INCORPORATING DIVERSITY

RETHINKING ASSIMILATION IN A MULTICULTURAL AGE

edited by
Peter Kivisto

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I

The Revival of Assimilation in Historical Perspective

Peter Kivisto

In the final decade of the twentieth century—a decade that witnessed more newcomers arriving in the United States than at any other point in its history—Richard Alba referred to the impact on the nation brought about by assimilation as a "quiet tide" and a "dirty little secret" (1995a: 3). What he was reflecting upon was a growing realization that despite an aversion among many scholars to employ assimilation theory in accounting for immigrant incorporation, in fact, there was abundant evidence to suggest that assimilation was occurring. Within a decade, the secret was out in the open. Assimilation was once again a topic of interest within sociology and related disciplines. This was evident, for example, in the title of an article appearing in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "Scholars Cook Up a New Melting Pot" (Glenn 2004), as well as in the title of a collection of essays edited by Tamar Jacoby, *Reinventing the Melting Pot* (2004).

Nevertheless, considerable confusion exists about what assimilation actually means, and many scholars persist in being suspicious about assimilation, either for its presumed ideological biases or empirical inadequacies.

Not long ago, in a lecture on immigration presented to an audience at California State University at Fresno, I jokingly said, "Assimilation happens, though I haven’t seen the bumper sticker alerting us to this fact." The audience understood the reference to a familiar declaration on vehicle bumpers across America and laughed. Given that response, when I gave a similar talk at the University of Helsinki
about a month later, I used the same joke and quickly realized that I should not give up my day job. The joke sank like a lead balloon. It didn’t help, I learned afterwards, that the “Shit Happens” bumper sticker (or its Finnish equivalent, which might read Paha Juttu) that was alluded to never managed to make it to the land of my ancestors.

However, a bit more reflection led me to realize that beyond these most obvious difficulties, the fact that the origin of assimilation theory has a decidedly American reference spelled out certain crucial additional interpretive difficulties. On more than one occasion, colleagues from outside the United States have reminded me—often pointedly—that this contested concept does not travel well and is in fact often lost in translation. If that is not problem enough, within the United States assimilation is a concept that scholars attempting to make sense of the patterns and dynamics of immigration and transplantation have both embraced and rejected. Discourses on assimilation as a fact and as an ideal are often intermingled, so that what is in fact the case and what might or might not be desired are difficult to analytically distinguish. Add to this the fact that there is no shared definition of assimilation, and the result is that, at times, in debates over the reality, efficacy, or desirability of assimilation the participants often talk past one another.

All of this is unfortunate and counterproductive, especially in light of the recent revival of interest in assimilation, primarily brought about by the growing body of research on the global movement of peoples from the nations of the South and East to the nations of the North and West. In this research, there is a clear need to understand factors contributing to, as well as those inhibiting, the successful incorporation of newcomers into the economic mainstreams of the advanced industrial nations, the political institutions and civil societies of these liberal democratic regimes, and their cultural cores. Likewise, there is a need to understand what it is that newcomers are presumably assimilating into, what genuine options they have, and what their varied impacts actually are on the respective receiving nations.

Clearly, any effort to make sense of the analytical utility of assimilation must be pursued first by recognizing the three incontrovertible facts about assimilation that I have just identified: (1) there is little consensus about what we mean by the term; (2) it remains highly contentious; and (3) it is back in vogue. In the following pages I will attempt to trace the historical trajectory of this concept and its primary challengers. This will involve accounting for the return of assimilation among scholars of migration and ethnicity since the 1980s, despite confusion about what exactly it means and in spite of the controversies that surround it. I will also seek to indicate both the ways in which the current employment of assimilation is rooted in a tradition going back to the early part of the twentieth century and where it breaks new ground. In doing so, I have divided what follows into three sections. The first concerns the canonical formulation of assimilation. The second examines efforts aimed at reappropriating assimilation while simultaneously casting a critical eye over deficiencies in its classical articulation. Finally,
the third section explores efforts to move beyond the forensic examination of the
tradition by developing new understandings of assimilation that variously relate it
to class location, the role of citizenship, multiculturalism, and transnationalism.

THE CANONICAL FORMULATION OF ASSIMILATION THEORY

Robert Park, in conjunction with key colleagues of his at the University of Chi-
cago such as W.I. Thomas and Ernest Burgess, is generally and appropriately con-
sidered to be the sociologist most responsible for the canonical formulation of
assimilation theory (Kivisto 2004; Rumbaut 1999; Kozol 1995; Lal 1990; Persons
1987; Hirschman 1983; Matthews 1977; Lyman 1972). However, there is less
consensus about both what Park had in mind when he described assimilation and
whether, and to what extent, he merely presented a summary of prevailing views
or developed an original position. His perspective has been portrayed by some as
a theoretical articulation of the melting pot, as a synonym for Americanization,
the final outcome of a "race relations cycle," and an expression of a "straight-line"
process of incorporation (Portes 1995; Gans 1992; Lyman 1972). In these various
interpretations it has been assumed that his particular perspective on assimilation
is incongruent with, if not antithetical to, cultural pluralism or its more recent
parallel concept, multiculturalism (Kivisto 2002; Gordon 1964).

Park’s Precursors

Earlier uses of assimilation as a sociological concept predate Park’s contribu-
tion by three decades. The appearance of assimilation, both in popular usage and among
social scientists, coincided with the beginning of a great migratory wave around
1880. Regarding the former, Rubén Rumbaut (2001: 845) cites an editorial in the
New York Times from that era which expressed concern about the capacity of the
nation to assimilate many of the new immigrants then arriving in the United
States. Within the social sciences, the term was commonly used, though seldom
explicitly defined. James McKee (1993: 122) contends that, "assimilation became
a central concept in sociology without prolonged debate and without much con-
cern for any preciseness of definition." This is not entirely true insofar as at
least two instances sustained systematic attempts were made both to add clarity
and to employ assimilation as a concept accounting for the processes associated
with immigrant incorporation.

