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UNCOMMON VALUES, DIVERSITY, AND CONFLICT IN CITY LIFE

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Prologue

The first day that I meet my undergraduate class in “American Society” at Berkeley, I challenge their notion that America is especially diverse culturally. The Berkeley campus is a hotbed of ethnic consciousness and students typically frame issues in terms of race and nationality. Many believe, at least implicitly, that ethnicity creates social and cultural differences. But on that first day, while scanning faces that are freckled pink topped with blonde hair, olive-colored framed by black hair, and ebony capped with kinky hair, I contest that presumption. Typically, these students have ancestors from all over the world, from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe. But virtually every one of them agrees, for example, that people should choose their own spouses, that each person deserves equal respect from the law and equal opportunity for success, that “one person, one vote” is a political ideal, and that the perfect home is a detached single-family house where each child has a separate bedroom. These beliefs or values are, in the context of human history and geography, exceedingly odd; few of the students’ ancestors would understand, much less agree with, those views. Yet, so powerfully absorbing is American culture that long-enduring, antipodal values, such as parental rights to arrange marriages, vanish within a generation’s residence in this country. The human rainbow that is my class only underlines the homogenous quality of our culture. *E pluribus unum* indeed!

City people resist, more than others, assimilation, cling most tightly to foreign ways, and even personify cultural diversity. Popular and scholarly concerns that "modernization" dissolves moral solidarity have long focused on cities. I assume that we can learn much about the dynamics of cultural diversity in this nation by looking at American cities' experiences with diversity. From that experience, I draw several tentative lessons: that,

— despite resistance, ethnic cultures have been absorbed and are still being absorbed into the "mainstream" American culture;

— the novelty of the current era lies less in the reality of ethnic diversity than in the explicit ideology of ethnic diversity, because cultural diversity along ethnic lines is in decline;

— In the end, cultural diversity rests less on ethnic heterogeneity than on the emergence of new subcultures, organized around class, religion, lifestyles, and other interests and identities. Urban places generate such subcultures and so, perhaps, do modern media of communications and transportation; and

— moral order is precarious in a diverse environment, but order can be sustained without a moral consensus.

The City and Diversity

Since the nation's founding, confrontations among its diverse cultures have been most intense in the cities. Most non-English immigrants landed, confronted other immigrant groups,

and felt the pressure of the dominant Anglo-Protestant culture in the cities. And organized resistance to assimilation most often happened, cultural diversity made its strongest stands, in the cities. Most Americans have long read the city as “foreign” — and, significantly, as the “lost community,” too.

The intense bond between urban life and diversity was evident to the Founding Fathers and the generations that followed. For Jefferson, cities, with their landless workers, immigrants, and mobs, represented a threat to yeoman democracy. New York City, whose inhabitants spoke 18 different languages by 1650, in many ways signified a heterogeneity that threatened American virtue (see, e.g., Bender 1988). Populists often invoked the specter of urban “Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion” or its variants to mobilize rural and small-town voters. Do-gooders of the 19th century understood, as a matter of course, that cities were the wandering grounds of lost souls. To redeem the fallen might require removing them from the city to places where a “natural community” could sustain individuals’ integration into a moral order.¹ Struggles, often violent ones, over culture — that is, over ways of life, rather than material interests, although these two are not so easily untangled — racked American cities. Roy Rosenzweig (1985), for example, describes recurrent battles in late 19th-century Worcester, Massachusetts, over how the public parks would be used and the Fourth of July celebrated: with the sober reserve of the Protestant middle class or the boisterous drinking of Catholic immigrants. (“Italian Celebrates: Couldn't Speak English but Could Fire Revolver Shots,” read one Worcester newspaper headline.) Similar accounts are available for cities around the nation.

The parks and parade routes were just two of the urban battlegrounds upon which immigrants struggled against native Protestants intent on at least controlling, if not assimilating, them. Other front lines were schools (fighting over, for example, compulsory education and Protestant moral instruction); workplaces (punctuality, drinking, and Sabbath work), police departments (jobs, enforcement of liquor, gambling, and drug laws), churches (ethnic succession, and styles of worship), and, certainly, neighborhoods.²

Lest this list imply that urban cultural diversity was solely *ethnic* diversity, we should remember that 19th-century American cities also generated tension and even violence along other dimensions of difference, such as religion, class, and age. For example, revivalist movements mobilized many middle-class Americans to force piety and discipline on their employees and neighbors, and an atheistic labor movement arose in Chicago (Johnson 1978; Nelson 1991). A distinct middle-class, with its own organizations, neighborhoods, and consciousness, arose in the major cities of the East Coast during the antebellum years; and in roughly the same period, workingmen developed solidarity, unions, and their own class consciousness (Blumin 1989; Wilentz 1984; Gorn 1987). Around the turn of the century, young, single women formed a notable part — a problematic part, for many observers — of the urban workforce, with distinctive “youth” lifestyles and neighborhoods (Meyerowitz 1988; Peiss 1986).

