess their adequacy for analyzing processes of language acquisition or adaptation. It needs to be noted that studies with qualitative or cultural approaches also employ these factors in the manner of a quantitative method, but mainly to supplement their analysis, and not as its basis.

The longer immigrants lived in the US, the more likely it became that they learned English. If this did not happen with the first generation of immigrants, then almost certainly with their children and grandchildren. By the third generation, some scholars assume that "Anglicization" was achieved, and the ancestors' native languages, if they were still spoken, were restricted to the private sphere. This is one of the many findings of Labov's study on language acquisition, which uses the data from the 1910 United States' Census to determine the influence of demographic factors, and especially the immigrants' native languages, on their English language acquisition. Her methodological approach is to determine mathematically how much impact these factors have on language acquisition. To do that, Labov uses a 1 out of 250 sample from the census data from 1910 and considers nine different factors: "ability to speak English, age of entry, first language, gender, literacy, recency of immigration, shared first language, social class, and urbanicity."[19]

The difficulties of this method are that through the sample size, minority groups, such as Danes, might be underrepresented, and that the study relies on both self-reported English proficiency as well as the enumerators' ability to evaluate English proficiency. Additionally, Labov is aware of the difficulties that arise with categorizing immigrants according to ethnic or linguistic groups as well as national origin, as these categories do not necessarily overlap and are subject to change. The census data was selected, aggregated, and analyzed by individuals with assumptions about immigrants and contemporary

[19] Labov, 1998. 380. For Labov's use of method and theories, see Labov, 1998. 368-369, 392.

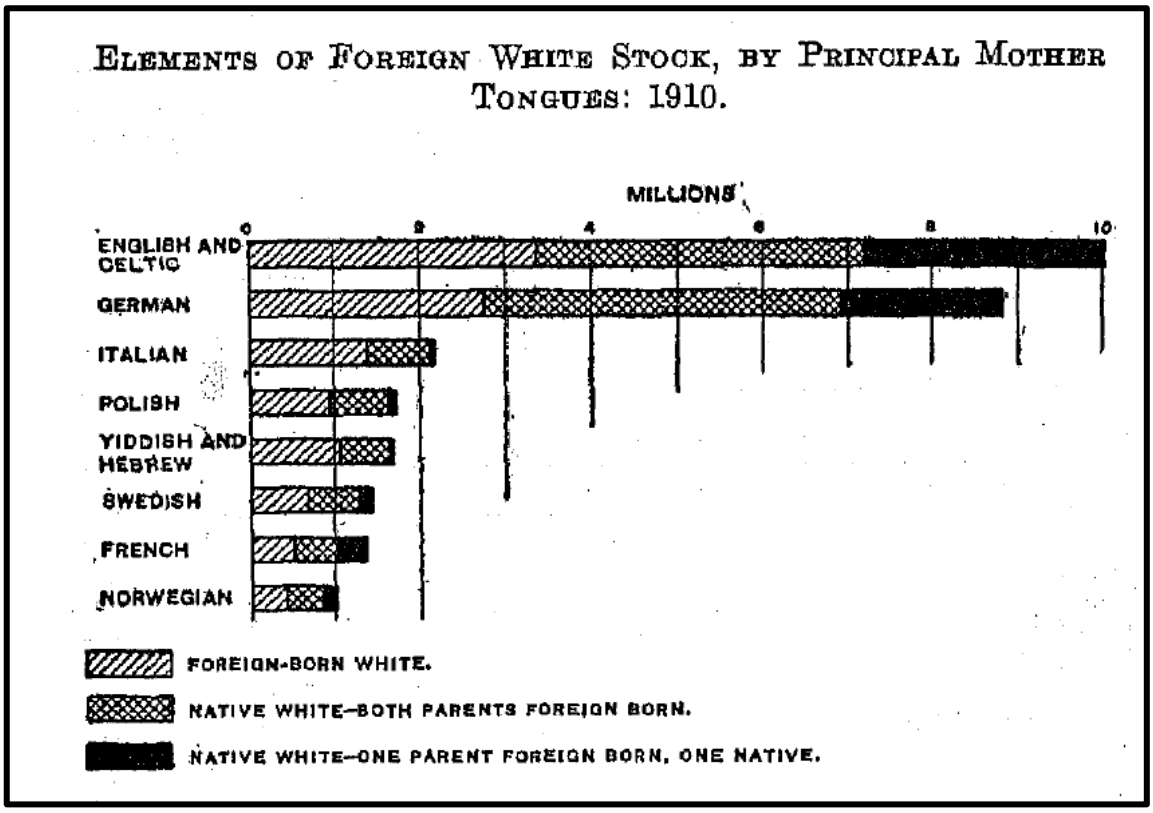

Figure I

national and ethnic stereotypes, which means that both categories used in the census as well as noted content need to be employed carefully in any quantitative analyses.[20]

When Labov wrote her study, there was no theoretical basis in linguistics to predict how easy it was for native speakers of a certain language to successfully learn English in contrast to native speakers of other languages. A chart from the United States' Census Bureau shows the distribution of first languages of those who were white and immigrants themselves or had at least one foreign parent. Those who had English, German, Swedish, or Norwegian as first languages were largely born in the United States. Considering the migration patterns at the time, this result could have been caused by the large numbers of families that emigrated from North-Western Europe. Large-scale immigration by Polish-speakers and Italian-speakers had only started after the 1880s, which would explain the fewer total numbers, as well as the ratio of native- to foreign-born Polish- and Italian-speakers. Based on this chart, Labov argues that Italian- and Polish- speakers were the groups in which proportionately more immigrants had to learn English, because she assumes that the native-born speakers of these languages would learn English eventually, for example in school. Nevertheless, all of those who were foreign-born would have to

[20] Labov, 1998. 369, 380.

actively learn the English language if they wanted to. The census data does not provide information on how many of the immigrants and their children listed above spoke English. Without that information, the chart could have projected the image to contemporaries that even native-born children could not speak English, probably caused by lack of proficiency from their parents.[21]

Labov concludes that seclusion from English speakers as well as living in an ethnic community were the most obvious obstacles for acquiring the English language in both rural and urban areas. Being literate in any language, having arrived in the United States at a young age, or having been in the United States for a long time would increase the immigrants' likelihood to learn English. 27% of immigrants that arrived between 1899 and 1910 said upon arrival that they could neither read nor write in any language. Compared to the "new migration" from Southern and Eastern Europe, Scandinavians and Germans, between 1900 and 1910, were quicker to achieve a high proportion of English-speakers. A significant difficulty for Labov's study is that the census data does not have information on the level of the immigrants' English proficiency. It only separates them into English and non-English speakers, above or under 10 years of age.[22]

Labov's findings indicate that Scandinavian immigrants, followed by German immigrants, were the most likely to be literate and to have some proficiency in English, not taking into account other factors. To assess the reason for this is very difficult. Labov claims that the immigrants' first language had an influence on how quickly they learn English, but so did their general literacy. Her findings indicate for example that Swedish immigrants were more likely to learn English than Polish immigrants. However, was this because the Swedish language is closer to the English language or because a higher percentage of Swedes were literate? An analysis based on the factors Labov chose for her study is difficult, as most of the factors overlap or are interdependent. Her study confirms her assumption that migration at a young age increases the chances of learning English,

[21] Figure I "*Elements of Foreign White Stock, by Principal Mother Tongues*" US Bureau of the Census 1914, Statistical Atlas, plate 219; Labov, 1998, 372-375. For the distribution of countries of origin of immigrants to the United States, see Daniels, 2002. 121-123, 188-189.
Even if a native-born grew up with a different first language than English, it can be assumed that they learned English in school, at least instructed as a second language. Labov, 1998. 382.

[22] Labov, 1998. 377-379, 382. Another problem for her study is the subjective and often through stereotypes biased view of the enumerators, who conduct the questioning for the census. As the immigrants were only divided into English- and non-English-speakers, there is no room for nuance, and immigrants who were still in the process of learning the language were probably counted as non-English speakers.

as it seems easier for children to learn a new language and children were usually exposed to the English language in school.[23]

Learning English, from the Anglo-American point of view, was the most essential part of Americanizing immigrants, in combination with education on United States' history and American traditions. However, this only refers to immigrants from North-Western Europe, who were the only groups of immigrants that were considered assimilable. These immigrant children had to attend public schools, to ensure their Americanization. Public schools who received a variety of students with different first languages did not offer specific English classes. Everyone had to attend the regular classes with English instruction. Very few classes focused on just teaching immigrant children English, which was especially important for older children. If there were enough children with the same first language, it was in some cases possible to request English classes that were instructed in the children's native language.[24]

Grøngaard Jeppesen published a study on the assimilation process of Scandinavian immigrants and their succeeding generations. In addition to United States' census data, he uses material from different surveys from the late twentieth century. Even though his method is quantitative, he wants to include cultural and socio-economic factors as well as patterns of settlement. He admits that there were always individual factors to the adaptation process, and that assimilation inside an ethnic group could happen very differently. He employs factors such as religion, ethnic identity, and political orientation to take the personal level of the adaptation process into account. These factors are not always separable and influence each other. His focus on Scandinavian immigrants allows him to examine different tendencies of adaptation processes within a single ethnic group. A large problem for his study is that the factors on the personal level of the immigrants are only available for the later generations, as the data comes from surveys from the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Therefore, his analysis of the immigrants in the early twentieth century is based on the same census data Labov uses in her study.[25]

Grøngaard Jeppesen concludes that "[…] the road into American society for the Scandinavian immigrants and their children was not single-stranded but followed several tracks. Thus, there was talk about assimilation, which was not simple and directly linear,

[23] Labov, 1998. 385, 392-393. Daniels, 2002. 159-160.
[24] Mirel, 2010. 13-14, 51-52; Daniels, 2002. 159.
[25] To analyze the personal level, he uses the factors: language, religion, values, ethnic identity, socio-economic status, education, occupation, income, location of settlement, marriage pattern, political views, and social trust. Grøngaard Jeppesen, 2017. 56-57.

seen over generations. Obstacles had to be overcome and choices had to be made."[26] Immigrants from the different Scandinavian countries show different ways of adapting to Anglo-American society, and even within these groups, differences can be found. Additionally, mainstream Anglo-American society itself was constantly changing and evolving, which makes the analysis of the adaptation process more complicated. In the end, his results largely agree with Labov's conclusions. He, too, sees the ethnic community as a place that does not further English acquisition.[27]

Both Labov and Grøngaard Jeppesen show by way of census data that there was a difference in English knowledge between the sexes. Men were more likely to speak English, but in the German and Scandinavian case, the difference between the sexes was very small. The argument is that men learned English more quickly, because they left the house more often and went to work. Many women stayed at home or worked in domestic environments, and therefore had no immediate need to acquire English. Figure II shows the numbers of male and female immigrants who did not speak English, though it does not include percentages. Additionally, the figure does not differentiate according to ethnicity. Labov and Grøngard Jeppesen show the percentage of non-English speakers according to sex in each ethnic group separately, which shows that women, on average, were less likely to speak English. However, it is not enough to say that this is caused by the predominantly domestic role that women took. The following examples by cultural studies show how immigration to the United States gave women work opportunities they did not have in their native country, and domestic work may have been an advantage in learning English.[28]

Immigrant women's likelihood of learning English varied strongly. For example, Some German immigrant girls in Milwaukee were hired as maids in Anglo-American households. Therefore, they learned English and got accustomed to Anglo-American culture and traditions, and later transferred parts of these into their own households. German immigrant men in the same city had often mainly German co-workers, which prevented

[26] Grøngaard Jeppesen, 2017. 132.
Original wording: "[…] [V]ejen ind i det amerikanske samfund for de skandinaviske immigranter og deres børn ikke var enstrenget, men fulgte flere spor. Det var således tale om assimilering, som ikke var simpel og umiddelbart lineær set over generasjoner. Forhindringer skulle overvindes, og valg skulle tages." [Translation by myself]
[27] Grøngaard Jeppesen, 2017. 58-59.
[28] Figure II "*Foreign-Born White Population 10 Years of Age and over Unable to Speak English: 1910 and 1900*" US Bureau of the Census 1914, Statistical Atlas, plate 226; Labov. 1998. 389; Grøngaard Jeppesen. 2017. 59.