The earliest such effort was political economist Richmond Mayo-Smith’s
"Assimilation of Nationalities in the United States," which appeared in 1894 as a
two-part installment in Political Science Quarterly. According to Mayo-Smith, there
were three primary forces promoting assimilation: intermarriage, physical envi-
ronment, and social environment. He ignored the first factor due to a lack of
adequate data, and thus did not examine the biological mixing of peoples but
rather focused on whether or not members of the varied ethnic groups in the
United States were adapting to and embracing the customs, laws, and institutions of the nation, and thus were fusing culturally into an American nationality (Mayo-Smith 1894: 431). Like Frederick Jackson Turner, he argued that with the passing of the frontier the role of the physical environment receded, leaving the social environment as the primary factor promoting assimilation.

More specifically, Mayo-Smith (1894: 652–669) identified two primary factors that contribute to assimilation: education and the exercise of citizenship rights. In this discussion it is clear that assimilation is construed to be a one-way process wherein the newcomers transform themselves, but there is no reciprocal process affecting the members of the host society. His version of what Milton Gordon (1964) would seven decades later refer to as “Anglo-conformity” appeared to be the outcome of a relatively easy, seamless, and unidirectional process. Indeed, although he supported some form of immigration control, he was critical of those among his contemporaries who feared some of the new immigrants—whom they accused, among other things, of being prone to political radicalism and being responsible for rising crime rates—because he was confident that the social environment would serve as an antidote to these problems. Because of this, he assumed that assimilation was “natural and almost inevitable” (Mayo-Smith 1894: 670). This conviction was predicated on the capacity of the nation to socialize newcomers into its followways and mores and on the presumed willingness of immigrants to be so resocialized.

The second significant contribution to the early development of assimilation theory was Sarah Simons’ five-part article on “Social Assimilation” that was published in the *American Journal of Sociology* during 1901 and 1902. It was a detailed, richly documented, and theoretically sophisticated essay that explored assimilation in terms of world history. Part of the rationale for the essay was to provide conceptual clarity to a term that was viewed as important for both sociological and historical research (Simons 1901: 790–791). Simons defined assimilation as “that process of adjustment or accommodation which occurs between the members of two different races, if their contact is prolonged and if the necessary psychic conditions are present,” with the result being “group-homogeneity to a greater or less degree” (Simons 1901: 791–792).

Assimilation was construed to have both a social and a psychological dimension. Moreover, it was seen as having two aspects, the first of which entailed an unconscious or unplanned social process that occurs in situations where sustained contact between groups exists. The second was a volitional aspect, and in this regard Simons (1901: 793) was especially interested in “purposive assimilation,” that is “directed by the state.” Social contact was regarded as becoming more frequent and intense in modern societies as a result of improvements in transportation brought about by the railroad and steamship and in communications by such factors as the availability of mass-produced newspapers and the telegraph. Sounding like a precursor to contemporary globalization theorists, Simons wrote that developments in transport and communication technologies had resulted in
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Park's Theory of Assimilation

It is in the context of these two preconditions that Park's distinctive contribution to 
assimilation theory needs to be understood. Although he used the term repeatedly 
in many of his publications, Park explicitly and in a sustained way addressed 
assimilation as a topic in only three publications that span his career at the Univer-
sity of Chicago. Two of these are very brief, including a section introduction to 
the textbook he coauthored with Ernest W. Burgess and an encyclopedia article 
(Park and Burgess 1969 [1921]; Park 1930). His earliest treatment, appearing in 
the Chicago flagship journal, the American Journal of Sociology, is clearly his most 
sustained and arguably his most original and theoretically sophisticated analysis of 
the topic (Park 1914).

Before proceeding to summarize Park's argument in this seminal essay, an 
obseration is in order. Contrary to a commonly held view that was advanced in 
particular by Stanford Lyman (1972: 27–70), Park's theory of assimilation is not 
inextricably linked to the "race relations cycle," which entails a four-stage tele-
ological process that has groups moving slowly and gradually from contact to 
conflict, to accommodation, culminating in assimilation. Park used the idea of a cycle 
in only two publications, and in only one did this process seem to be what he had 
in mind. In none of the above-noted articles explicitly concerned with assimila-
tion does he mention the term. For this reason, it is reasonable to concur with 
Barbara Ballis Lai (1990: 5, 41–42) that the race relations cycle idea served only a 
minor role in Park's work and does not inform his conceptual discussions of 
assimilation.

In "Racial Assimilation in Secondary Groups with Particular Reference to 
the Negro" (1914), Park identified three objectives. First, he sought to clarify the 
significance of assimilation as a category of sociological analysis, implicitly distin-
guising it from assimilation as a normative concept. Second, he articulated a theory that treated assimilation as a process. Third, he presented his understanding of the implications of racial impediments to assimilation. Park noted that two different meanings of assimilation coexist. The first is "to make like" and the second is "to take up and incorporate." Both represent societal processes. The former operates more or less spontaneously as individuals "acquire one another’s language, characteristic attitudes, and modes of behavior." The latter is more volitional, involving the incorporation of both individuals and ethnic groups into "larger groups." In combination, these two processes are responsible for the construction of national identities in the modern world (Park 1914: 606).

As with Durkheim, Park considered changes in the division of labor in society as creating a new structural matrix for social relations. He saw homogeneity as the predominant feature of the premodern world, while in modern societies increasing heterogeneity among individuals becomes typical. In such societies, social solidarity no longer demands the consciousness of kind characteristic of the past. Rather, the interdependencies made possible by the new economic order serve as a powerful basis for a new form of solidarity characterized by considerable diversity. Because modern societies are able to accommodate far greater levels of diversity, individuals are increasingly free to develop autonomously.

One of the ways they do so is by emancipating themselves from parochial groups that constrain expressions of individualism. In place of such groups, individuals are inclined to become voluntary members of what Park (1914: 607) described as larger and more inclusive "cosmopolitan groups." What he had in mind appears to be connected to two insights of Simmel (1971 [1908]: 252, 274): first, that increases in individualism coincide with the expansion of the "social circle encompassing the individual," and second, that individualism and a "cosmopolitan disposition" are intimately intertwined. Park (1914: 607–608) made the following observation:

What one actually finds in cosmopolitan groups, then, is a superficial uniformity, a homogeneity in manners and fashion, associated with relatively profound differences in individual opinions, sentiments, and beliefs.... So far as it makes each individual look like every other—no matter how different under the skin—homogeneity mobilizes the individual man. It removes the taboo, permits the individual to move in strange groups, and thus facilitates new and adventurous contacts.