Guardians of Anglo-Protestant culture worked hard to keep the lid on the urban caldron of diversity by “Americanizing” newcomers through schooling, social work, and propaganda. Although immigrants often resisted such outreach — for example, scoffing at settlement-house

social workers — and tried to defend their ways of life — for example, by supporting Catholic schools — there seems to have been no organized ideology against cultural assimilation. In fact, immigrant groups often sought ways to syncretize their cultures with Americanism, to argue that being true to one's own culture was, in some fashion, part of being a "real" American (e.g., Meagher 1986). And assimilation did occur, probably less because of conscious Americanization and more as the result of occupational mobility, social interaction, and participation in the wider mass culture of 20th-century America (see, for example, Alba 1990; 1995; Waters 1990; Cohen 1989; and Morawska 1994).

Today, too, the metropolis is the cockpit of cultural clashes. (The phrase, "culture wars," as used by, say, Pat Buchanan, describes a struggle between an often urban cosmopolitanism and a typically rural provincialism, but I am referring here instead to divisions within our urban areas.) American cities are where peoples of the world congregate. In 1994, 95% of enumerated noncitizens counted lived in America's metropolitan areas as compared with 77% of native-born citizens; 50% of the noncitizens lived in metropolitan center cities, compared with 30% of the native-born.³ Moreover, over half of recent immigrants resided in only five of the metropolitan areas.⁴ In 1990, foreign-born residents comprised 45% of the population of Miami, 38% of the population of Los Angeles city, and 34% of San Francisco's population (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1995a). In addition, African-Americans disproportionately live in metropolitan areas, particularly in the center cities. One well-known consequence of this urban diversity is conflict — ranging from simple intergroup tension to political struggles over schools to violent racial battles — conflict that tends to be greater in frequency and depth the larger the city (Fischer 1984: 151-

52; see, e.g., Olzak, Shanahan, and West 1994; Olzak, Shanahan, and McEneaney 1996; Portes 1984; and Baldassare 1994). Such conflict is often read as showing the absence of common values and community in cities.

Contemporary American cities also spawn distinct but *nonethnic* cultural groups, too: art worlds, gay communities, young singles crowds, "yuppies," even welfare "underclasses" (on the last example: Rank and Hirschl 1988; Hirschl and Rank 1991). These nonethnic communities often conflict, too, over housing, school policies, domestic partner legislation, policing, and so on.

Nonethnic subcultures differ in many ways from ethnic ones. In principle, for example, the former are chosen rather than assigned by birth, they seem short-lived rather than deeply rooted, they connect people more to friends than to family, and they arise from within the national culture rather than outside it. However, even these distinctions are fuzzy. (Today, it is not obvious that being born into, say, an Italian-American family is more fateful than being born to parents who are political radicals, or artists, or in a drug scene.) Nonethnic differences can be as divisive as ethnic ones. Struggles over school curricula are initiated by evangelical communities, over public space by youth groups, and over natural resources by committed environmentalists. As American subcultures, they do fight their battles within a common discourse — for example, in the language of individual rights — but that may make the battles even more bitter and lasting.

Cultural diversity and cultural tension are endemic to cities, the more so the larger the cities. Why? As I have elaborated elsewhere (Fischer 1984; 1982; 1995), population centers generate diverse subcultures by attracting migrants from widely dispersed places and by

concentrating distinct sets of people in such numbers that they form social networks of shared interests. In larger cities, those networks grow to “critical masses” needed to build institutions, institutions that, in turn, foster self-conscious and active subcultures. These subcultures expand and encompass members’ personal networks more completely than is likely in smaller places. The city is diverse — a “mosaic of little worlds that touch but do not interpenetrate,” in the famous words of Robert Ezra Park — but individuals’ own networks, located inside those little “worlds” — are not diverse. In fact, they are probably less diverse than the personal networks of comparable rural people. These subcultures (some call them “communities”) frequently conflict over material or cultural issues or both.