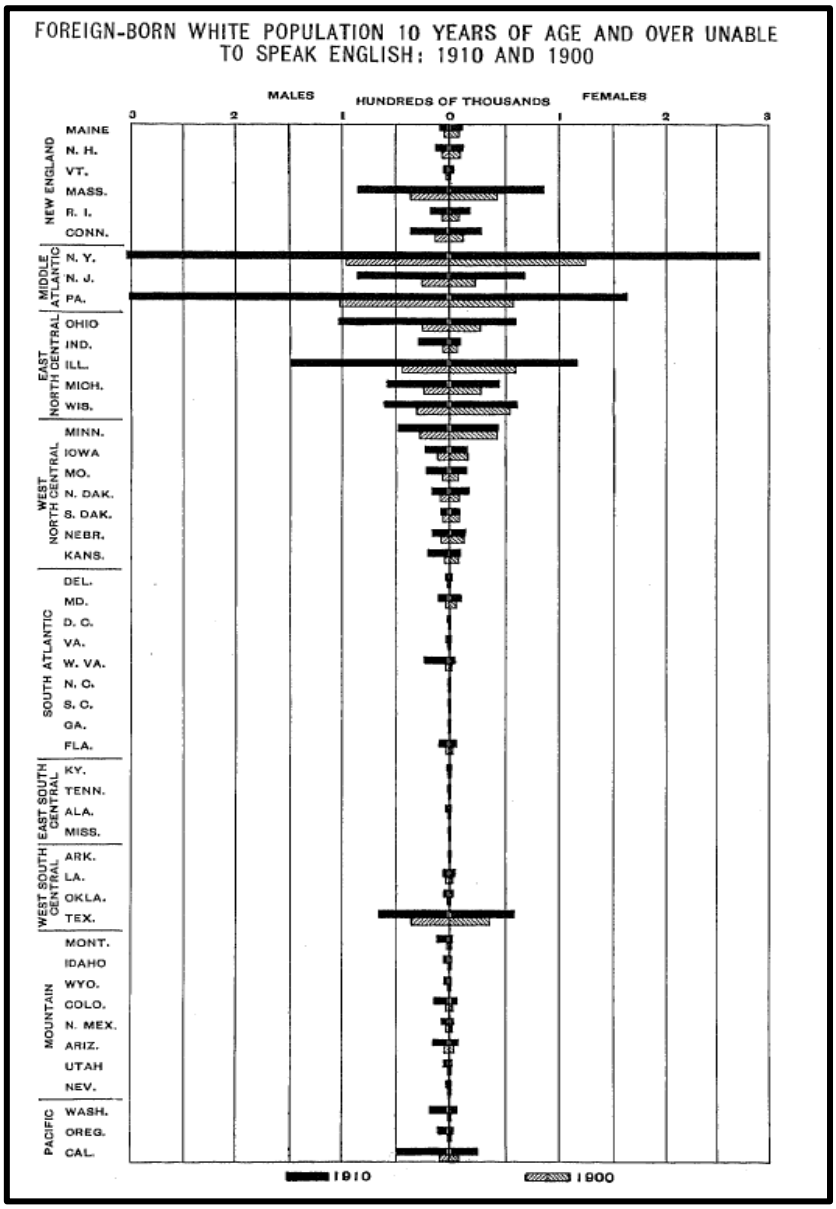

Figure II

them from acquiring English.[29]

Another example is the contribution of Norwegian women to both their family's income as well as shaping the ethnic community. The Norwegian-American community offered Norwegian women new opportunities to work that did not exist in Norway at the time. In the United States, Norwegian women would teach in public as well as in parochial schools and engage in church activities, which was not possible in Norway. The new job opportunities did not necessarily imply that the women would learn English, but it shows that their inability to speak English did not necessarily derive from a lack of job opportunities. Especially Norwegian girls, who grew up in cities, would learn English in

[29] Conzen, 1976. 92-94, Helbich, 1988. 499-450.

school, which gave them the opportunity to look for jobs outside the domestic sphere, which was still the dominant workplace for Norwegian women at the time. It also meant that the English language was more likely to be part of their private lives and their households, and therefore their native language was not necessarily transferred to the second generation.[30]

As the two examples of quantitative studies examined in this chapter show, results become more precise when the study restricts itself to a certain group of immigrants. A study that considers all immigrant groups, for example, cannot account for the diversity within an ethnic group. Additionally, it seems as if the broader the study is, the more it can only describe the average immigrant, who did not exist. If it does not consider information from the personal level, the quantitative analysis can treat the immigrant as a subject without agency, which has been dominant in the research for a long time. Demographic factors did not determine if someone learned English or not; that was a decision that the immigrants had to make themselves. As the examples presented in relation to the differences in sex in terms of language show, just because more men than women spoke English, that did not mean that this was because they worked outside of the domestic sphere. Domestic work would often be an opportunity to learn English, and work outside of the domestic sphere did not necessitate a proficiency in English.

[30] Lahlum, 2011. 80, 93-95.

1.2. Patterns of Settlement and Mechanisms of Migration

Labov and Grøngaard Jeppesen consider the factors "shared first language" and "living in an ethnic community" to be highly relevant for both adaptation to American society and English language acquisition. For Labov, a shared first language with a neighbor was an obstacle for immigrants that prevented them from learning English. Grøngaard Jeppesen considers the fact that immigrants lived within an ethnic community as an indicator that they were not well adapted to American society. Both authors presuppose that the ethnic community is an obstacle for language acquisition and adaptation, and use it as an analytical category. Their conclusions reaffirm this interpretation of ethnic communities.[31]

To account for the presence of an ethnic community that shared a language, Labov makes use of the sequential listing of households in her sample of census data. When an individual had the same first language as the head of the preceding household, Labov understands this as an indication for an ethnic community. According to this method, every foreign-born in the United States had a 25.90% chance that his nearest neighbor shared his first language. For Germans the chance was 29.65%, for Swedes 16.39%, for Danes 5.63%, and for Norwegians 19.22%. These estimates seem very low, considering that only 6% of immigrants who arrived in 1910 claimed that they were not joining friends or family. It is conceivable that those friends and family members shared a first language and that these new immigrants would settle close to them. Immigrants with a shared first language did not settle close to each other by accident, and mechanisms like chain migration ensured that.[32]

Labov argues that her study verifies that immigrants living in an ethnically homogenous community in urban areas took on the English language more slowly than immigrants who lived in linguistically diverse neighborhoods. This is a problematic claim, as Labov's method cannot account for when immigrants learned English and where they lived at the time. Based on the analysis of the following chapters, it becomes more likely that Labov's result is caused by the higher numbers of recent immigrants in the urban areas, as well as those who only came to work and not settle permanently. Additionally,

[31] Labov, 1998. 392; Grøngaard Jeppesen, 2017. 53-54, 139.
[32] Labov, 1998. 388; Kamphoefner, 2009. 47-48, for the mechanism of chain migration, see Gjerde, 1997. 81, 88-90, 97-98, 101; Joranger, 2008. 150-152; Aengenvoort, 1999. 156-157.

the census data shows how differences in the proportion of non-English speakers in various areas was quite small.[33]

There might have been a small chance for immigrants to settle close to someone with a shared first language if they settled in a random location in the United States, but the majority of immigrants did not do that. They migrated to specific ethnic communities where friends and family members lived, which made the probability of having a neighbor with the same first language a much higher. They knew for sure they would settle in an ethnic community that often shared much more than just a language. This chapter reviews how the mechanism of chain migration and the ethnic community have been used and interpreted in different approaches to migration research. Different scholars have attached different meanings to these ethnic communities when it comes to adaptation and language acquisition, but they largely agree that the homogeneity of a community enhanced its potential for maintaining native languages and cultures.[34]

German immigrants, in general, did not tend to settle in larger cities. They were concentrated in the "German Triangle", marked by the cities of St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Milwaukee. The immigrants settled closely together, as immigrants of other ethnic groups did. Few German immigrants were engaged in agriculture, and they never made up more than 5% of American farmers, but those who did often lived in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, and Nebraska. During the peak of German migration, one quarter to two fifths of the immigrants engaged in agriculture; in Wisconsin in 1880, for example, 27% of the farmers were German. Scandinavian immigrants settled nearly exclusively in rural areas in the Midwest. They often came in family groups and moved from rural areas in their respective countries of origin to rural areas in the Midwest. In the first half of the nineteenth century, immigrants from Sweden were largely farmers and their families, and from 1880 onwards, more farm laborers arrived and only later immigrants from urban areas followed. Norwegian migration followed a similar pattern, and the new arrivals settled so closely together that more than half of the Norwegian immigrants were located in only three states in the Midwest: Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota.[35]

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[33] Labov, 1998. 368. The 1910 Census shows that in rural areas, there were 25.2% of foreign-born who did not speak English, in small towns 23.8%, in small cities 20.3%, and in metropolitan areas 22.3%. Kamphoefner, 1994. 861.

[34] Concerning migration pattern, see Kamphoefner, 2009. 47-48; a selection on scholars that focus on the homogeneity of communities beyond their language or ethnicity are Conzen, 1990; Conzen, 1976; Øverland, 2002; Höndgen [Aengenvoort], 2004 and Joranger, 2008.

[35] For the settlement patterns of German and Scandinavian immigrants, see Daniels, 2002. 149-150, 164-167, 173 and Joranger, 2008. 143-144; for German immigrants' involvement in agriculture, see Conzen 1990, 3-5.

Chain Migration

The ways in which immigrants came to the United States might have seemed chaotic to many, especially contemporaries, but for the most part, they followed certain patterns. Chain migration was a dominant mechanism, as family members, friends, and former neighbors tended to settle close to each other and reunite. Many people only migrated from Europe because family members had already established an existence in the United States and provided them with the necessary information that made their migration easier and safer. Letters played an important role for chain migration and were more than just the means for immigrants to keep in contact with their families and friends at home. They also provided information about the United States and the living situation, which was often compared positively to what the family members and friends experienced at home. Thereby, the letters could further immigration from the immigrants' countries of origin, as families chose to reunite in the United States. Additionally, the letters carried promises of job opportunities, pre-paid tickets, and knowledge of the local conditions. The pre-paid tickets especially played a large role in the migration process, as many who wanted to emigrate did not have the means. The information that arrived through the letters was also often spread further than the persons the letter was addressed to. The letters could circulate through neighborhoods and whole villages or be printed in newspapers, and sometimes actively promoted migration to the United States, often to a specific region. This is how chain migration played out – it promoted migration from specific areas in the country of origin to specific areas in the United States and thereby ensured that the ethnic communities would be homogenous, not just ethnically, but also in language, dialect, religion, and culture.[36] "Chain migration linking European villages with American settlements, it is now clear, insured the homogeneity necessary for transplanting accustomed habits and values, which influenced not only noneconomic areas of life, but even long-term economic strategies."[37]

Immigrant letters, and therefore chain migration, accounted for more immigrants to the United States than migration via agencies. The letters were considered more authentic than migration advertisements from agencies or warnings against emigration in newspapers or by authorities. The letters were written by familiar or well-known people, which made them a more reliable source of information that included recommendations about migration as well as warnings. In these letters, the issue of learning English was

[36] Gjerde, 1997. 81, 88-90, 97-98, 101; Joranger, 2008. 150-152; Aengenvoort, 1999. 156-157.
[37] Conzen, 1990. 8.