Thus, assimilation is conceived to be a process wherein individual social horizons expand and, simultaneously, increasingly complex webs of social interaction and affiliation arise. In other words, although it might appear paradoxical, assimilation signals the proliferation of diversity. Rather than enforced conformity, it makes possible a greater degree of autonomy.

At the same time, Park described a relationship between assimilation and social solidarity by arguing that in societies characterized by mutual interdepen-
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The native concept. Second, he articulated a process. Third, he presented his understanding to assimilation. Park noted that two exist. The first is "to make like" and the other is "to pass." Both represent societal processes. The idea that individuals "acquire one's own behavior." The latter is more voluntary individuals and ethnic groups into two processes are responsible for the conundrum of world (Park 1914: 606).

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Manipulating themselves from parochial individualism. In place of such groups, individuals become typical of the "social circle" that individualism and a "cosmopolitan" Park (1914: 607-608) made the following. It an individual, then, is a superficial uniformity, associated with relatively prosaic, sentiments, and beliefs... So far as it is otherwise—no matter how different under the individual man. It removes the taboo, disengages groups, and thus facilitates new and

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The relationship between assimilation and characterized by mutual interdepen dence, sentiments and habits develop that encourage pragmatic working relationships. Assimilation understood in terms of such relations creates the precondition for a situation wherein "groups of individuals, originally indifferent or perhaps hostile, achieve the corporate character," by which he meant that social groups, including ethnic groups, can persist in exhibiting their collective distinctiveness due to the fact that they buy into an overarching national sensibility of life and let live—or in other words a cultural climate predicated on pluralism and tolerance (Park 1914: 610). Thus, contained in Park's formulation is an explanation for how cultural pluralism or multiculturalism can coexist with assimilation—though not the essentialist version of pluralism associated with Horace Kallen (1924) or the parallel essentialism evident in some strong multiculturalist theorizing.

Park treated assimilation as a process relevant to all ethnic groups, and not only voluntary immigrants and their offspring. He specifically used the concept in his discussion of the situation of blacks in the United States, the only nonvoluntary migrant group in the nation. In this discussion, he identified what he considered to be the chief obstacle to incorporation, which was predicated on invidious comparisons made on the basis of external features such as skin color. The consequence of race prejudice is that the member of the marginalized group cannot be seen as an individual, but merely as a representation of the collective. This constitutes the social psychological underpinning of racial prejudice, for insofar as people are not capable of viewing the other as an individual, they are unable to establish patterns of interaction based on reciprocity and respect. Park (1914: 611) did not explore the causes or varied manifestations of prejudice, focusing instead on the interfunctional implications of the color line that separates the races.

In applying assimilation theory to blacks, Park claimed that assimilation takes place even in a situation of intense prejudice. He was clear that the aspect of assimilation that "goes on silently and unconsciously" and results in the acquisition of the dominant culture's language, religion, and values was quite thorough-going (Park 1914: 611). On the other hand, blacks had not assimilated structurally because they had been denied entrance to and membership in the secondary groups of the dominant society. The result was the emergence of a sense of group identity associated with the idea of racial pride, a phenomenon akin to the nationalistic movements among Europe's "nations without states." In this regard, Park concluded his essay with an intriguing speculation about the prospect of a multiethnic state wherein nationality groups maintain their distinctive identities while at the same time being committed to the interests and ideals of the state, a situation that is possible only if the state is prepared to deal with the demands of the nationality group for redistribution of resources and recognition (Park 1914: 623).

What Is the Canonical Formulation of Assimilation?

Mayo-Smith, Simons, and Park rejected the view that assimilation was a theoretical expression of the melting pot, or what Park and Burgess (1969 [1921]: 735) disparagingly referred to as the "magic crucible" version of assimilation that they...
associated with theories of “like-mindedness.” All three emphasized the role of culture over biology, though only in Park can one detect a genuine break with biological determinism.

Park’s position in contrast to his predecessors advances the theory of assimilation in significant ways. First, he understood migration to be a group phenomenon, and not merely an individual one. Second, he disagreed with the Anglo-conformity view of assimilation that was explicitly articulated in Mayo-Smith and was certainly a large part of what Simons had in mind. Third, Park granted agency to ethnicity. Finally, he articulated his position in a manner that very consciously sought to divorce sociological analysis from moral preferences and ideology.

His is, to borrow Herbert Gans’ (1992) term, a “bumpy-line” version of assimilation, not, as some commentators have assumed (including Gans), a “straight-line” approach. Assimilation is the product of interaction and thus has a reciprocal character, although Park understood that differences in group location and power and status differences would affect outcomes. Racial hostility (he leaves out of consideration religious hostility) was consistently described as the major impediment to assimilation.

Assimilation boiled down to finding a way to live cooperatively, playing by common rules that define the parameters of intergroup conflict. It entailed the creation of a shared national identity, which of necessity required certain commonalities, such as a shared language and core cultural values. However, it also permitted the persistence of ethnic identities and affiliations. Assimilation thus is not considered to be antithetical to a multicultural society; it does not require cultural homogeneity.

The unappreciated aspect of Park’s contribution to this dialogue is his explanation for why modern societies can tolerate diversity and his account of why assimilation propels so many individuals to exit—totally or partially—their ethnic groups. Park was insistent that due to the division of labor in modern societies, assimilation did not entail homogeneity, and that considerable individual and group differences can persist without impairing national unity. The reverse side of the coin involves the lure of assimilation. Park thought that assimilation was attractive because modern societies are individualistic. What this means is that people will seek to enhance their own opportunities and expand their life options, and that one way of doing so is to refuse to permit the parochial constraints of the ethnic group to limit self-realization. It means that individuals will seek to expand their social circles and will treat the ethnic group, not as a community of fate, but as one of a variety of possible affiliations and sources of personal identity. The cosmopolitan group, in contrast to the parochial group, is one in which individuals possess options, including the options of loyalty, voice, and exit.