Disagreement and conflict form the negative side of the diversity coin. That same diversity provides the excitement and creativity of city life. Both the appreciated and the abhorred qualities of cities result from their multiple cultural worlds. Ethnic communities are just one kind of cultural world that flourish in cities — and not the most distinctive ones at that. The really distinctive subcultures are those that rarely have counterparts in rural areas — for example, the ballet world, sex workers, computer hackers, lesbians, and political junkies.⁵ Moreover, nonethnic subcultures proliferate and grow over time, while the viability and distinctiveness of minority ethnic subcultures typically fade as the pressures from the dominant culture to assimilate win out (see next section).

Historical Changes

How have these patterns of urban diversity changed over American history?

The degree of *ethnic* diversity in American cities has fluctuated wildly over the last couple of centuries. Although the colonial cities were heterogenous, peoples from the British Isles and northwest Europe largely defined their motley character. The flood of Germans and Irish during the mid-19th-century increased both urban diversity and polarization. The next big influx, around the turn of the century, of Italians, Jews, and others from southern and eastern Europe, raised the proportion of Americans who were born outside the nation's borders to 15%. This inflow, mixed with anxieties about labor unrest, contributed to a backlash of nativism, racism, eugenics, and political moves to close the borders. Borders did close in 1924. By 1970, only 5% of Americans were born abroad. The immigration reforms of 1965 reversed the tide yet again. In 1994, 9% of United States residents had been born abroad, largely in Latin America and Asia (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1995b) and they differed much more from natives than had the European immigrants. (In that light, perhaps we should be surprised that the nativist reaction to "brown" and "yellow" immigrants today is notably milder than nativist reactions were to "white" immigrants in earlier eras.)

The immigrants of earlier waves have assimilated, some virtually disappearing into the American mainstream. (I use the term "assimilation" broadly, to mean both adoption of dominant cultural perspectives and incorporation of group members into the larger society's social structures, such as jobs and neighborhoods.⁶) Germans and Scandinavians, for example, barely

count as ethnic anymore, except in a few colorful tourist locations.⁷ The Irish, Italians, Poles, and so on, are rapidly on their way to complete melting. The Jews appear not far behind (at least as an *ethnic* group).

One indicator of assimilation is spatial distribution within urban areas. The Europeans have moved out of their turn-of-the-century enclaves and spread out so that European ethnic neighborhoods — although a few discernable ones can still be found, especially in cities such as New York — are few and house few of the remaining group members. The process seems slowed in very large urban centers, but spatial assimilation has been largely inexorable (see Massey 1985; Lieberman 1980; Zunz 1982; Bodnar 1985; Alba, Logan, and Crowder 1996).

Probably the most fundamental indicator of assimilation is intermarriage. The data show strong declines in the rate of within-group marriage among the immigrant groups of the late 19th century — to the point, among Jews, of virtual collective panic. Like spatial assimilation, group intermarriage seems slowed down in the larger cities but the historical trend is clear nonetheless.⁸

What of the "new" immigrants? Are they following the same trends toward assimilation or have we entered a new era, one of ethnic persistence? Answering these questions is difficult because the tide of immigrants continues to replenish the ethnic neighborhoods, reinforce mother tongues, and provide marriage partners. Nevertheless, the trend lines look similar to those of the Europeans: increasing spatial dispersion away from enclaves, loss of language in later generations, and increased intermarriage with outgroup Americans.⁹

To be sure, I have grossly summarized complex patterns. Some groups have assimilated more quickly (e.g., the French); others more slowly (e.g., Italians); some have been ambivalent (e.g., Jews); and others have been fiercely resisted (e.g., African-Americans). The new immigrants face greater hurdles than the Europeans did, because they are not only foreign but also, like blacks, racially distinct. Also, cultural assimilation, when it does come, ought not to be equated with "making it" in America, as the travails of Chicanos show. Still, what is striking is the pervasiveness and power of assimilation. That the Jews, people who have for millennia successfully persisted as "strangers" in foreign lands, should find their cultural identity threatened in America as it has been nowhere else where they had lived in large numbers is testimony to the absorptive power of this society.