sometimes addressed as well. Heinrich Möller, a German immigrant from Hesse, wrote to his brother in 1869, three years after his arrival, asking his sibling to join him. He said:

> "[…] Certainly, in the beginning you will not like it, just like I did, because of the English language. But now I do not care if an English speaker talks to me or a German. I prefer to speak English over German and you, dear Jakob, will learn it quickly too, because my wife already knows a lot too, and she has only been in America for a year."[38]

In the early twentieth century, the immigration authorities in the United States began to question the newly arriving immigrants on whether they were joining friends or relatives. The fact that only 6% of all newcomers answered in the negative indicates the significance of chain migration at the time. 15% of all immigrants were awaited by friends and nearly 80% by relatives. Those who wrote letters from the United States to their friends and families did not want to exaggerate by making unrealistic promises about the country. Often they were very careful in their writings, to not make false promises that might cause the letters' recipients to emigrate as well. This caution can be traced back to a sense of responsibility the immigrants felt towards their friends and family members, and the fear of blame for a possibly failed emigration project. In the cases where immigrants recommended others to follow them, they would clearly specify for whom it might make sense to emigrate, and give specific reasons. Warnings, too, were sometimes just directed at specific persons, who the immigrants considered unable to endure the long journey or to deal with local circumstances.[39]

Chain migration, as a metaphor for the mechanism that describes how immigrants follow personal connections, works as a counterpart to metaphors that indicate that immigrants are merely subjects to external influences, like "push" and "pull" factors. Immigrants themselves initiate chain migration, usually without the involvement of agencies or state-run initiatives. As chain migration worked primarily through letters, it meant that immigrants who already had ties to one another would settle together in the United States, so that there was little room for arbitrary settlement where the ethnic composition of the neighborhood would be determined by chance.[40]

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[38] Letter by Heinrich Möller, January 24, 1869. In Helbich, 1988. 209.
Original wording: "[…] Freilich anfangs wir[d] es Dir nicht ganz gut gefallen den es hat mir auch nicht besser gegangen den die Englische sprache mach[t] es, aber jetzt ist es mir einerlei ob ein Englischer zu mir schpricht oder ein Deutscher ich spreche Lieber Englisch als Deutsch und Du Lieber Jakob wirst es auch ganz geschwind lernen den meine Frau kann auch schon sehr viel, und ist auch bloß ein Jahr in Amerika, […]". [sic] [All translations by myself, into correct English]

[39] For the letters' authenticity and impact, see Kamphoefner, 2009. 47-48; Kamphoefner, 1987. 69; Lovoll, 1999. 19-20; Aengenvoort, 1999. 114; for warnings and personalized advise for migration, see Mørkhagen, 2017. 228-231.

[40] Øverland, 2002. 79-80.

Yet, chain migration required that some immigrants had made the start and settled somewhere without having known someone there beforehand. An important mechanism that preceded chain migration, but also worked parallel to it, was stage-migration. A good example for stage-migration is the process in which the city of Milwaukee was formed. Many of its first settlers were immigrants that had already lived elsewhere in the United States for some time. As many immigrants had the goal to own a farm of their own, they would follow the farming frontier westwards. Many would pass through Milwaukee, which was a frontier city in the mid-nineteenth century. Those who could not find land, gave up on farming, or were simply not suited for farm labor would stay in Milwaukee, often as craftsmen. When the immigrants had built a livelihood and established a community, chain migration brought family, friends, and former neighbors to the city, who would come directly to the city, without settling elsewhere first.[41]

The Ethnically Homogenous or Homogenous Ethnic Community?

The ethnic community is a main factor in quantitative as well as qualitative analyses that examine processes of adaptation and language acquisition. In quantitative analyses, the ethnic community is seen as an obstacle for language acquisition, and as a sign that the immigrants living in it are not adapted to the American society. Qualitative analyses have a more differentiated view of what ethnic communities are, what they do, and what that means for adaptation and language acquisition. Qualitative and quantitative studies agree in that an ethnic community can offer immigrants the room to maintain languages and cultures. Labov in her quantitative study argues, that having a neighbor with the same fist language decreased the chances of immigrants to learn English. Having a neighbor with the same first language would indicate that the immigrants lived in an ethnic community. Other scholars, who take a cultural approach, such as Höndgen, point to the importance of internal differences of ethnic groups, because they influence the formation of ethnic communities to a large degree.[42]

Qualitative studies point to the importance of homogeneity of an ethnic community, which goes beyond a shared language and ethnicity. As shown in the section on chain migration, this mechanism ensured that the homogeneity of a community did not

[41] Concerning the history of Milwaukee and its immigrant population, see Conzen, 1976. 17-18, 35-38.
[42] Labov, 1998. 392; Höndgen [Aengenvoort], 2004. 18.

just include language and country of origin, but also regional background, dialects, traditions, habits, values, and church affiliation. Next to this extended understanding of homogeneity, other preconditions needed to be present to enable an ethnic community to be so self-reliant, that its inhabitants could afford to cut off contact with the Anglo-American society almost entirely. Even though a certain level of homogeneity was necessary, too much of it could be in the way of a self-sustaining community. Different socio-economic areas as well as occupations needed to be covered by members of the community, so that they did not have to rely on interactions with other communities. If there were needs, such as the provision of a certain service or good, which the ethnic community could not cover, it was forced to interact with other ethnic groups in the settlement. Therefore, a larger community was more likely to be able to provide all community services.[43]

An example is the German community in Sauk Valley, which was able to maintain the German language and elements of German culture for a long time. As late as the 1950s, a journalist commented on the ongoing use of the German language, the persistent dominance of family and church, as well as the rural lifestyle, as many German farmers did not want electrification of their farms. This persistence was helped by the high degree of homogeneity the community achieved through selective migration. The immigrants were nearly exclusively German and Catholic, as chain migration ensured that new immigrants came from the same regions and religious communities as the previous generation of immigrants. Nevertheless, the social and cultural life, though built largely on shared language, religion, and traditions, did not fully resemble a German Catholic community as it would have been in their country of origin. Parts of the ethnic community were based on American models, notably the political system, and parts of the culture were inherent to this specific community. Conzen argues that the culture in ethnic communities was created, indeed invented, locally and incorporated different aspects in every single community. Therefore, there was no such thing as a unified German-American culture. In regard to the community in Sauk Valley, Conzen argues, that developments and changes in its culture had been caused by a general trend of modernization, and do not have to be interpreted as a process of adaptation to American society. Because the community was so secluded and self-sufficient, changes in its culture could have been caused by social developments from within the community.[44]

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[43] For factors that increase homogeneity, see: Höndgen [Aengenvoort], 2004. 18; Joranger, 2008. 183-184; Aengevoort, 1999. 319; concerning the necessity of diversity in ethnic communities, see: Kamphoefner, 1987. 117; Conzen, 1976. 4.

[44] Conzen, 1990. 1, 8-9, 12, 30-31, 33; Helbich, 1997. 410; Gjerde, 1997. 129.

Next to the homogeneity and diversity that were necessary to build communities, which were largely self-sustaining, one should also consider the differences that occurred within ethnic communities. Höndgen has studied three townships in Ohio that all had a large percentage of German immigrants. Minster and New Bremen, two of these townships, had been founded by settler societies from Northwestern Germany, while New Knoxville, the third township, was only populated by German immigrants after its founding.[45] Minster and New Knoxville were divided by religious differences, as Minster was mainly settled by Catholic Germans, and New Knoxville by Reformed Protestants. This difference was largely maintained by the mechanism of chain migration, which pre-selected the new immigrants according to their confession. Their religion or faith was not enough to be welcomed in one of these settlements, as all three townships shared a regional, northwestern German, background and therefore also shared a dialect of the German language. This is, according to Höndgen, also the explanation for why these immigrants, divided by their faith, nevertheless chose to settle so closely together. The shared regional as well as socio-economic background caused a familiarity between the groups. Nevertheless, they did not engage in, for example, shared German cultural festivities. Höndgen's differentiated view on this specific geographical area of German settlement is partially based on census data, which allowed her to quantitatively examine the migration pattern of the Germans. Additionally, she uses letters, newspapers, and documents concerning the local church history to account for the social and cultural connections and barriers between the communities.[46]

Another example that points to the importance of regional factors is the story of two Catholic settlements in Dubuque County in Iowa. In 1843, a group of five families who originally came from Westphalia, but had already lived in the United States for ten years, moved to Dubuque County and founded a settlement there, after deciding on the vicinity because of its fertile soil. The settlement was called "Neue Wien",[47] but became soon known as "New Vienna". The settlers wrote to friends and family members in the United States and Germany, to ask them to join them, what many eventually did. By 1846, ten new families arrived and settled close to New Vienna. They had previously resided in St. Louis for a year and they had originally come from Bavaria. They likely chose the

[45] By 1840, the three townships consisted of 1,958 inhabitants and in 1900 of 6,039. Höndgen [Aengenvoort], 2004. 19, 30.
[46] Joranger, 2008. 183-184; Höndgen [Aengenvoort], 2004. 18-19, 22, 26-30, 43; Aengenvoort, 1999. 319.
[47] The name was chosen as reference to the Leopoldine Society, a Roman Catholic immigrant-aid organization based in Vienna. German name cited after Gjerde, 1997. 105.

location of their new settlement because a German Catholic community had already been established there. Even though they settled a little apart from the older settlement, they joined the New Vienna parish. From the beginning they felt like outsiders, both because they came from Bavaria and because they arrived later in the United States than the previous settlers. Even in 1855, when both settlements had grown, the Bavarians were the ones who were told that they could not expect to be accommodated in the church, due to limited seating.[48]

The migration of other ethnic groups was also following a pattern of regional familiarity, which resulted, according to Gjerde, in a "crazy quilt-pattern of nationality groups on the land, […] further subdivided into smaller more culturally distinct groups with common pasts, a subdivision that created even more cohesive communities."[49] He analyzed Norwegian ethnic communities in the United States and how they settled according to the areas in Norway they came from. Old clichés that referred to different customs, the mocking of each other's dialects, and a lower opinion of other groups had been transplanted from the Norwegian communities to the new settlements. Background factors such as confessions, region, and dialects subdivided the ethnic groups, as at the time, a shared national background was too loose a concept to bind these communities together. National identity would start to play a role only once the concept of the nation state would be established.[50]

Another issue needs to be considered when analyzing Scandinavian immigrants. In contrast to ethnic groups being subdivided by regions, Scandinavian immigrants, due to similarities in language and culture, as well as the interconnected histories of their countries, would often settle together with other Scandinavian immigrants, disregarding their respective national background. An additional factor here is the smaller total number of Scandinavian immigrants compared to those of other ethnic groups. Even if a regional background separated Norwegian immigrants from each other, they might live in a community with Swedish immigrants, as Swedes generally belonged to the same church. Intermarriages between immigrants from different Scandinavian countries were not uncommon. A common Scandinavian culture bound the immigrants together, at least until

[48] Gjerde, 1997. 105-106.
[49] Gjerde, 1985. 140.
[50] Gjerde, 1985. 140-141, 165, 167; Joranger, 2008. 169-170; German-American immigrants also settled in patterns that agreed with their previous settlements in their country of origin, which caused a transfer of specific regional cultures to American settlements. Kamphoefner, 1987. 104-105.

the national identity of the separate groups started to matter, such as when Norway struggled for independence from Sweden, which also influenced how the immigrants in the United States interacted with one another.[51]