One of the unfortunate features of Park’s discussion is that he failed to adequately define what he meant by cosmopolitan groups. In part this was a failure to take up the research agenda presented by Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., in the pages of the American Journal of Sociology. The task of scholars, Schlesinger contended, was
not only to explore "the influence of America on the ever-changing composite population," but also to examine "the influence of immigration on American life and institutions" (Schlesinger 1924: 71). Park ignored the latter. More specifically, he failed to understand the implications for American identity of cosmopolitan groups being receptive to being transformed as a result of their encounters with groups from outside the mainstream. In this regard, the insights of social critic Randolph Bourne (1916), in his advocacy on behalf of a "trans-national America," could have served Park well in amplifying his thesis. Unlike Kallen, who tended to view ethnic identities as fixed and distinct, Bourne had a more dynamic view in mind, one that presumed that not only would ethnic groups be transformed as a result of their encounter with the larger society, but that American society would also be transformed positively as a consequence of the encounter between the core culture and outsiders moving in. Park appears to have had something similar in mind, but unfortunately his argument in this regard remained woefully underdeveloped.

The Impact of the Paradigm

The version of assimilation articulated by Park can be seen as a theory of the middle range developed under the influence of those grand narratives of modernity associated particularly with the work of Durkheim and Simmel. For the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, it constituted the hegemonic theory used by both sociologists and historians to study ethnicity in America.

Most sociologists spent little time refining or revising the theory, concentrating primarily on operationalizing it. This was clearly the case among Chicago School sociologists, as can be seen, for instance, in the social distance scale developed by Emory Bogardus (1933) and in the wedding of assimilation to the ecological focus on the spatial patterns of cities in the work of Louis Wirth (1928). The apogee of such work was W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Strole's *The Social System of American Ethnic Groups* (1945), which was a part of their Yankee City Series.

Warner and Strole offered a complex conceptual scheme to account for the likely assimilative trajectories of a wide range of groups that they broadly distinguished into three categories: ethnic, racial, and ethno-racial (this is not well defined, but represents something of an intersititial category). The focus of their study was on the differential barriers to incorporation confronting various groups. Key to defining the strength of the barrier was the level and degree of subordination each group confronts, but factored into the equation was the impact of the relative strength of the group's communal bonds. Located in the social distance tradition, the traits that made incorporation difficult for ethnic groups were cultural in nature, and therefore, subject to change. In contrast, the racial traits that worked against assimilation were rooted in biology, and thus would remain persistent handicaps for racial groups. The ethno-racial groups (the two examples in the study were "Spanish Americans" in the Southwest and "mixed bloods" from Latin America) had sufficiently ambiguous identities that their futures might either
look like the futures of ethnic groups or the futures of racial groups (Warner and Srole 1945: 284–292).

In their "scale of subordination and assimilation," Warner and Srole combined racial and cultural types to form a grid in which they located each specific group. They offered both a prognosis of the length of time it would take to assimilate (ranging from "very short" to "very slow") and the group's predicted future social location. In the case of ethnic groups, the movement over time would be from the ethnic group into specific social class locations. At the other end of the spectrum, for blacks it would be a movement from the racial group to a "color caste" location. Asians were destined to enter a "semi-caste" condition, while Latinos would either end up in a class or color caste location. Thus, they concluded that, "The future of American ethnic groups seems to be limited; it is likely that they will be quickly absorbed. When this happens one of the great epochs of American history will have ended and another, that of race, will begin" (Warner and Srole 1945: 295). This is a rather odd formulation given the prominent role race has played throughout American history, but it does serve to differentiate the future historical trajectories of white ethnics and people of color.

Both methodologically and in terms of the theoretical assumptions shaping their work, Warner and Srole's study can be viewed as emblematic of a tradition of sociological research that extended into the 1960s. A parallel connection to the canon can also be seen among historians of the era. This is especially evident in the seminal essay of Marcus Lee Hansen, "The Problem of the Third Generation Immigrant" (1938), whose thesis challenges the idea of straight-line assimilation, offering instead an account for why a renewal of interest in ethnic origins might materialize. Thus, Hansen's thesis has often been regarded as offering an explanation for ethnic revivals (for a retrospective account of the Hansen thesis, see the essays in Kivisto and Blaneck 1990). He argued that unlike the second generation, which repudiated its ethnicity due to insecurity and a desire to be accepted into the mainstream, the third generation was inclined to manifest a renewal of interest in their ethnic identity precisely because they had adjusted to and been accepted by the mainstream society. However, this did not amount to a repudiation of assimilation theory. Rather, it signaled the fact that the third generation inhabited a unique historical moment, one that was not likely to be replayed in subsequent generations. Although he posed his thesis in generational terms, the impact of specific historical events ought also to be factored into any analysis of the likelihood of ethnic return. In any event, Hansen assumed the overarching trend was towards acculturation and incorporation.

A similar assumption can be found in the work of the other major historian of immigration at midcentury, Oscar Handlin. As Russell Kazal (1995: 446) has pointed out, both of Handlin's significant books on immigration, Boston's Immigrants, 1790–1880: A Study in Acculturation (1941) and The Uprooted (1951), "contained a healthy dose of Chicago-style sociology." If the first emphasized, as the subtitle indicates, the adjustment process, the latter was structured around the concept of alienation and thus focused on the existential tensions, conflicts, and
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suffering experienced by the immigrant generation—those people whom he depicted as being consigned to forever live in two worlds without feeling truly at home in either. Despite his use of the terminology associated with post-World War II mass society literature in *The Uprooted*, the book's intellectual affinity with the Chicago School is evident, particularly its close ties to the idea of disorganization that was central to W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1927/1918–20). Handlin's uprooted immigrants were treated as a lost generation whose plight could in no way be seen as mitigating the powerful assimilative forces at work in America.

Handlin did not focus, as did Hansen, on the American-born generations. Among those that have picked up on Hansen's theme of generational transformation, none have offered a more cogent sociological account than Vladimir Nahin and Joshua Fishman (1965) in their reappraisal of the Hansen thesis. As they point out, since assimilation takes place over time, it is essential to take into account both history and generational transition. Nahin and Fishman consider Hansen's social psychological explanation to be overly simplistic, and in its place they offer a far more complex portrait, one that arrived at what they describe as a paradoxical conclusion: "despite acculturation ... the sons continued to remain acutely conscious of their ethnic identity." More than merely challenging the Hansen account of children forgetting and grandchildren remembering, in their phenomenological emphasis on lived experience, they have offered a sociologically informed explanation for why individual experience and social structural factors combine to yield the paradox of acculturation occurring simultaneously with the maintenance of a keen sense of ethnic identity.