The great exception to this pattern of assimilation is, of course, African-Americans. They became more segregated from whites during the 20th century as they moved into northern, urban ghettos. Intermarriage rates between blacks and whites remain — although recently rising — below 5 percent.¹⁰ Culturally very American and historically more American than most groups, African-Americans remain unincorporated.

Excepting the African-American case, the contemporary patterns of assimilation do not seem qualitatively different from those of earlier eras. Even in the urban environment so supportive of ethnic cultures, America is absorbing the second and third generations into the conventional culture. Some have even suggested that the recent immigrants, many of whom are

well educated and previously exposed to American popular culture, are more ready and able to assimilate than were earlier immigrants.

What may be new and substantially different is that an ideology of diversity, of multiculturalism, exists today which did not exist before. This ideology thrives most visibly among some elites in universities, politics, media, and even corporate management (see Hollinger 1995). Whether it affects everyday assimilation in neighborhoods, on jobs, or in dating is an open question, however. The celebration of ethnicity seems to have followed the rise of the "Black Pride" movement that succeeded the Civil Rights movement. For Latinos, Indians, and Asians, emulation seems logical. But for other Americans the celebration of difference may be partly a defensive reaction to these moves (everyone needs "roots" to participate) and partly a romantic reaction to the success of assimilation (much like the adoration of nature that emerged from the centers of the urban-industrial order).

In a nation of multiculturalism — as opposed to a nation of segregated cultures — it is also possible to merge an ethnic identity with other identities, with occupational or lifestyle identities, even with the national identity itself. A "real" American, in this sense, is a hyphenated American. (In my first visit to San Francisco, I watched Chinese girls wearing Scottish kilts march in a Columbus Day parade. What could be more American?) This expression of ethnicity is far from that found in the culturally segregated ethnic villages or ghettos of Europe, or even in the immigrant enclaves a few generations ago.

If the clear trend for (non-black) ethnic groups is assimilation what, about those non-ethnic subcultures — occupational, leisure, lifestyle, and ideological groups — fermenting in cities? There is little hard evidence about the rate of such groups' formation, nor of their divergence from the mainstream norms, except insofar as they become criminal, but one could fairly speculate that in both respects diversity may be increasing. (Some of the research on intermarriage suggests a shift from ethnic to class endogamy, for example.) To the extent that cities generate subcultural diversity because they bring people together, creating what Durkheim called "dynamic density," then the further bringing together of people in contemporary society made possible by planes, highways, and electronic communication may be, in turn, accelerating the formation of novel subcultures (Fischer 1995: 549-50). The urban experience suggests, paradoxically, that as the society becomes more diverse, the individuals' own social networks become less diverse. More than ever, perhaps, the child of an affluent professional family may live, learn, and play with only similar children; the elderly factory worker may retire and relax only among other aged members of the working-class. Ironically, then, the worries about a "disuniting of America" may be misdirected by focusing on ethnic diversity.

A columnist for a computer magazine phrased his concerns about the dark side of telecommunications development in an essay entitled, "The End of Common Experience." Given the arrival of narrow-casting television and individualized internet exchanges, he wrote,

the good news is that people with specific interests can find lots of similar-minded people with whom to interact. The bad news is that people whose behavior already tends toward

the antisocial will likely find increased support for their tendencies, unmoderated by interaction with the rest of the world. . . . Not only is there the potential for the weird to get weirder but for the supposedly normal among us to become less tolerant, because we have less exposure to those who are different (Machrone 1996).

The history of urban diversity suggests that some of this concern may be well-placed.¹¹

*Seeking Order in a Diverse Community*¹²

Studying the city's diversity provides lessons for understanding the nature and consequences of diversity in the wider society. The problem of "moral order" in the metropolis is a classic one. European fathers of social science (Durkheim, Tonniës, Simmel, and so on) wondered how moral order — regular, predictable, and harmonious social action founded on shared values and understandings — could survive in the heterogeneity of the city and, by extension, the heterogeneity of modern society. Underlying their discussion was the assumption that public order required a moral consensus. The American tradition, too, sought moral order in the city. The Puritan's idealized "city upon a hill" presumed concord among citizens; the evangelical reformers of the 19th century tried to recreate a harmony they remembered from their small-town childhoods; and American sociologists, too, sought the basis of a morally-based order.¹³ Yet, American efforts to sustain a moral consensus were repeatedly disappointed. Puritan towns declined into strife and division; immigrant groups rejected reformers' efforts at taming them. Moral order is elusive in the city; the "decline of community" seems ever-constant.