The Ethnic Community – Means or Obstacle for Adaptation

Different studies with a cultural approach have examined German communities in the Midwest and found that the ethnic community was not an obstacle to adaptation, contradicting interpretations based on quantitative studies. In contrast, it was a necessity that could further the adaptation process as "an important transitory phase".[52] Through the local creation of culture in the ethnic communities, the adaptation process did not just describe the transition from one society to another. First, the newly arriving immigrants had to adapt to life in the ethnic community, that provided familiarity in the form of language and religion, and several known traditions, but that was otherwise very different from the society of their country of origin. The ethnic community offered the immigrants the opportunity to get to know the United States, its political system, its history, and its culture, in the immigrants' own native language, and in surroundings that provided familiarity and security.[53]

Whereas Conzen points out in her study of Sauk Valley that the homogeneity of the German community ensured maintenance of language and culture, she uses the metaphor of a "decompression chamber"[54] in her study of Milwaukee to describe the role the ethnic community played for the immigrants. This means that the immigrants could adjust to life in the United States at their own pace. Conzen argues that the community was not just helping adaptation, it was also necessary for its success. Immigrants often arrived in the United States unable to speak English and unfamiliar with the political system and the local culture, and would not have succeeded with settling down without the ethnic community. She lists factors that determine with which speed immigrants move along the "accommodation-assimilation continuum":[55] "These include the selectivity of emigration

[51] Daniels, 2002. 182; Joranger, 2010. 237. For the immigrants' marriage patterns, see: Thorvaldsen, 1998. 6-7, 10.
[52] Daniels, 2002. 170.
[53] Helbich, 1997. 410; Kamphoefner, 1987. 190-191.
[54] Conzen, 1976. 3; also called "ethic decompression chamber" by Kamphoefner, 1987. 191. Gordon, too, points to the two-fold role of the ethnic community, as providing familiarity on the one hand, and introducing parts of Anglo-American culture to the immigrants on the other hand. Gordon, 1972. 244.
[55] Conzen determined different stages on the way to assimilation, where assimilation is not the inevitable outcome of the adaptation process. The first stage is initial accommodation, the second absorption into the economy, the third behavioral acculturation (regarding norms and customs) combined with personal adjustments to the new life, which is then, but not necessarily, followed by assimilation. Conzen. 1976. 2.

– the personal attributes and skills of the immigrant, the motives and aspirations which accompany his move, his cultural and moral baggage – as well as the demographic composition of the emigration, its rate and pattern of settlement, and the character and attitudes of the receiving society."[56] The factors listed here determined the speed of the immigrants' adaptation to American society. The demographic data plays a role in the quantitative as well as qualitative approach, but for her study, Conzen adds the cultural and moral baggage as well as motives and aspirations for the emigration as relevant factors that determine the speed, or likelihood, of adaptation.[57]

In Helbich's study on adaptation, as seen through immigrant letters, the ethnic community as a concept helps to categorize the immigrants according to how far adapted to American society they were. He classifies the immigrants into the following groups:

1. The remigrants, who usually did not put any effort into learning English and did not identify with the German-American community.
2. The would-be remigrants, who would have liked to return home but lacked the financial means or were hindered by the political situation.
3. The less adapted migrants, who did not engage with the rest of society and had few ties to the German-American community.
4. The German-Americans, who spoke little or no English at all, but were well integrated into the German-American community.
5. The integrated German-Americans, who were fully integrated into the German-American community and had additional social and business contacts with the Anglo-American world, and therefore often learned English.
6. The cosmopolitan German-American, who spoke English and engaged with Anglo-American society, but still managed to maintain parts of the German language and culture at home and in the family.
7. The (German?)-Americans, who spoke English well, were married to Anglo-Americans, belonged to an American church, participated in political affairs, and maybe had but a few contacts to the German-American community.[58]

Helbich uses cognitive, identificational, social, and structural factors to categorize the immigrants.[59] His findings show how adaptation, language skills, and the ethnic community are connected, but also where they are independent from each other. For example,

[56] Conzen. 1976, 2.
[57] Conzen. 1976, 2.
[58] Helbich, 1997. 411-415.
[59] Cognitive factors include, for example, English proficiency, identificational factors include the immigrants' attitude towards the host society, social factors include relations and contacts, and structural factors include political participation and employment. Helbich, 1997. 409.

English and non-English speakers were found inside as well as outside of ethnic communities. Immigrants who were not part of the German-American community or at least interacted very little with it, could have either been very well integrated into the Anglo-American society and speak English, or not be integrated at all and not speak English. Helbich demonstrates how living in an ethnic community does not stand in the way of adaptation and language acquisition, but that it can support the larger adaptation process, even though it might be slowing it down.[60]

Similarities in the adaptation process can be seen by immigrants that migrated from the area of Westphalia to Missouri, as studied by Kamphoefner. The German-American community was, to some extent, Americanized. German farmers, for example, adopted American farming techniques and other German immigrants used their professional knowledge and skills to fill niches on the American market. Their private life often did not include extensive contact to the American society, but, according to Kamphoefner, the German community itself rather than the individual immigrants adapted to American society, often in the course of two or three generations. The choice to spend their social lives among other German-Americans was given to the immigrants by the ethnic community. Ideally, it had a certain size and balance between ethnic and regional homogeneity and a socio-economic and occupational heterogeneity, to provide a sufficient social environment for the immigrants.[61]

It needs to be noted that no ethnic community was able to shield their inhabitants entirely from the Anglo-American society or other ethnic groups. The community was always part of a larger settlement, and no settlement would have inhabitants that only belonged to the same ethnic group. Municipal issues and trade, for example, forced the immigrants to interact with other groups of immigrants or Americans. This exchange was inevitable, and religious, linguistic, and cultural barriers often had to be overcome. This is also true for the Midwest, and even though its vast space and available land offered the immigrants much room for seclusion, they were always a part of larger settlements and a larger community. Even though there were parts of cities that seemed like they were ethnically homogenous, one group of immigrants would never make up 100% of its inhabitants. In Milwaukee's north-western districts in 1860, for example, Germans made up over 75% of the heads of households, which was unusually high, but still left significant room for other ethnicities. In Cincinnati in 1890, there were two districts that were dominated

[60] Helbich, 1997. 410; Kamphoefner, 1987. 191.
[61] Kamphoefner, 1987. 133-134; Conzen, 1976. 4.

with 80% and 71% by Germans, the second generation included. This late in the 19th century, concentrations that high had become very unusual.[62]

Even though the numbers show that no ethnicity could fill a space in a settlement completely, the individual perceptions of other immigrants could differ. In 1874, Johan S. Lindtner, an immigrant from Norway, wrote a letter from Milwaukee to his wife in Chicago:

> "Milwaukee has 2 hundred thousand immigrants, of which 70 thousand are German, 2 thousand Scandinavians of which the majority are Norwegians and the rest are Irish and English and American. The Germans dominate everything that has to do with politics, even the language, thus it is very seldom that one can hear English on the streets, but German we hear everywhere […]."[63]

His account of his experience in Milwaukee points to the significant impact the German immigrants had on the appearance of Milwaukee as a German city, even though Germans made up only a third of its population.[64]

[62] Lovoll, 2006. 12, 65; Helbich, 1988. 21-22.
[63] Letter by Johan S. Lindtner, April 10, 1874. In Øverland, 1993. 388-389.
Original wording: "Milwaukee har 2 Hundrede Tusind Indvaandere hvoraf 70 Tusind er Tysdskere, 2 Tusen Skandinavere hvoraf mesteparten er Norske og resten er Erske og Engelske og Amerikanere. Tyskerne Dominerer alt hvad der henhører til Poletik, ja saagar Sproget, det er saaledes meget sjeldent at høre paa Gaden Engelsk Sprog, men Tydsk hører vi overalt […]." [sic]
[64] According to the Census data from 1860, a third of Milwaukee's' inhabitants were German immigrants. Helbich, 1988. 21.

1.3. In How Far Can the Immigrants' Environment and Demographic Characteristics Pre-determine Their Language Acquisition?

Age, sex, and native language, as employed in quantitative analyses provide very little information on why some immigrants learned English and others did not. Age was relevant in regard to school attendance. Young age made immigrants more likely to learn English because they attended school, and either the instruction was in English or it was taught as a second language. The immigrants' children had therefore little choice when it came to language acquisition. The small difference between the sexes in every ethnic group in terms of likelihood can be proven by the quantitative analysis. Nevertheless, it can only make assumptions about the reasons.

There were significant numbers of women who did not speak English, employed and unemployed, and a greater number who did speak English. However, the quantitative analysis can only speculate about the reasons. The qualitative analysis on the other hand, can provide us with very specific examples, which may or may not be representative of other cases, but gives us definite reasons for the immigrants' decision or need to learn English. There is no indication that immigrants considered factors like their own age, sex, or native language, when they thought about learning English. In those cases, the demographic characteristics of the immigrants lose much of their relevance.

Quantitative analyses, as stated before, consider the ethnic community either an obstacle for language acquisition or an indicator that immigrants were less adapted. This chapter demonstrates how the ethnic community must be more closely determined before it can be used as a factor in this manner. For the community to be self-sufficient and reach a high degree of seclusion from the rest of society, it needed to fulfill many criteria. It needed to be homogenous in regard to language, religion, and region, but it needed a certain economic and social diversity to provide the community with all necessities of life. Even then, every community was different, as they were built from different regional cultures and made up to varying degrees by building blocks from both the American society and the society of the immigrants' country of origin.

The analysis based largely on cultural studies has demonstrated that the ethnic community might not have been an obstacle, it could even have been a necessity for successful adaptation. It is important to differentiate between language acquisition and adaptation, even though the scholarly consensus is to treat them equally. Living in an ethnic community increased the chances that immigrants succeeded with their new life in the

United States, as it integrated them politically and economically into the American system. The few contact points with Anglo-Americans that could not be avoided slowly introduced the immigrants to American culture. There were English and non-English speakers who were both well integrated into an ethnic community. Instead of viewing the community as an obstacle for language acquisition, one should rather view it as a space that enabled immigrants to maintain parts of their culture, especially their language and religion. It provided a space for language maintenance, which itself was not an obstacle for language acquisition, as the bilingual or even trilingual behavior of some immigrants shows. Therefore, the ethnic community needs to be reconsidered in terms of language maintenance and adaptation, but less so as an obstacle for English acquisition.

2. The Immigrants' Cultural and Religious Lives

This chapter discusses the importance of the immigrants' cultural and religious life. This includes the values and beliefs they transferred from their countries of origin as well as the cultural and religious practices of the communities they settled in. As the chapter on patterns of settlement shows, the life in the ethnic community did not necessarily cause a low proficiency in English for its members. Those immigrants, who were considered well integrated into, for example, a German community, may have spoken no English whatsoever or may have been fluent in the language. The ethnic community took some of the immediate necessity to learn English away, but learning English did not have to be a question of necessity.

Focus of this chapter are the immigrants' mindsets regarding learning English, based on their beliefs and values. After discussing possible ways in which culture and religion could have impacted the immigrants' opinion on the English language, often also the Anglo-American culture and society, the connection between culture, religion, identity, and language is discussed. Cultural and religious issues are discussed separately, even though there are cases where they overlap. The question of identities derives from the different theoretical approaches about adaptation, acculturation, and assimilation, which assume that immigrants had at least two identities: one that complies with the society they originated from as well as an American one.[65]

[65] See for example Joranger, 2010. 247.