In a parallel effort published in the same year, Tomatsu Shibutani and Kian Kwan (1965) offered an approach that wedds the Chicago School of Sociology version of assimilation, similar to that developed by Park, to symbolic interactionism. They advanced the theory of assimilation in part by moving from a singular focus on the United States to explore its applicability to a wide range of locations around the globe. In a recent reappraisal of their work, Richard Alba and Victor Nee (2003: 34) contend that Shibutani and Kwan's social constructionist approach:

adds several features that are missing in the canonical account. One is a complex, causal analysis that allows for contingency... Another is the preservation of the distinctions among levels of aggregation so that the interaction among individuals, groups, and the larger social environment is incorporated into the analytic accounting... Finally, their analysis quite explicitly recognizes the centrality of stratification [and power] in the ethnic experience.

These works are representative of the central orientation of the majority of sociologists and historians during this period and a reflection of the hegemony exerted by assimilation theory decades after its canonical formulation. A half-century after Park's initial formulation, Milton Gordon's seminal study, *Assimilation*
in American Life (1964), both codified and systematized the theory of assimilation. Gordon (1964: 71) identified seven types of assimilation: (1) cultural or behavioral—also known as acculturation; (2) structural; (3) marital—or amalgamation; (4) identificational, which means creating a shared sense of peoplehood at the societal level; (5) attitude reception; (6) behavioral reception; and (7) civic, where interethnic conflicts over values and power are overcome by the shared identity of citizenship. Two of these, in my estimation, do not refer to assimilation per se, but rather to preconditions for assimilation, which have to do with the absence of various impediments to incorporation: attitude reception assimilation refers to the lack of prejudice while behavioral reception assimilation concerns the related absence of discrimination.

One of the intriguing aspects of Gordon's thesis is that he located cultural pluralism within this schema. This is because he did not think that there was a straight and uniform path to assimilation, but rather assumed, as had others before, that it would occur along a variety of different avenues and at differing speeds. Moreover, if persistent levels of prejudice and discrimination characterize interethnic relations, all or some types of assimilation would be stymied. Thus, assimilation did not necessarily mean that ethnic identities and affiliations would disappear or become irrelevant.

Gordon referred to these aspects of assimilation not simply as types, but also as stages, and thus he did have a sense that assimilation might in some circumstances signal the demise of ethnic allegiances. He hedged his bets on how the process of assimilation would occur, though he was clear about two things. First, he thought that marital assimilation would be the last to occur (on this score, see David Hollinger 2003 for a reconsideration of the history of amalgamation). Second, he contended that the type of assimilation most crucial to the process was structural assimilation. Once it occurs, he argued, all the others will inevitably follow: "Structural assimilation, then, rather than acculturation, is seen to be the keystone in the arch of assimilation" (Gordon 1964: 81). In this regard, what Gordon had done was to codify and add analytical rigor to Park's formulation. If acculturation can be seen as that aspect of assimilation that Park described as occurring spontaneously, structural assimilation entails volition on the part of ethnics and members of the mainstream.

Gordon adds a significant dimension to the matrix missing in Park when he separates out civic assimilation from structural assimilation. Park's discussion of assimilation had a curiously apolitical quality to it—one that ignored entirely the significance of the role of citizen. He did deal with the identificational side of this when discussing the significance of national identity as a unifying and thus assimilating force. However, the extent to which the idea of the citizen as actor might override or complicate the idea of the ethnic as actor is not advanced in his formulation. Gordon lays it out but does not develop it, implicitly agreeing with Talcott Parsons' contention that the salience of ethnicity progressively gives way to citizenship as the principal basis of solidarity in liberal democracies (Parsons 1971: 92). It should be stressed that for both, it was not an either/or proposition
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pitting ethnicity against citizenship. Rather, what they had in mind was the ca-
pacity of citizenship to reduce levels of interethnic hostility and conflict. The
enhanced salience of citizenship did not mean that the memories of ancestors and
embracing of one's cultural roots would necessarily disappear. As I shall in-
ate in the third section below, citizenship has become a major focus of attention
for some theorists currently reshaping assimilation theory.

Assimilation Revisited

Within a decade after the publication of Gordon's book, assimilation theory's
hegemonic status came under attack. Given the difficulties associated with disso-
ating the theory of assimilation from assimilation as ideology and policy, this is
not surprising. According to Gary Gerstle (2001: 327), the civic nationalism that
took hold during the administration of Theodore Roosevelt (who, incidentally,
attended a performance of, and had high praise for, Israel Zangwill's play titled
The Melting Pot) and shaped American national identity until the 1960s came
under attack in what amounted to a "revolt against assimilation." This was due
chiefly to the combined impact of the civil rights and the anti-Vietnam War move-
ments. In the case of the former, ideas associated with black pride (recall Park
on this score) and with the critiques of white America offered by militant black
ationalists signaled an end to the idea that "Assimilation into the national culture
took precedence over the maintenance of cultural or religious particularity" (Gerstle
2001: 330). Opposition to the Vietnam War furthered this trend, especially insofar
as the "best and the brightest" who had led the nation into the quagmire were
associated in the mind of many antiwar activists with the WASP elite (as coinci-
dentially were many antiwar activists, such as William Sloane Coffin and Robert
Lowell).

Related to these developments, in part as a reaction to them in a context
where the center did not hold, by the early 1970s there was considerable discus-
sion about an ethnic revival among the Southern and Eastern European ethnic
whose ancestors had arrived in the nation between 1880 and 1930. Reviving the
essentialist argument that Horace Kallen (1924) had advanced on behalf of cul-
tural pluralism shortly after World War I, polemicsists such as Michael Novak
(1971) depicted groups such as Greeks, Italians, Jews, and Poles as "unmeltable
ethnics." Part of the heightened sense of ethnicity among these ethnics entailed a
benign search for roots. However, it also signaled a reaction to the perceived gains
achieved by blacks in the immediate aftermath of the civil rights movement and a
resistance to integration (Rieder 1985).