Cities generate moral disorder: misunderstandings, tension, and even conflict among people over ends, over means, and even over definitions of the situation. Yet, they rarely degenerate into Hobbesian wars or anarchy. By understanding the sources of disorder and the solutions that sustain order, we gain some insight into the larger issues of moral order in a diverse American society.

Cities produce problems of moral order at the *micro* level. Urban life, more so than life in small places, puts us in problematic *public*¹⁴ settings, ones in which shared understandings are weak and expectations are unclear. The distinguishing condition of public encounters in urban communities — in bus stations, ticket lines, stores, subways, on the streets — is that they are typically encounters in a “world of strangers” (to quote Lyn Lofland¹⁵). We must deal, at least tacitly, with people whom we do not know personally, whom we do not recognize, and most important, who are obviously different from us in many ways. In such encounters among people from different subcultures, behavioral expectations are neither shared nor certain. How near or far to sit, to make eye contact or not, to speak or not — these elementary norms vary from group to group and carry different implications for each. Then, should an untoward event occur, alternate interpretations make action ambiguous. If a man and woman start yelling at one another, is this an everyday dispute or the beginning of a physical assault? Would intervention be welcome or resented? If teenagers boisterously shout obscenities, is this delinquency or just high spirits? In situations such as these, urbanites in public places often lack a common definition of the situation and normative guide to action. Order at the level of individual experiences is tentative and fragile. Anxiety about it is pervasive and consequential. For example, fear of crime

is bred at least as much by the perception of public disorder, especially of loitering minority youth, as by actual incidents of crime (see, e.g., Taylor and Covington 1993; Rountree and Land 1996).

Fragility characterizes the order among social groups in the urban "mosaic of little worlds," as well. The heterogeneity of subcultures I have described means that cities, in Louis Wirth's phrase, "comprise a motley of peoples and cultures of highly differentiated modes of life between which there often is only the faintest communication, the greatest indifference, the broadest tolerance, occasionally bitter strife, but always the sharpest contrast" (Wirth 1938: 160) — hardly a *moral* order. Conflict, sometimes bitter, certainly arises in small towns, too. Yet intergroup conflict in large cities is a of a different magnitude, more pervasive, extensive, and serious. Cities tend to be rent by many cleavages, rather than one or two, by race, nationality, class, business, age, and lifestyles, all at once; often cultural differences are themselves the grounds of dispute.¹⁶ In addition, the stakes are often enormous and interests in those stakes divide along group lines — for example, the struggles between black neighborhood activists and heavily Jewish teachers' unions over controlling the New York City school system.

Given these forces of disorder, why doesn't everything fall apart? Sometimes it does — individuals fight, cities split into civil war. More often, however, things do not fall apart; they just hang together tenuously. It is remarkable how well order is sustained in the most improbable cases. Robert Edgerton (1979) has described how 450,000 people, more than live in Kansas City, can crowd a small stretch of Southern California beach wearing virtually no clothes but with few problems. Every working day, people of diverse colors and cultures jam together, check-to-check

and elbow-to-rib, in New York's subways with only rare disturbances. How is this possible? How is order sustained in the morally disunited city? I can speculate about how an amoral order is sustained.

At the personal level of public encounters, one solution to the threat of moral anarchy is *avoidance*. Americans (more so than Europeans) have dealt with urban anxiety by residential segregation. John Schneider, for example, has shown how in mid-19th-century Detroit spatial segregation helped reduce middle-class encounters with public disorder; similarly, racial segregation today reduces whites' crossing paths with blacks whom they find threatening (Schneider 1980; Liska, Lawrence, and Sanchiriko 1982). *Wariness* is a related strategy. An on-guard attitude can help forestall upsetting encounters; that stance often distinguishes the urban veteran from the rural "hayseed." *Stereotyping* is also useful, providing guides, whether ill-founded or not, to interaction among people of different backgrounds.¹⁷ *Coercion* is a historically common solution — blatantly present in police states that enforce the cultural understandings of the ruling group, more subtly so in democratic societies (e.g., Dray-Novey 1993). Several scholars have explored another kind of solution: a *public etiquette* — proper manners such as "selective inattention," nonverbal cues of recognition, careful physical spacing, and what might be called "elevator behavior"— which lubricates what might otherwise be frictional situations. Such etiquette seems most developed in cities.¹⁸

I have excluded from this list of "solutions" any recourse to a moral consensus, although one might consider public etiquette as a minimal sort of consensus. There may be more than this

minimum, however. Popular outrage — at, say, horrific crimes such as child kidnappings — and popular celebrations — for, say, sports-teams' victories such as the Yankee's world championship in 1996 — show that diverse people can share some values. Still, the point here is that order can be sustained in public encounters without much in the way of shared values.