2.1. Religion

Religious issues could not only be reasons for immigrants to leave their country, they also shaped their lives in the United States. In the quantitative studies that are discussed in this thesis, religion does not play a role. While church affiliation and denomination are quantifiable, faith is not. Church records as well as other regional sources can provide the necessary data to quantitatively examine the religious division of a set region. But faith, with its specific local differences, was also a factor that determined where immigrants settled, helped to form communities, and provided the sense of belonging that would make the community their home. Some communities incorporated members of one church but did not have to be ethnically homogenous. German and Irish Catholics, for example, would attend the same church, with either German or English language sermons. German Catholics were unlikely to be members of a German ethnic community if its denomination was not Catholic.[66]

The immigrants' faith was transferred from the immigrants' countries of origin to the United States. Religion and faith belonged into the immigrants' private spheres and were therefore less susceptible to, for example, a change in the immigrants' environment. It can be compared in strength to family bonds and made the respective church an important factor in migration and community formation. As many churches were transplanted from the immigrants' countries of origin, including their organizational structure and often clerics, they also brought the immigrants' native languages with them. The immigrants' churches in the ethnic communities played an important role for the preservation of culture and language. In the Midwest, members of several denominations and faiths could be found. In 1890, more than 70% of the people in the Midwest were either Catholics, Methodists, Lutherans, Baptists, or Presbyterians.[67]

Compared to other immigrant groups, German immigrants were internally divided by several factors. Their different regional backgrounds resulted in cultural and linguistic differences, sometimes even in a way that they had to speak English to one another. They were also separated by church affiliation and denomination. The largest group among German immigrants were Lutherans, followed by Catholics and Jews. There were divides among the American Lutheran churches, especially between the German Lutherans that arrived in the nineteenth century and the already established Lutheran churches that had

[66] Daniels, 2002. 153-155; Aengenvoort, 1999. 277; Gjerde, 1997. 19.
[67] For religious divisions of German immigrants, see Doerries, 2004. 4-5, 10-11; Helbich, 1997. 410; for religious landscape of the Midwest, see Gjerde, 1997. 5, 110-111.

existed before the American Revolution. These had undergone some transformations, for example, some now held services partly or completely in English. They had also been liberalized in some regards, which made them more similar to other churches than the traditional Lutheran church. Those Lutherans, who wanted to preserve the traditional ways, founded the Missouri Synod in 1847.[68]

Some Catholic Germans faced problems of a different kind, as Irish Catholics dominated most Catholic churches in the United States. Even though there were problems, there were no organizational schisms. In 1886, a German-born vicar from the diocese of Milwaukee complained to the Vatican on behalf of a number of German priests about the reluctance of the Irish in the Catholic Church to allow space for the German language and customs, but he was without success. The German language in sermons could only survive in places with a high percentage of German Catholics. German Jews had a large influence on the Jewish community in the United States but were largely concentrated in the urban areas of the East Coast, less so in the Midwest. Only a few of them were found in rural areas, as they were rarely professionally involved with agriculture.[69]

Religion and culture were often closely connected, as the church in many communities was the main stage for the social life. Swedish and Norwegian immigrants, just like the German immigrants, would establish churches, schools, and an ethnic press. The Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minnesota, were two Swedish colleges that were created in the 1860s and were attached to the Augustana Synod. Most Swedish churches were Lutheran, and the Augustana Synod had been founded together with immigrants from Norway. The Norwegian Lutheran church itself was organized in several synods, some variations of which had already existed in Norway.[70]

Norwegians were the group of immigrants with the highest percentage of rural settlers. In rural Norwegian communities, the church would act as the main institution for the immigrants' social lives and helped preserve Norwegian traditions and language. "[…] [T]he dominance of the Norwegian Lutheran Church had a stabilizing and conserving effect on the settlement pattern and the identity of the Norwegian immigrants and their descendants in the settlements."[71] Norwegian cultural associations and clubs were

[68] Doerries, 2004. 4-5, 10-11; Aengenvoort, 1999. 277; Daniels, 2002. 152-153.
[69] Daniels, 2002. 153-155, 157.
[70] Daniels, 2002. 171-172.
[71] Joranger, 2010. 232-233.

common in urban areas, where they were necessary to ensure the preservation of tradition and language, as the church exercised less influence there. Danish immigrants, by comparison, were less active in founding ethnic organizations, which Daniels suspects is caused by many Danish immigrants not being affiliated to any church. The Danish Lutheran church was divided into two branches, which had different opinions on ethnic heritage and its maintenance.[72]

The Danish case illustrates well how different the effect on language maintenance and acquisition could be from two branches of the same denomination, which makes denomination a difficult category or factor in a quantitative analysis, if it was not further specified and subdivided. Due to the smaller number of Danish immigrants to the United States, settlements with large Danish communities were uncommon, which could be a cause of the quicker adaptation of Danish immigrants to the Anglo-American society. In a case study of two villages where large Danish communities formed nonetheless, Mackintosh shows how the schism in the Danish Lutheran Church could influence the speed of adaptation. The schism was, in a sense, imported from Denmark, as clergy and missionaries from Denmark brought their sets of values and beliefs with them. To which church one belonged was to some extent determined by socio-economic factors. The Danish Lutheran Church was divided into two movements: The Inner Mission movement, which was pietistic, very much focused on the words of the Bible and followed by the poorer part of Denmark's population, which had less access to formal education. The Grundtvigian, movement on the other hand, was receptive to cultural matters and most of its followers have had received education from a folk high school.[73]

Until 1872, when the Danish Lutheran Church was founded in the United States, the Danish immigrants would visit Norwegian Lutheran churches. The Danish clergy that arrived after the founding of the Danish Lutheran Church brought with them the schism that divided the church in Denmark. The unified church of the villages Elk Horn and Kimballton split up in 1894,[74] resulting in one village for each branch of Danish Lutheranism. The analysis of statistics by Mackintosh showed that the villages, from that point on, had different speeds of adaptation.[75] Mackintosh traces these differences back to the

Original wording: "[…] [D]en norsklutherske kirkens dominans hadde en stabiliserende og konserverende effekt på bosetningsmønsteret og identiteten til norske immigranter og deres etterkommere i settlementene."

[72] Daniels, 2002. 182.

[73] Mackintosh, 1996. 99-101.

[74] The villages were founded in 1868, and Danish immigrants made up 90% of their inhabitants. Mackintosh, 1996. 100-101.

[75] The author uses the term assimilation. Mackintosh, 1996.

different sets of values of the two branches of Danish Lutheranism. One considered Danish culture and language important and to be protected, while the other thought that their values could be expressed just as well in English as in Danish. The result was that the members of the pietistic branch adapted more easily to life in the United States, which improved the economic success of the village as a whole. The other village slowed down its rate of adaptation, due to their protection of the Danish language and their emphasis on the preservation of the Danish culture.[76]

While the different churches of most immigrant groups believed that language was connected to faith and losing one of them meant to also lose the other, the Inner Mission movement of the Danish Lutheran Church was an exception. As the other churches attempted to maintain their services in the native languages of their respective countries of origin, native languages were preserved for a long time in the ethnic communities and transferred to the succeeding generations. According to Gjerde, living in an ethnic community with a church that held services in the immigrants' native language would mean that unemployed women were very unlikely to ever learn English. Because of the connection between faith and language, parochial schools would often have instruction in the immigrants' native languages too. Thereby, the immigrants' children, either born in the parents' country of origin or the United States, would be involved in the process of language maintenance. If immigrants were not able to attend churches that had their roots in their country of origin, then it was likely that learned English faster, as they partook in English services or sermons.[77]

[76] Mackintosh, 1996. 104-105, 110-111.
[77] Gjerde, 1997. 108-109; Doerries, 2004. 16-17.

2.2. Education

To German immigrants their native language was an important part of their regional and national culture. Most immigrants wanted it to last longer than just the first generation and saw to it that their children were instructed in German. According to Daniels, the successful use of one's native language in the United States – language maintenance – was bound to three preconditions: numbers, desire, and a high degree of segregation. Germans happened to be the majority in some rural areas, but not in the cities. German religious schools existed and the number of Germans in a settlement was often high enough for them to be able to demand German instruction also in the public schools. Public schools, on their own, would sometimes offer German instruction to bring more immigrant children to attend the school. When there was a large enough number of parents who wanted instruction in German, then they were able to put pressure on the school to comply with their wish. In Cincinnati, for example, a German and an English school system developed parallelly. Parochial schools could instruct in English, but often chose instruction purely in German. Often German and English language instruction would exist in parallel. In a letter from 1888, a German immigrant mentions that all of his children spoke German and learned how to read and write German in school, but were still more comfortable with speaking English, because "[…] it simply is the country's language."[78]

The intensity with which German and English were taught could vary from place to place. In the cities of Cincinnati, Cleveland, Baltimore, and Indianapolis, the schools which taught German divided the school days equally between English and German language instruction. In Chicago and St. Louis, only one hour of German instruction was given per day, and the rest of the time the children of German immigrants would experience a normal school day with their Anglo-American co-students. In 1900, approximately 40,000 students in Chicago learned German, of which only 15,000 had German ancestry and around half of them were Anglo-Americans.[79]

Parochial schools were established by Scandinavian and German immigrants from different denominations. The main reason was that clerics in particular considered the public schools a bad influence on the children, and would take authority from the parents

[78] Letter by Franz Joseph Loewen, April 29, 1888. In Helbich, 1988. 196-197.
Original wording: "[…] weil es eben die Landessprache ist."
On German immigrants requesting German language instruction and necessary conditions for language maintenance, see Daniels, 2002. 159-160; Helbich, 1988. 25-27; Letter by Theodor Lagemann from Berea, Ohio, 06.12.1904. Cited after: Aengenvoort, 1999. 276.
[79] Helbich, 1988. 26.

away, who in most religions were considered, next to the church, as the mainly responsible providers of education for children. There were slight differences between, for example, Scandinavian and German Lutherans, and German Catholics. The advocacy for parochial schools was strongest from German immigrants, who worried about the influence of the public schools and state intervention in general. Scandinavian immigrants tended to establish fewer parochial schools, also because they were less worried about possible state intervention. This was, according to Gjerde, connected to the histories of the German and Scandinavian countries, who experienced different political structures and different relations between the people and the state. Scandinavian and German immigrants agreed, however, that parochial schools were not just important for religious education, but also as a means of maintaining their native languages.[80]

A student from New Knoxville reported in a letter in 1904: "The area where my home is, is mostly German, and in everyday life's conversation one speaks Plattdeutsch. Most people can speak English, German and Plattdeutsch. Father can also speak and write the English language. The schools put emphasis on the English language."[81] Those who were living in towns with large German communities were not oblivious to the English language. For most inhabitants it played the role of the official language, which was spoken in school and public, whereas German, specifically its regional dialect, was spoken at home. The German language that was taught at school and spoken in church services was High German, which was very different from some regional dialects, which forced many immigrants and their children to be trilingual.[82]

There was a tendency to restrict German instruction in schools, beginning towards the end of the 1880s. Many states enacted laws that enforced instruction in the English language. Some states, like Wisconsin, tried to enact laws that demanded English-language reading, writing, arithmetic, and the history of the United States.[83] If a school did not comply, it would not be considered a school under Wisconsin law. Even still, shortly

[80] Gjerde, 1997. 272-280.
[81] Letter by Theodor Lagemann from Berea, Ohio, 06.12.1904. Cited after: Aengenvoort, 1999. 276. Original wording: "Die Gegend wo meine Heimat ist, ist noch meistens deutsch und im alltäglichen Gespräch reden die Leute Plattdeutsch. Die Meisten können Englisch, Deutsch und Plattdeutsch reden. So auch der Vater kann die Englische Sprache sprechen und schreiben. In den Schulen wird hauptsächlich auf die Englische Sprache gewicht gelegt." [sic]
[82] Aengenvoort, 1999. 276.
[83] Wisconsin's Bennett Law of 1890. The law repealed after a great controversy in Wisconsin. Daniels, 2002. 160.

before the First World War, German was the most often studied language in high schools.[84]

Norwegian immigrants, too, would send their children to public schools, and considered it important that their children acquired English, but only if they also received religious education in Norwegian. Two letters from Norwegian immigrants mention additionally that adults were allowed to visit the schools too, to learn English, and that they would often attend them during the winter. Tosten Levorson Hvashod and Hellik Olsen Lehovd wrote in their letter to a friend in Norway: "We have Norwegian teachers for religion for our children, as well as regular English schools where everyone has free access to send their children, but also adults can go there for free to learn the country's language."[85] Nearly two years later, Hellik Olsen Lehovd wrote to his family: "[…] but last spring I was with a Yankee (that is an American) for about 6 weeks. I can tell you that I have learnt to speak and understand the English language very well, and I can also read a little in it; because I went to school for a bit in both last winters."[86]

[84] Daniels, 2002. 160.