Assimilation Challenged

The zeitgeist of this era, not surprisingly, filtered into scholarship on ethnicity.
Within both sociology and history, there was a rather widespread abandonment
of assimilationist theory in favor of variant versions of pluralism. The idea of ethnic persistence gained currency with the publication—at virtually the same time that Gordon’s book appeared—of Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1963), which examined five ethnic groups in New York City (Italians, Irish, Jews, blacks, and Puerto Ricans) and concluded, in a richly documented and nuanced thesis, that these groups functioned to a large extent as interest groups. One could draw the conclusion that to the extent to which this instrumentalist raison d’être persisted, so would the saliency of ethnic identities and affiliations. Despite the book’s provocative title, the authors did not offer an explicit pluralist alternative to assimilation at the theoretical level.

The sociologist most responsible for the promotion of a research agenda that sought to indicate the persistence of ethnicity, rather than its erosion, was Andrew Greeley (1971; 1974; Greeley and McCready 1975), who relied on National Opinion Research Center surveys to examine a wide array of attitudinal and behavioral topics, all of which were intended to ascertain the extent to which ethnicity still mattered. Greeley limited his subjects to European-origin ethnics, excluding from consideration racial minorities that had not been able to assimilate structurally due to externally imposed barriers. His findings did not lend much validation to the idea that assimilation theory was irrelevant. Indeed, his results about the persistence of ethnicity were mixed at best, and moreover crucial issues that would call the thesis into question, such as intermarriage rates, were largely ignored. Greeley’s findings pointed to little more than the obvious fact that assimilation had not yet reached its end stage, but no serious sociologist had actually made such a claim. Greeley, too, did not attempt to offer a theoretical alternative to assimilation.

Pluralists who did attempt to provide theoretical explanations were divided between two alternative accounts of ethnic persistence. Some theorists, including Harold Isaacs (1975) and Pierre van den Berghe (1981), embraced what has been described as a primordialist perspective (though the current terminology that could be used to describe this camp is “essentialist”). Ethnicity from this perspective is considered to be deeply rooted in the psyche or, from a sociobiological perspective, in the genes, and as such is an immutable and universal given. Ethnic attachments are the result of a little understood but nonetheless extraordinarily powerful psychological attachment to the group. This position is problematic insofar as it devalues the role played by both historical events and social structural factors and because it fails to appreciate the mutability of human attachments and loyalties.

For this reason, most sociologists who embraced pluralist theory did so from what became known as a circumstantialist (Glazer and Moynihan 1975: 19–20) or optionalist (Gleason 1983: 919) perspective, which provided a more compelling sociological basis for understanding ethnicity. This version of pluralist theory looked to those social, cultural, and political factors that created conditions that either sustained or undermined ethnic attachments for particular groups at particular times.
Assimilation Ignored

This perspective also dovetails with the work of social historians of ethnicity during this time period, who, by being sensitive to the distinctive features of specific groups, the particularities of time and place, and the significance of complexity and contingency, added to the appreciation of the variability of possible outcomes (Higham 1982). Olivier Zunz (1985: 53) correctly contends that this generation of social historians to a large extent neglected assimilation. In their effort to write history from the bottom up, they gave voice to the ethnics, stressing the choices they made, the strategies they employed, the resources they mustered, the ambiguities they felt, the coalitions they formed, and the constraints they encountered. This is clearly the case in John Bodnar’s synthetic account of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century immigration, The Transplanted (1985), which like much of the best social history of this period represents a fruitful interplay between ethnic history and labor history (Kivisto 1990; Higham 1990). His portrait of the immigrant generation—the “children of capitalism”—is one in which they reacted pragmatically to the larger society’s institutions and values, creating a world as best they could that was “an amalgam of past and present, acceptance and resistance” (Bodnar 1985: 210). He did not raise the prospect that, as Warner and Srole predicted, European ethnics would shift from a primary identity rooted in ethnicity to one located in class, but rather concentrated on the dialectical tension and mutual reinforcement of these two aspects of individual identity. Kazal (1995: 456) writes that, “When Bodnar used the terms ‘Americanization’ and ‘assimilation,’ he appeared to distinguish them from the larger process of immigrant adjustment and to deny that they happened for the majority of immigrants and their children.”

Perhaps because there is a tendency among historians to focus on the particular and to resist the temptation to generalize about larger social processes, which, like W.H. Auden, they might think is tantamount to “committing” a sociology, social historians such as Bodnar did not offer a frontal rebuttal of assimilation theory. Nor did they explicitly embrace cultural pluralism or propose an alternative. Rather, as Zunz (1985) has argued, they tended to simply ignore assimilation, thereby implicitly casting into question its utility as a concept for understanding the incorporation of immigrants and their offspring into the larger society.

Rethinking the Theoretical Legacy

By the 1990s a growing number of sociologists and historians, reacting to the critiques and the neglect of assimilation theory, began to express their conviction that a reconsideration of its utility and validity was in order. This included some scholars who had remained supporters of assimilation theory throughout the prior period, such as Herbert Gans, Nathan Glazer, John Higham, and Stephen Steinberg, in addition to a younger generation that included Richard Alba, Rogers Brubaker,
Douglas Massey, Ewa Morawiska, Victor Nee, Alejandro Portes, Rubén Rumbaut, Roger Waldinger, and Min Zhou (Jacoby 2004). In reacting to what Rogers Brubaker (2001: 531) referred to as the “massive differentialisist turn” that occurred during the latter part of the twentieth century, these figures are among those most responsible for the “return of assimilation.” The idea of a return stimulated an effort to rethink and reappropriately a line of thought dating back to Park (Rumbaut 2005).

In part, this disparate group of thinkers was challenging the theoretical adequacy of cultural pluralism in accounting for the fate of ethnicity over time for European-origin groups. At some level, the argument advanced was quite simple: assimilation had proven to be a far more useful analytical tool for understanding the historical trajectories of these groups. Glazer (1993: 123) answered his own question about whether assimilation was dead by contending that however unpopular the term might be at the moment, if “properly understood, assimilation is still the most powerful force affecting the ethnic and racial elements of the United States...” The fact that blacks have not been successfully incorporated into the mainstream of American society accounts for much of the criticism of assimilation, but according to Glazer this does not undermine assimilation theory, but illustrates the fact that, as he notes Park had already stressed, prejudice and discrimination stymie assimilation. In other words, assimilation is a powerful force, but not inevitable.