Disorder also threatens at the level of groups. Here, too, cities seem to maintain order with amoral solutions. Some cities have managed to stay relatively *homogenous*, sometimes by rigid entry controls (e.g., Redfield and Singer 1954). Conflict often increases as the numbers of a subordinated group grows and keeping them at bay can work, at least for a while.¹⁹

Neighborhood *segregation*, maintained by physically-walled quarters in medieval cities or politically-walled suburbs in American metropolises, also reduces intergroup confrontations. So does strong *domination* of the city by a single and unified group. What is probably most common in American cities, after residential segregation, is order through *negotiation* among diverse groups. Sometimes it is tacit negotiation, as when police ignore illegal activities favored by particular groups, and sometimes it is explicit negotiation that may involve shifting coalitions of interests. Such negotiations are usually unequal ones. Behind the negotiation lies the latent threat of disorder — of disruptive strikes, ethnic violence, withdrawal, and the like. Moreover, negotiated solutions chronically need patching and are usually on the verge of collapse. Therefore, negotiation compounds the general sense that urban life is morally chaotic and tenuous. It is.

Conclusion

The urban struggle to sustain order in the midst of diversity — an endemic problem in city life — suggests lessons for understanding the national “community.” Ethnic diversity, although a vivid and sometimes troubling reality, is declining. The sociology students of varying hues whom I described at the beginning of this paper think alike much more than they imagine. They differ significantly, however, from Americans of other ages, regions, and educational backgrounds; they even think differently than Berkeley students outside letters and science. American cultural diversity on non-ethnic or -racial dimensions of human affiliation is probably increasing. Achieving a society-wide consensus on values beyond perhaps a few fundamental ones such as democracy becomes more difficult. The urban experience suggests that order can be sustained even without a moral consensus, by various devices, some not pleasant. Perhaps the best such device is negotiation based on shared procedural understandings. This aspiration is a far more modest one than is the goal of a morally cohesive society. It forecasts continuing, even worsening, tensions and misunderstandings. But it may be the best we can hope for in a diversifying society.

ENDNOTES

1. For example, reformers tried to round up street urchins in New York and ship them off to live with rural families. See on these matters, e.g., Boyer (1978).

2. On some of these points, see, for example, Ravitch (1974); Brown and Warner (1992); Glenn (1992); Bodnar (1985: esp. Chapters 5 and 7); and Bayor (1978).

3. The figures for naturalized citizens are 94% metropolitan and 39% center-city (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1996a).

4. Roger Waldinger (1989) reports that 46% of immigrants arriving between 1965 and 1980 lived in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, and Miami. Uncounted and more recent immigrants are probably even more likely than others to be in those places, especially Los Angeles.

5. Of course, some particular subcultures tend to be disproportionately rural, such as people heavily involved in hunting. But overall the generalization holds.

6. In principle, cultural adaptation and structural incorporation need not be tied together. One can imagine an English-speaking, Protestant, Anglicized Chicano who nevertheless lives in a *barrio* and holds a "Mexican" job or imagine a totally-observant Hasidic Jew who nevertheless lives in suburban Salt Lake City and works as a professional athlete — but these images require quite an imagination. In practice, cultural and structural assimilation go together strongly, excepting, as we usually must, the case of African-Americans whose culture is deeply American but many of whom are shut out from much of the society. Sometimes, assimilated people express their ethnic heritage consciously, but this most often involves "symbolic ethnicity" (Waters 1990).

Such expressions, in fact, often simply underline a group's assimilation — for example, having a float in a patriotic parade, displaying cultural traditions in a public school classroom, or mobilizing politically. All these are *American* forms of action, totally unfamiliar in the traditional culture.

7. See, for example, on waning Norwegian identity, Schultz (1991). A 1991 report in the New York Times (18 March) noted that only two Norwegian-language newspapers were left in the country from what had originally been more than 100.