[85] Letter by Tosten Levorsen Hvashovd and Hellik Olsen Lehovd, January 14, 1854. In Øverland, 1992. 309-312.
Original wording: "Vi have norske Religionslærere for vore Børn, samt engelske faste Skoler hvor enhver har fri Adgang at sende sine Børn ja ogsaa voxne kan gaa der frit for at lære Landets Sprog." [sic]

[86] Letter by Hellik Olsen Lehovd, December 12, 1855. In Øverland, 1992. 368-370.
Original wording: "[…] men forleden Vaar var jeg hos en Yaenkee (det er Americaner) i vel 6 Uger. Jeg kan og fortælle Eder at jeg har lært at tale og forstaae det engelske Sprog temmelig godt, og jeg kan og læse lidt i det; da jeg har gaaet lidt i Skole begge de forrig Vintre." [sic]

2.3. Culture

German cultural organizations often outnumbered the ones of other immigrant groups. In the 1880s, four out of five foreign language newspapers were in German. German-American authors also provided high numbers of novels, autobiographies, and short stories. The Swedish language newspaper, for example, never reached a high circulation and in total 1,100 were published. The Norwegian-American press consisted of some 800 publications, the largest of which was likely *Decorah-Posten* with more than 40,000 subscribers. There were also a number of bilingual papers, which aimed to reach a broader audience and relied financially on advertisements, which they could get more of if they accepted them in more than one language. The numbers on non-English publications are often not approximations. It is difficult to keep track of these publications, which were often short-lived, changed their names, or merged. They were an important medium that emerged from inside immigrant communities, especially towards the end of the nineteenth century, and many of these papers were well-established and covered a range of topics, including public issues and politics of the United States.[87]

Thereby, they served two purposes: They would introduce new immigrants in their native language to social and political topics in the United States and thereby bring the immigrants further in their adaptation process. But it was also a means of preserving language for those immigrants who had been in the United States for a longer time. In terms of language acquisition, it did not require the immigrants to be able to read English, but that does not imply that it was an obstacle for language acquisition. Rather, it should be seen as a tool for integration as well as language maintenance.[88] Hellik Olsen Lehovd wrote to family members in 1856 and pointed to the advantages of having the Norwegian language press. "We know a lot about the whole affair of the war in Europe, because we have a Norwegian press and Norwegian editors here who receive pieces of news with every post from Europa as well as all other parts of the world. It is very convenient for us to receive news in our own language about the most important events."[89]

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[87] Daniels, 2002. 161-163, 171-172, 174-175; Aengenvoort, 1999. 280-281; "The Immigrant Press" *Dictionary of American Immigration History*, 1990. 340-344.
[88] Aengenvoort, 1999. 279.
[89] Letter by Hellik Olsen Lehovd, May 14, 1856. In Øverland, 1992. 384-386.
Original wording: "Vi kjende og meget godt til det hele Forhold angaaende Krigen i Europa, da vi have norsk Presse og norske Bladredactører her som med hver Post erholde Efterretning saavel fra Europa som fra enhver Verdensdeel, hvilket er os meget hyggeligt da vi i vort eget Sprog kan faa Oplysning om de vigtigste Begivenheder." [sic]

Many places in the United States had German singing societies and *Sängerfeste* and Germans contributed much to American musical culture and symphony orchestras. German settlements usually had German language theater plays, but these did not continue after the First World War. All these cultural enterprises and their success can not only be explained by the large number of Germans immigrants in the United States. There appears to have been a certain arrogance among many Germans based on their belief in the superiority of their culture in comparison to Anglo-American culture. Many of the German immigrants had attended gymnasia or universities and came from urban areas and the middle-class. The cultural tensions between German-Americans and Anglo-Americans showed regarding issues like prohibition and the continental versus the Puritan Sunday. Ideas of a German state in the United States, or maybe a German colony, existed, but only among a small group. They were never realized, and many considered them as impossible.[90]

Heike Bungert estimates that the political refugees from Germany, the "48ers", were the main actors in founding German clubs, *Vereine*. These did not just offer a possibility to maintain aspects of the German culture and traditions, they also helped new immigrants with their transition into the American society and German-American community. Information about housing, job opportunities, and political issues was distributed in these clubs. They were therefore an important part of the German-Americans' lives. Clubs were also the main organizers of numerous festivals, whose purpose was to unify the immigrants and maintain the ethnicity. To unify the German-American society, the German-American local elite such as doctors, lawyers, and teachers, referred to the shared traditions as German or German-American. German culture and ethics, as performed and lived at the festivals, were not just seen as superior to the Anglo-American ones, many thought Americans would profit from adopting them into their culture. Different clubs organized different kinds of festivals, some focusing more on music, others on gymnastics, and some on literature or even specific writers like Schiller. Thereby, German-Americans were encouraged to maintain the German language, pass it on to their children, and maintain German instruction in schools.[91]

In the end, not all of these festivals and celebrations managed to unify all levels of a local German-American community. Organized by the well-educated and wealthy,

[90] Daniels, 2002. 162-164; Kamphoefner, 1987. 106-108; Bungert, 2017. 65-66.
[91] Bungert, 2017. 65-66, 71-74. The "48ers" also had a large influence on the German immigrant press and politics. Helbich, 1988. 13.

the festivals often failed to draw German immigrants from other classes of society. Differences of opinion could also be found inside the clubs, thus, there was no unified image of German or German-American culture. In addition, the cultural life of a German community was often orientated on the cultural life of the specific area in Germany the immigrants came from. Therefore, it is difficult to speak of a German culture in America, as many different local traditions had been transplanted according to settlement patterns based on chain migration, which made the culture of German communities rather diverse.[92]

For many German immigrants it was important to marry other Germans, or descendants of German immigrants, when they had arrived alone in the United States. This is illustrated by two letters from Ludwig Dilger, who came to the United States around 1880, probably to avoid military draft and improve his economic situation. He settled in St. Louis, which had a large German population, and there he married the oldest daughter of a German immigrant who migrated in 1860. In a letter to his brother Wilhelm, he complains that the family repeatedly inquired if his wife was really German: "Why do you always ask if my wife is a German? The name says it after all. For sure, she was born here and speaks German as well as any of you and is proud of her German heritage."[93] On the same day he wrote a letter to his other brother Albert: "Dear brother, you asked in your letter if my wife is German. *Burmeister* is clearly no Indian name nor an English [one]. For sure, she was born here, by Low-German parents. […] She would have liked to write you all, but she cannot write German, because the public schools here do not teach German."[94]

In rural areas, Norwegians settled closely together, and their social lives would mainly be determined by the Lutheran church. But in Chicago, where in 1900 some 22,000 Norwegian immigrants lived,[95] they founded clubs too, as the hold of the church was not

[92] Bungert, 2017. 72-73; Kamphoefner, 1987. 104-105.
[93] Letter by Ludwig Dilger, October 15, 1891. In Helbich, 1988. 469.
Original wording: "Was fragt ihr den immer ob meine Frau Deutsch ist? Der Name sagt es doch. Freilich ist sie hier geboren, und spricht so schön Deutsch wie irgend eins von Euch und ist stolz auf ihre Deutsche Abstammung."
[94] Letter by Ludwig Dilger, October 15, 1891. In Helbich, 1988. 468.
Original Wording: "Lieber Bruder, Du frägst in Deinem Briefe, ob meine Frau Deutsch ist [.] *Burmeister* ist doch gewiss kein Indianer Name auch kein Englischer. Freilich ist sie hier geboren, von Plattdeutschen Eltern […] Sie hätte Euch schon gern einmal geschrieben, aber sie kann nicht Deutsch schreiben, weil hier in den öffentlichen Schulen kein Deutsch gelehrt wird." [Italics in original] [sic]
For background information on Ludwig Dilger, see Helbich, 1988, 458-461.
[95] Additionally to the 22,000 immigrants from Norway, nearly twice as many second-generation Norwegian Americans lived there too. Joranger, 2010. 233.

as strong in urban environments. These clubs provided, similar to the German ones, security in the sense of providing useful information and support of different kinds, as well as the means to preserve certain cultural aspects and their language. Norwegian immigrants, in both rural and urban areas, usually lived in similar patterns as they did in their country of origin. Immigrants from the same area in Norway settled close to another, even in Chicago, so that rural Norwegian patterns of settlement were transferred there. An example is the *Bjørgvin Singing Society*, which was limited to men who were born in the city of Bergen. Additionally, class divided the Norwegian immigrants in Chicago, as the social "elite" and the working-class gathered in different clubs and associations. Some organizations were also founded together with Danish and Swedish immigrants, due to their relatively similar cultures and languages, probably also because they felt more connected when they contrasted themselves to the Anglo-American society and other ethnic groups. This ended towards the end of the nineteenth century, as a Norwegian national identity grew in importance as Norway struggled for independence from Sweden.[96]

[96] Lovoll, 1988. 165-166, 205-210, 253-255; Joranger, 2008. 169-170; Joranger, 2010. 231-237.

2.4. Norwegians, "Norskamerikanere", or Americans? The Relation of Religion, Culture, Identity, and Language.

The question asked in the title could also be asked for German-Americans, as "Deutschamerikaner" established itself as a word in the German language just as "Norskamerikanere" did in the Norwegian language. Together with the issues of culture and religion, the different concepts of *identity* need to be discussed. Reviewing the results of Helbich's study on immigrant adaptation, identification with either the American, German-American, or German society seemed to correlate largely with English proficiency. When an immigrant was well-integrated into a German-American community, that gave little indication if he or she spoke English or not. If he or she identified with Anglo-American society to any degree, it was quite likely that he or she also spoke English, at least to some extent. This was possible even if the immigrant was an integrated member of a German-American community and participated actively in its social and cultural life. Identifying with German culture or attending a church in a German community was compatible with identifying with the Anglo-American society. "To identify with Anglo-American society" is a difficult concept, as it is less tangible than other factors and is seldomly stated as such in sources. An indicator that an immigrant identified with Anglo-American society could be that he or she was interested in political events in the United States, probably because he or she felt that it would affect them too. Immigrants who identified only as German, or German-American, were less likely to learn English. Some of them were fairly apolitical, or only interested in news from their home, and were therefore not interested in learning English. Some even actively avoided it.[97]

Helbich's study showed that multiple identities were possible, and did not have to be in competition with one another. Other scholars share his view. According to Gjerde, immigrants lived with two identities: the ethnic one and the American one. These could stand in different relation to each other, but one did not have to be in the way of the other. In correspondence with historian Kate Everest in 1893, Ernest Mayerhoff, spokesman of German communities in Wisconsin, explained how both allegiances strengthened each other. His German neighbors, for example, were prepared to learn the English language and American manners but wanted to keep the German language and Lutheran faith. In his view, this would result in them combining the best of both cultures. To identify with

[97] Letter by Mathilde Franziska Anneke, Milwaukee, April 3, 1850. Cited after Conzen, 1976. 38. Discussion of Helbich's study on pages 28-29.

both cultures could be seen as generally supportive of the adaptation process, as the immigrants learned to "[…] identify with their ethnic past in the context of their adopted nation […]."[98]

Joranger agrees with Gjerde, that different identities were not necessarily opposed to each other. But he considers more than two identities, as the immigrants, in this case Norwegian immigrants, also identified with their ethnic communities in the United States. This resulted in an American identity, a regional identity based on the region in Norway the immigrants came from and probably had in common with their neighbors in the United States, and an ethnic identity that bound them to the overall Norwegian-American community in the United States with its own, distinct culture and traditions. In regard to German immigrant communities, Conzen doubts that there was any shared ethnic identity. The immigrants' identity would be focused on the specific community they lived in in the United States, which was unlike other German-American communities. As already mentioned, the communities differed not just in size and homogeneity, but they also had specific local cultures and traditions. In general, though, one can assume that immigrants in the Midwest identified strongly with their community, if it was the local community or the statewide ethnic community.[99]

The number and nature of possible identities immigrants could take on is less relevant when focusing only on language acquisition. To identify in any degree with the United States, and to understand oneself as a part of it, was a powerful motivation for immigrants to learn English. Exceptions might be found, and possibly not everyone was able to learn the language to the same extent. But those immigrants who "felt American", were interested in social and political issues in the United States, and wanted to partake in politics and in public life, were also willing to learn English. This did not have to stand in any opposition to being part of an ethnic community and actively participating in its cultural events, wanting to maintain one's native language, and attending the same church as in the country of origin. Still, immigrants could live in the United States without being part of the American society. Ethnic communities, with their provision of familiarity of cultural and religious practices, gave those immigrants the room to isolate themselves. This opens the question of what the motivations and intentions were of immigrants who did not want to become a part of the United States and its society or learn its language.