Glazer’s argument dovetailed with Ewa Morawiska’s (1994) defense of assimilation, in which she called for its resuscitation. She also called for correcting what she saw as certain problematic features of the “classical” theory of assimilation. These included that it was too simplistic and ahistorical, that its efforts to understand the dominant group and what it is that groups are assimilating into were insufficient, and that it exhibited a lack of concern about the role of gender in the assimilation process. In a similar vein, Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco (2002) pointed to questionable assumptions that have underpinned much work in assimilation (though, I would point out, not necessarily to the canonical formulation): (1) the clean-break assumption, which suggests that immigrants quickly and thoroughly sever their ties to their homeland; (2) the homogeneity assumption, which fails to appreciate that the host society is multilayered and diverse; and (3) the progress assumption, which views the length of time in the host society as key to the improvement of the socioeconomic circumstances of the group.

Still other scholars cast a sympathetic but simultaneously critical perspective on assimilation theory from Park to Gordon, addressing as Rubén Rumbaut (1999) described it, the “ironies and paradoxes” of assimilation. Rumbaut argued that rather than seeing it in terms of a terminal end state, it ought instead to be imaginatively conceived as an analytical construct of an “endlessly astonishing synthesis” (Rumbaut 1999: 191). Efforts to make the concept more complex and less unidirectional included Gans’ (1999) effort to expand upon Gordon’s (1964) attempt to reconcile assimilation and pluralism, an attempt that could be seen for example in his “symbolic ethnicity” concept (Gans 1979), and Milton Yinger’s (1994: 38–55) similar effort to treat assimilation and “dissimilation” as operating in a state of dialectical tension.
The most sustained attempt to offer a systematic rethinking of assimilation theory was that offered by Elliott Barkan (1995). On the surface it appears to represent an effort to revive the race relations cycle that, as noted earlier, has been inappropriately associated with Park, insofar as it involves a model consisting of six stages: contact, acculturation, adaptation, accommodation, integration, and assimilation into the core society/core culture. However, Barkan insisted that this model ought not to be construed as a cycle or a straight-line teleological process, writing that "there has been no one pattern, no cycle, no one outcome that uniformly encompasses all ethnic experiences" [italics in the original] (Barkan 1995: 46).

The analytical purpose of the model is to identify both those patterns that occur with a certain regularity as well as the exceptions to the patterns. By noting the exceptions and by being attuned to the impact of prejudice and discrimination, as well as individual choices on the part of marginalized people to either seek incorporation or to resist it, the model is designed to link assimilation to pluralism. Barkan saw assimilation as a two-way process, entailing both the level of openness on the part of the host society and the extent to which there is a desire to incorporate on the part of marginalized individuals. More than that, as an effort to remedy a particular shortcoming in the canonical model, he viewed assimilation as "a bidirectional phenomenon in that the general society and culture are affected by the heritages of those who assimilate," while recognizing that the interplay between newcomer and host is not an equal exchange (Barkan 1995: 49). Barkan was less attentive to the fact that the host society is multifarious and thus outsiders who assimilate do so into differing sectors of the society, thus making assimilation a far more complex and varied phenomenon, and one that does not necessarily signal a successful entry into the societal mainstream.

Critics have identified problematic features of Barkan's model. Its inattentiveness to class and gender has been noted (Vecoli 1995). Likewise, its singular focus on the individual over the group has been criticized (Alba 1995b). Finally, the model appears to be intended primarily to account for the historical trajectories of voluntary immigrants. This raises concerns about whether or not it can be proven suitable in accounting for the historical experiences of nonvoluntary immigrants such as blacks, indigenous peoples, or ethnonationalist minorities.

Nevertheless, the model served to amplify the argument that assimilation and pluralism were interrelated phenomena, and not either/or propositions. In a sense, it can be read as a culmination of a rethinking of conceptual frameworks dating from the early part of the twentieth century. It can also be seen as offering a theoretical account of the historical fates of European-origin ethnicities in the United States, and in so doing provides a theoretical framework for locating such studies as Richard Alba's Ethnic Identity (1990). This study was perhaps the most influential research project that mounted compelling empirical evidence for the erosion of ethnic institutions and neighborhoods, the declining role of ethnic cultures, the progressive decline in ethnic identifications and loyalties, the concurrent increase in intermarriage rates, and substantial evidence of social assimilation.

At the same time, Barkan's model does not address increasingly salient issues concerning multiculturalism, transnationalism, and citizenship, nor their
relevance to an adequate theory of assimilation. However, during the past several years, a number of scholars have in a variety of ways begun to tackle these topics from the vantage of incorporation. Sometimes this has been posed with explicit reference to the term "assimilation," while at other times a synonym has been used. Whichever is the case, in so doing, they have begun to move assimilation theory in new directions.

**New Directions**

There are two issues involved in ascertaining precisely what it is that outsiders assimilate into. The first involves the matter of where in the class structure they locate. The most influential recent work addressing this topic is Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou's (1993; see also Portes 1995, Zhou 1997, and Portes and Rumbaut 2001) development of the idea of "segmented assimilation." With particular reference to the post-1965 immigrants in the United States, they note that some immigrants are doing remarkably well economically, as they have entered into the ranks of the professional or entrepreneurial classes. On the other hand, others are located at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy, consigned to doing "3D" (difficult, dirty, dangerous) work.

Underpinning the idea of segmented assimilation is a perspective that views the economy as an hourglass due to the precipitous decline in the number of manufacturing jobs—the main vehicle for upward mobility for immigrants in the last great wave of migration. Focusing in particular on second generation youth, Portes and Zhou view the upwardly mobile as assimilating into and thereby embracing the world views of the American middle and upper middle classes. On the other hand, the other cohort is mired in poverty and inner city life with all the attendant social problems. In this sector of recent immigrants, one can detect evidence of assimilation into the oppositional culture of the streets, defined chiefly by the culture of the black underclass. Portes and Zhou are not arguing, as Warner and Srole did, that the movement would be from ethnic to class identities. Instead, they see the two as intertwined. In this regard, the concept of segmented assimilation offers a partial account for differing assimilative outcomes predicated on economic factors.