8. Lieberman and Waters (1988: 199) report that in-group marriage rates among Polish-Americans dropped from 47% for the generation born before 1915 to 20% for the generation born after 1945; the drop was from 66% to 27% for Italians. (The decline was less dramatic for the Irish, Germans, and English, because, having heavily intermarried by the early 20th century, Americans of partial Irish, German, or English ancestry are so common that even nationality-blind marriages often involve people with some partial heritage in these groups.) On Jewish assimilation, see, e.g.: Goldscheider and Zuckerman (1984) and Lipset and Raab (1995) and many other warnings about intermarriage in almost any Jewish community publication. On reduced intermarriage within cities see, e.g., Bernard (1980) and Alba (1990). On ethnic intermarriage in general, see Kalmun (1991), Stevens (1985), and Alba and Golden (1986).

9. On spatial assimilation, see, e.g., Massey and Denton (1987). On intermarriage: rates of Mexican-Mexican marriages have dropped from 83% in the pre-1915 cohort to 71% in the post 1965 cohort, despite the vastly increased numbers of Mexicans in the United States (Lieberman and Waters, p. 199; see also Farley 1996: table 6-5). The proportion of Hispanics married to other Hispanics has stayed about the same for the last 25 years U.S. Bureau of the

Census 1996b: 55, but, in the face of an approximate tripling of the Latino population, that stability implies much intermarriage in later generations. On language change among Mexican-Americans, see Lopez (1978). Intermarriage among Asians follows similar patterns. Even by 1980, the outmarriage rate among third-generation Japanese-Americans was 40% and the outmarriage rate among Chinese-Americans, despite continuing immigration, was 26% (Montero 1980). In 1990, only about half of young, native-born, Asian men and one-fifth of young, native-born, Asian women married other Asians of whatever specific nationality (although those proportions were up from 1980, probably because of the immigration flow — Farley 1996: table 6-5).

10. On segregation, see Massey and Denton (1993), and Harrison and Weinberg (1992). On intermarriage: In 1994, about 4% of married blacks were married to a white spouse (up from about 1% in 1970 — U.S. Bureau of the Census 1996b: 55). A recent study points out the pace at which black/white intermarriage is growing: 12% of new marriages by blacks in 1993 were with a white, up from 3% in 1970 (study reported by Holmes (1996)).

11. Urbanites *do* have *exposure* to different others, but that impersonal exposure may just aggravate intergroup estrangement.

12. Some material in this section is drawn from an earlier paper: "Rethinking Urban Life: Order and Disorder in the Public Realm," Paper presented to the American Sociological Association, 1982.

13. A classic in this latter genre is Zorbaugh's (1928) The Gold Coast and the Slum. He finds the differences in values among communities of affluent WASPS, Sicilian immigrants, and young singles totally problematic.

14. Distinguishing public from private here is critical. Some analyses of urban mores describe urbanites' private lives as mirrors of the public encounters described below. That is a major error, upon which I will not elaborate here (see Fischer 1984).

15. Lofland (1973). These encounters are the dramatic texts for other analysts too, such as Erving Goffman, Stanley Milgram, William H. Whyte, and Robert Edgerton.

16. One sign of this tension is the finding that, although residents of large cities are less prejudiced than small-town people, as that is conventionally measured, urbanites are likelier to see other cultural groups as community problems -, e.g., complaining that Asians "buy up everything" in the neighborhood, or that public behavior by gays can make one "feel like a minority" (Fischer 1982: Ch. 18).

17. E. M. Bruner (1973) describes the use of popular stereotypes to regulate public interaction in Indonesia. Sally Engle Merry (1981) describes a similar process in a Boston housing project.

18. David Hummon, in his study of how people think about city and town, quotes a San Franciscan:

I'm a city person . . . I feel comfortable in the city, I can get around. I know how to deal with people on a very informal basis. There are certain rules: how to get along in a city, what to expect from people you don't know. In a small town, I think there is much more of a personal level of what's expected . . . I think a lot of small town people — that really throws them for a loop. They can't understand how everybody's just getting along [in the city] (Hummon 1980; see also Hummon 1990).

19. This is the story of black/white relations in American cities. The era of nostalgic harmony was typically the era during which the blacks were few and weak in power. As their numbers grew, so did conflict. See, for example, Osofsky (1971), Drake and Cayton (1945), and Karnig (1979).

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