[98] Gjerde, 1997. 61-64.
[99] Joranger, 2010. 247; Conzen, 1990. 30-31.

3. Motives, Intentions, and Plans for the "New Life"

There are two approaches for discussing why immigrants came to the United States and what they intended to do there. One was dominant in academic research until the 1970s, and focuses on the so-called "push" and "pull" factors that it considers the main reasons for migration. From the 1970s onward, new approaches treated immigrants more often as agents in the migration process, who were not merely responding to certain "push" and "pull" factors. Immigrants were then considered to be acting independently from these factors, which adds a level of contingency to the migration process. The "push" and "pull" factors remain important, as they were still incentives and reasons for migration. What changed was, that the immigrants were now seen as able to act despite these factors, making the decision whether or not to migrate an individual one.[100]

One of the examples is chain migration that determined to a large extent who migrated whereto, as having family members in the United States made immigrants more likely to migrate. Immigrants did not necessarily come to the United States only for better job opportunities or because the living conditions in their country of origin were too challenging, but because they wanted to reunite with their families or simply because a family member had bought them a ticket. Without that connection to the United States, the migration might not have happened.[101]

This chapter discusses different motives for immigrants to leave their country of origin and the plans they had made for their life in the United States. The immigrants' intentions were relevant for whether or not they would identify as American, embrace aspects of American culture, such as the language, and if they wanted to stay in the United States or not. An example that points to the importance of the original motives is a letter of a German from Milwaukee:

> "[…] [M]y father was mainly looking for a place in which Germans had settled and where one could manage better in his own language […] Milwaukee is the only place in which I found that the Americans concern themselves with learning German, and where the German language and German ways are bold enough to take a foothold."[102]

[100] Gjerde, 2002. 14-15; Øverland, 2002. 79-80.
[101] Aengenvoort, 1999. 119.
[102] Letter by Mathilde Franziska Anneke, Milwaukee, April 3, 1850. Cited after Conzen, 1976. 38. According to the Census of 1860, more than half of the heads of households and approximately a third of the population of Milwaukee were Germans. In 1900, over a third of Milwaukee's population were German immigrants and their children. Helbich, 1988. 21.

To consciously look not just for a German community, but one that would enable him to converse in German in all areas of life, seems to have been very important for the father mentioned in the letter. The letter continues to describe the rich German cultural life in the city as well as the large political influence of the German population in Milwaukee.[103]

An example for a contrasting opinion on immigration and language acquisition are the statements from Johann Bauer in his letters to his family. At first, he joined his brother in New York, who "[…] speaks English very well […]" and intended to stay with him for some time, so that he "[…] would be able to speak English soon too."[104] Already one year later he had found employment on the farm of an Anglo-American family, and he and his brother moved with them to Missouri. Another year later, he uses English phrases, with translations, in the letters to his family. How he learned English is not known, but his original intention was to integrate into the Anglo-American society, and his knowledge of the language and the fact that he married an Anglo-American woman show that he succeeded in that. He seemed very fond of his home and told his family that he might come and visit them soon, but he also told them that he would not return permanently, as we would miss the United States too. His letters indicate that his main motivations for leaving Germany were better economic prospects, disagreements with his stepfather, and the fact that he already had contacts in the United States, like his brother.[105]

[103] Letter by Mathilde Franziska Anneke, Milwaukee, April 3, 1850. Cited after Conzen, 1976. 38.
[104] Letter by Johann Bauer, May 11, 1854. In Helbich, 1988. 150-152.
Original wording: " [Er] spricht sehr gut englisch & […] [ich] dann auch bald engl. sprechen könnte." [sic].
[105] Letters by Johann Bauer, June 10, 1855, and November 30, 1856. In Helbich, 1988. 148-149, 152-155.

3.1. "Freedom"

Many immigrants chose the United States because of its reputation as a land of opportunity and freedom. The word "freedom" could stand for different meanings, being used to describe a person's individual freedom or the vast open space that one associated with the United States and specifically the Midwest. This space could be used to "[…] reestablish traditions segregated from the impurities of other cultural groups. The enormous opportunities to own land and to separate into ethnic communities provided migrating groups with the latitude to transplant cultural patterns as the nation expanded."[106] The realization of this thought can be seen in the pattern of settlement that covered the Midwest. Through chain migration and ethnic institutions, as well as bonds through family and church, the Midwest gave the opportunity to recreate settlements that, according to Gjerde, seemed to resemble European states.[107]

This ethnic division of the Midwest is a contested view, as various scholars characterize the ethnic communities in different ways. The communities varied greatly in size, regional and religious homogeneity and socioeconomic diversity, and are not entirely representative of European states, as they were established with aspects of both the American society and that of their countries of origin. This made them a midway station between two societies and were clearly distinguishable from the society of their country of origin. Most immigrants did not come, as many Americans believed, because they wanted to become a part of the United States. The majority came because they believed that the United States, in contrast to their countries of origin, would give them the freedom to live their lives in their own way. Norwegian immigrants, for example, came to the United States thinking that they could retain their culture and lifestyle from Norway and they would not be forced to give them up. But they were aware that living in the United States would make a certain degree of adaptation into the larger society inevitable.[108]

This was also true for German immigrants. They came to the United States mostly for economic reasons and held no grudge against the German government. On the contrary, many were proud of Germany and national German heritage, especially after 1871 when the German Empire was created. Instead of beginning new lives in the United States, they used its freedom to transfer their culture there. Compared to other ethnic

[106] Gjerde, 1997. 7-8.
[107] Gjerde, 1997. 2, 8.
[108] For the discussion on the building blocks of local cultures, see pages 24-25.
Gjerde, 1997. 19, 53; Lovoll, 1999. 326.

groups, Germans established the biggest cultural apparatus in the United States. From the 1830s on, after the German colonial migration was largely over, 90% of German emigrants went to the United States.[109]

[109] One example for the cultural influence of Germans was the presence of saloons and beer gardens in Cincinnati. In 1860 it had about 2000 establishments that were dedicated to drinking, which was more than one place for 100 people. Daniels, 2002. 146-147, 151.

3.2. Political and Religious Reasons

For German and Scandinavian immigrants, political and religious incentives were very rarely the reason to migrate. In Germany, even the failed revolution of 1848 produced rather little, though prominent, migration of political refugees to the United States. But political issues could, in general, be one of the factors possible emigrants considered when thinking about leaving Germany. Their dissatisfaction with the economic situation and social problems could cause a negative view on their respective governments and authorities, though many Germans still positively identified with their country and government and would follow news about it closely once they had emigrated. A more widespread motivation for emigration was to avoid military draft.[110]

The relation between religion and freedom was a difficult one for Europeans, especially their religious leaders. On the one hand, they appreciated the freedom that allowed them to transplant their faith, church structures, and religious practices without any state enforced limitations. On the other hand, they worried that it was that same freedom that would cause individuals to diverge from their church and faith. They feared that the large degree of freedom could cause a far-reaching loss of traditional family structures and control by the church. Additionally, other denominations were seen as dangerous, especially Protestantism for the Catholic Church. Protestants feared the religious chaos that came with freedom of religion, as their members would have to live among others who were members of other churches, denominations, or sects. In the United States, religion was not under the patronage of the state, which gave the people the freedom to choose their system of beliefs, or chose none at all. Religious leaders of immigrant communities therefore feared to lose members, but valued that they did not have to comply to state regulations.[111]

Many Germans considered the political system in the United States as something that some historians call a "pull" factor, as the immigrants cited it as a contributing factor to their decision to migrate. Political participation required the immigrants to understand the system and be aware of political issues. This again required that they spoke or understood English, and thereby marks a later stage of adaptation. Immigrants from Germany in the nineteenth century were unfamiliar with active political participation, but they appeared to accept the political system in the United States quickly. Political participation

[110] Daniels, 2002. 146-147, 151. Aengenvoort, 1999. 111.
[111] Gjerde, 1997. 66-71, 74.

seemed especially important on the local level. In the Ohio townships of German and Jackson, were Germans made up 80% of the heads of households in 1850, and all official positions in the municipal system were filled by Germans. This does not imply that the English language was not necessary in local politics, though, as official documents and notes needed to be written in English. In other places, like Washington township, there was a smaller percentage of Germans, and therefore fewer Germans in political positions. Aengenvoort assumes that only those Germans who had already acquired a certain proficiency in English, such as through formal education or their occupation, were involved in politics.[112]

[112] Conzen, 1976. 192-193; Aengenvoort, 1999. 295-297.

3.3. Economic Reasons

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the economic situation in Germany had changed more rapidly than in other European countries due to industrialization and urbanization. Old structures of family and society did not apply anymore, and many Germans felt forced to emigrate: first from rural areas to the cities, then abroad. The well-developed infrastructure, like steamships and large ports, which brought down the costs of going to the United States, greatly contributed to this movement. This enabled most people who would otherwise not have had the capital to migrate to work and save up the money necessary for the trip. Economic factors, in the sense of an economically unfortunate situation, were considered strong "push" factors. These were especially relevant before 1860. At the time German emigration was the largest out of areas that were dominated by rural industries like linen production. Most of these emigrants did not own land and the population growth in the area was high, which resulted in difficulties to feed and finance large families. This was especially true when and where the rural economy was declining. In rural areas which concentrated on farming, families were often smaller and people married later, so there were fewer problems and fewer potential emigrants. Many German emigrants from the areas with rural industries shared the goal of acquiring land in the United States, as the rumors were that it was available and affordable.[113]

Emigration from Sweden was motivated by similar factors. Due to sweeping social change, arable land became scarce and Sweden's population doubled between 1750 and 1850. 48% of Sweden's rural population was landless by 1870, and in the late 1860s the country experienced a famine, which many people considered valid reasons for emigration. The lack of arable land was even greater in Norway, where the population grew about 50% between 1801 and 1845. There was only little migration from rural to urban areas, as the industrialization in Norway was not as far advanced as it was in other European countries. Therefore, migration happened from rural areas in Norway to rural areas in the United States and specifically to the Midwest. Norwegian emigrants' main intentions for their life in the United States was to live their lives just as in Norway, with the same religion, traditions, and way of life, only with an improved economic situation. There were hardly any religious or political incentives. Those who migrated from Norway were often the younger sons of farmers who had little chance of inheriting their fathers'

[113] Daniels, 2002. 148-149; Kamphoefner, 1987. 18-19; Aengenvoort, 1987. 147; Helbich, 1988. 12, 48; Wehler, 1995. 543-545; Nipperdey, 1983. 102-114.

property, or farmers who owned small independent farms. Norwegians who did not own land, nor had families who did, whose land they could have sold for tickets to the United States, relied on pre-paid tickets that were sent to them from family members or friends.[114]

In general, those immigrants who knew upon arrival that their stay was only temporarily would not learn English. They came primarily to earn money and often did not plan to ever become citizens of the United States. They were also often not interested in the politics of the states, or any social issues, thus, had hardly any reason to spend time and energy on learning English.[115]

[114] Daniels, 2002. 168, 173; Lovoll, 2006. 3-9,25-26.
[115] Wyman, 1993. 63-65.

3.4. "Push" and "Pull" Factors and the Personal Decision – Likelihood versus Contingency

Even though the lack of land and other economic and social circumstances can be regarded as "push" factors, emigration remained a personal decision, and was often based on the wish to improve one's situation and improve one's prospects in life. Emigration was often not a necessity, but rather the result of a conscious deliberation of advantages and disadvantages of such a step. Quantitative studies use mainly economic and demographical statistics to account for the likelihood of emigration, therefore, these factors have received recognition by researchers – and in contrast to less tangible factors. Qualitative studies, on the other hand, allow the inclusion of less tangible factors. The wish to emigrate might have been caused by an economic situation, but if someone then actually migrated, and to where in the United States, was largely determined by personal factors such as family relations. Even though the emigration might have improved one's situation, someone could have chosen to not emigrate because they did not want to be separated from their families. If they decided to migrate, then often to find land or work there, which enabled them to provide for their families and send them tickets to the United States, or because family members and friends already lived in the United States and offered support.[116]

Support with information and financial means from family members who had already emigrated were for many Germans the only possibility to move to the United States. The importance of chain migration as well as family and regional bonds has been mentioned several times.[117] To reunite with one's family could be a contributing factor in the decision to emigrate, but it could also be the only one. In terms of language skills, it made it easier for the migrants if they joined family members who already spoke the language to some extent, as the family could organize the trip to their final destination and housing. Moving in with one's family members or working in the family business could limit the contact to the Anglo-American society, and thereby the need to learn English, but it would raise the chances that the immigrants would be financially and socially content, and thereby make the migration permanent. Helbich's compilation of immigrant letters shows that immigrants often had more than one reason to emigrate. Especially for those who left Germany alone, it was often a combined wish to (1) improve one's economic situation,

[116] See discussion on chain migration, pages 21-23, Aengenvoort, 1999. 112, 119, 147; Øverland, 2002. 79-80.
[117] See pages 21-23 and 23-27.

(2) leave the family in Germany because of arguments and differences or to avoid military draft, and (3) use the advantage that family members or friends were already in the United States and would help with the transition to life in the United States.[118]

Chain migration should not be considered another "push" or "pull" factor that attempts to explain how likely immigrants were to migrate without granting them the agency to make an individual decision. Even if immigrants moved to the United States and joined their families, they were always free to reconsider that decision. Many immigrants, upon arrival, were not content with the situation in the area their family members or friends lived, and would decide to look up other friends or family members or try to find a place on their own. Chain migration might be able to account for a lot of migration and the patterns in which it happened, but it still contains a level of contingency, as immigrants were able to change their mind, and often did.[119]

[118] Aengenvoort, 1999. 112, 119; for examples of immigrants' biographies, see Helbich, 1988. 179-181, 458-461.
[119] Øverland, 2002. 79-80; Aengenvoort, 1999. 192.

Conclusion

This thesis has discussed different issues of migration research regarding factors for language acquisition. Three different areas of factors have been examined separately, with the focus on both their relevance for language acquisition and their use in different methodological approaches.

The first chapter has dealt with the relevance of demographic characteristics, as usually employed by quantitative methods, as well as mechanisms of migration and patterns of settlement that are the objects of study of quantitative and qualitative studies. The analysis demonstrated how quantitative and qualitative studies can use the same analytical categories yet ascribe different meanings to them. This is due to different theoretical approaches as well as the differences in the choice of methods. This becomes clear when examining the role of ethnic communities. Purely quantitative studies employ them as a factor that indicates an obstacle for adaptation and language acquisition. Qualitative approaches[120] often make the ethnic community the object of their study and demonstrate how it is not *per se* an obstacle for adaptation or language acquisition, and additionally indicates divergences between the level of adaptation and language acquisition, which are generally considered to be closely connected. Demographic characteristics were shown to be relevant for studies that focus on the likeliness of language acquisition, but they do not give any indications for the reasons immigrants might have had to decide for or against learning the English language. Other difficulties of purely quantitative approaches can be traced back to the availability and reliability of the sources, mainly from the United States Census.

The second chapter discussed the so-called "cultural-baggage"[121] of the immigrants, including considerations about culture, religion, education, as well as ethnic and national identities. These factors have been shown to be closely connected and interdependent by historians, as well as essential for the formation of ethnic communities.[122] Immigrants held different opinions on the United States, the dominant Anglo-American society, and the English language that can be traced back to their cultural background,

[120] The qualitative approaches that are discussed in this thesis contain quantitative elements, but generally take a culturalist approach. Much of their argumentation is based on the immigrants' letters, newspapers, local church chronicles, and similar sources from their countries of origin. Additionally, the scope of their quantitative analyses is often much smaller than the ones of the purely quantitative studies, as they focus on specific ethnic groups or regions in the United States.
[121] Höndgen [Aengenvoort], 2004. 18.
[122] See chapter 1.2.

their personal experiences, but also their faith, and in particular the doctrines of their respective churches. These, as shown with the example of the two branches of Danish Lutheranism, could vary widely and have direct implications for language acquisition. The discussion of culture, religion, and education pointed to the importance of regional origin and faith for community formation, which itself then influenced the social, private, and public lives of immigrants. In terms of language acquisition, the most relevant factor discovered was identity. It was less important how many and which identities immigrants ascribed to themselves, but any indication that immigrants "felt American" was also a strong indicator that they were able to speak, or willing to learn, English. "Feeling American" is not a tangible category, but examples have shown that those immigrants who identified at least partially as "American", were interested in the United States' politics, social, and public issues, and considered the United States their home. Even though these factors have proven to be clear indications of immigrants' ability to speak or learn English, they remain very vague terms that require further research and clarification, as does the relationship between language maintenance and acquiring a new language. Some studies with a qualitative approach have demonstrated how active language maintenance, like the request for religious schools in their native language, did not indicate any opposition against their children, and themselves, learning English.

The last chapter discussed the immigrants' motives for migration as well as the plans they had for their future life in the United States. The essential question here was the perspective scholars take on immigrants. Were they subjects whose migration was entirely determined by "push" and "pull" factors, or were they actors with agency, who consciously decided to migrate? Just as immigrants made a conscious decision to migrate, often against the odds determined by the "push" and "pull" factors, they also made conscious decisions on whether or not to learn the English language. Sometimes this decision was even made before immigrants left their countries of origin. Those who came temporarily with the main intention of earning money often did not actively learn English. They did not intend to stay, start a family, or care specifically about the United States as a country or its political system. There seemed to have only been few immigrants who came to the United States with the plan of living there permanently but not learning the language. In some cases, it is hard to say how much immigrants made a conscious decision

to learn the language, when they only gave the indication that they learned it "because it's the country's language"[123].

This thesis concludes that for understanding language acquisition by immigrants (and especially those in the Midwest), four points are necessary:

(1) The assumption by many scholars, that language acquisition is (a) the best indicator for level of adaptation, and (b) can be examined with the same factors, needs to be reconsidered, as this thesis shows how adaptation, in the early stages, can happen without language acquisition. An example was the immediate accommodation in ethnic communities after arrival. English language acquisition was unnecessary, but the immigrants were introduced to the country's political system, interested in the local and public affairs through, for example, newspapers in their native language, and thereby gradually integrated into the country's economy.

(2) Quantitative studies tend to portray immigrants as actors without agency, and try to match demographic characteristics to their likelihood of learning English. This thesis is based on the "new migration history", which considers immigrants agents that consciously decided if they wanted to learn English or not. Demographic characteristics seldomly played a role in their process of decision-making. The factors used by quantitative approaches to study the likelihood of adaptation or language acquisition are often biased with oversimplified assumptions, which causes the analysis to simply confirm stereotypes. Quantitative studies are, however, able to trace migration patterns, such as chain migration, on a small scale and can thus provide important insights into the homogeneity and background of an immigrant community, which forms the basis for its cultural and social life. Thereby, it can provide an important basis for different approaches to study ethnic communities and their impact on the immigrants' decisions.

(3) The nature of ethnic communities needs to be explored further, as quantitative and qualitative studies disagree on the role they play in the adaptation process as well as for language acquisition. It is currently regarded as the biggest obstacle for language acquisition as well as a necessity for the adaptation process. This thesis shows how life inside an ethnic community gives little indication on the immigrants' language skills. Studies which take cultural approaches, and thereby show the diversity between and inside ethnic communities, make these communities unusable as an analytical category for

[123] Letter by Franz Joseph Loewen, April 29, 1888. In Helbich, 1988. 196-197.

quantitative studies. Quantitative analyses show, with the help of census data, that immigrants in these communities are less likely to learn English than immigrants outside of them. It does not, however, explain why there were immigrants who spoke English in these communities. Additionally, they cannot account for the communities' importance in the immediate accommodation of the immigrants, who would otherwise have been without support in a country whose language they did not speak.

(4) Very little is known about how immigrants tried to learn English. Only very few would learn English before they arrived. Some were able to attend schools, others had to rely on "learning by doing". Research is needed on the accessibility of English language instruction for immigrants, and other possibilities for them to acquire the language. It is conceivable that some of the immigrants who never learned English did not do so by choice, but were simply not given an opportunity. Taking care of their families as well as working full time jobs gave many immigrants little time to learn English, even if they were in the fortunate position of having a school nearby that offered instruction for adults too. The way in which "not speaking English" is used as an analytical category in quantitative as well as qualitative studies might have to be reconsidered accordingly. First, learning the English language was a decision consciously made, not a likelihood. Secondly, learning English might have been very difficult for immigrants due to various reasons, so that them not speaking English cannot necessarily be traced back to their unwillingness to learn the language.

Based on these points, new questions can be opened about the American society in early 20th century. The political worries of the Anglo-American part of society, that immigrants did not adapt to their culture, tended to stick together, and would threaten the American society as well as its political system, were often based on the fact that there were large numbers of immigrants who did not speak English. They used the collected data on the immigrants' language proficiencies to justify restrictive immigration policies. The conclusions of this thesis can only be employed for the American Midwest, as well as German and Scandinavian immigrants. Other ethnic groups in other parts of the country could experience adaptation, life in the United States, and interactions with the rest of society differently. That could be caused by racial discrimination, location of settlement, or the immigrants' personal cultural and religious background. Through the fact that only North-Western Europeans were considered as white by Anglo-Americans, and only white

immigrants as assimilable, language acquisition of immigrants from other regions needs to be examined with different theoretical frameworks.[124]

The results of this thesis show that there could have been a multitude of reasons why immigrants, in both rural and urban areas, did not learn English, as it was dependent on their personal decision and individual circumstances. Only rarely was it, because they did not want to be a part of the United States, its political system, and its people. Hopefully, this thesis can also provide new thoughts on the current discussion on migration, where the topics integration and language acquisition are dominating the debate.

[124] On restrictive immigration policies, see King, 2000. 52-56, 61-62.

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Figure I "*Elements of Foreign White Stock, by Principal Mother Tongues*" US Bureau of the Census 1914, Statistical Atlas, plate 219.

Figure II "*Foreign-Born White Population 10 Years of Age and over Unable to Speak English: 1910 and 1900*" US Bureau of the Census 1914, Statistical Atlas, plate 226.

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