One problematic feature of the idea of segmented assimilation is that, in offering a dichotomous description of entry into either the upwardly mobile middle class or the underclass, the model oversimplifies a more complex picture (Waldinger and Feliciano 2004). Although it may be that the economy looks more like an hourglass than it did before, the metaphor can mislead insofar as immigrants are to be found in the working class as well as the underclass and the educated middle class. As Alba and Nee (2003: 8) point out, the concept also carries the risk of treating the culture of the underclass as static and immune to outside cultural influences. Related to this point, it also carries with it a tendency to overlook the fact that not all members of the underclass are embedded in an adversarial cul-
The Revival of Assimilation in Historical Perspective

In recent years, a variety of ways have begun to tackle the issue of assimilation. However, during the past several decades, assimilation as a concept has been posed with explicit questions. While at other times a synonym for assimilation has been used, they have begun to move assimilation

directions

...remaining precisely what it is that outsiders...society, whatever the cause addressed there must be addressed in the same way. A particular focus of attention is on the failure of the system to address the needs and aspirations of a particular group. In particular, lower class youth, present in assimilating into the middle and upper middle class categories. On the one hand, poverty and inner city life with all the attendant problems, are viewed as presenting the cultural and social problems of the young. On the other hand, some argue that the young are not being assimilated into the middle and upper middle classes. On the one hand, the middle and upper middle classes face an array of problems, including the problems of the working class. On the other hand, some argue that the middle and upper middle classes face problems that are not being adequately addressed by current policies.
agreement with assimilation theorists that certain shared societal values must be present if an ethnically diverse society is to hang together. In this sense, their respective positions are alike insofar as they reveal none of the tendencies of radical (essentialist) multiculturalists, who raised concerns about multiculturalism as an ideology promoting the "disuniting" of societies and the "twilight of common dreams."

Kymlicka and Taylor's thought is shaped by the experience of Canada, a country undergoing wide-scale immigration in a context defined by the ever-present challenge to the integrity of the nation-state that is posed by the ethnonationalism of the Francophone community. In Parekh's discussion of multiculturalism, Britain is center stage, and here too the dual impact of immigration and the nation's two "nations without states," Scotland and Wales, shapes the discourse. In all three theorists' work, multiculturalism is defined in terms of group rights that the state not only tolerates, but seeks in various ways to protect and enhance. Kymlicka (1995: 26–33), for example, identifies three distinct forms of group rights: (1) the right to self-government; (2) polyethnic rights; and (3) rights entailing special representation.

At the same time, these multiculturalists are intent on identifying those factors necessary to unite the diverse elements of a multicultural society. Parekh (2000: 219) stresses the need for "a broadly shared culture" that emerges from "interaction and [one in which the groups composing it] should both respect and nurture their diversity and unite... around a common way of life." Citizenship plays a singularly important role in constructing this sort of culture in the work of theorists associated with liberal multiculturalism (Kymlicka), communitarian multiculturalism (Taylor), and postliberalism (Parekh). Kymlicka (2001: 296) identifies four prerequisite virtues essential for the functioning and the integration of a multicultural society that the others would not dispute: (1) "public spiritedness"; (2) "a sense of justice"; (3) "civility and tolerance"; and (4) "a shared sense of solidarity or loyalty."

Although none of these theorists have offered an account of the role of assimilation in a multicultural society, they lay the groundwork for one. In fact, they do more, insofar as they work at developing a multicultural theory of group incorporation that also maintains individual rights and privileges them over group rights. However, their work remains at the level of political philosophy. A distinctly sociological theory of assimilation that locates multiculturalism within it in a manner akin to efforts by Gordon and Gans to link assimilation to cultural pluralism has yet to be articulated. Yet if assimilation theory is to be developed as a theory applicable to nations other than the United States, such an effort is necessary, for, as Barbara Schmitz Heisler (2000: 91) writes, "we cannot assume that the structural characteristics of American society are identical to those found in other advanced industrial nations."

Multiculturalism shares with both cultural pluralism and assimilation the assumption that the nation-state is the appropriate unit of analysis. This assumption has been questioned by the most recent conceptual development to emerge
in recent years in the field of migration studies: transnationalism. The core of the transnational thesis as it pertains to migration is that contemporary immigrants, aided and abetted by technological advances in communications and transportation, inhabit a world characterized by what David Harvey (1996) refers to as “time-space compression.” While the parallel to Simons’ work at the beginning of the twentieth century is uncanny, these developments make possible something she did not anticipate, namely that immigrants would seek to live, as it were, with one foot in two nations. In other words, the transnational immigrant is one who transplants in the new host nation, while also maintaining roots in the homeland (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller 1999). Portes and colleagues (1999: 217) have described the emergence of the “transnational social field,” which “is composed of a growing number of persons who live dual lives: Speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders.”

Transnationalism is a product of globalization. According to Stephen Castles (2002) transnational immigrant communities are one possible outcome of current global migratory flows, a possibility that makes for a distinctive type of community formation. This is because transnational immigrants differ from both the “settler model” of immigration and the temporary immigrant model of the “guestworker.” The transnational immigrant occupies something of an interstitial location between these polarities, creating a novel form of accommodation wherein the immigrant communities forge ties to the homeland, and thus a transnational social space shapes the social horizon of the immigrants. Castles (2002: 1161) points out that both discrimination and multiculturalism can produce transnational communities, adding that the former results in insular or parochial communities while the latter facilitates the emergence of cosmopolitan communities. In addressing the topic of incorporation, citizenship is seen as key. However, in the wake of globalizing forces, older notions of citizenship, bound solely to the nation-state, need to be rethought, as do conceptualizations of citizenship predicated on *jus sanguinis*. Though Castles doesn’t address all of them, he is pointing to the various ways that citizenship is currently being refigured, as is evident in the expansion of dual citizenship, the existence of nested citizenship (e.g., one is a citizen of France and also the EU), denationalization, and the like. In its earliest formulations, transnationalism suffered from considerable conceptual inflation, with one manifestation relevant for the discussion at hand being that it was portrayed as a mode of immigrant adjustment distinct from and indeed an alternative to assimilation. More recently, a number of commentators have sought to clarify the concept and defl ate it to serviceable use (Fitzgerald 2004; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004; Kiirsten 2001; Levitt 2001). This theoretical refinement has been aided by the early results of various research programs on transnational immigration, the conclusions of which suggest that economic, political, cultural, and religious transnationalism is a relatively limited phenomenon insofar as only a minority of contemporary immigrants can actually be defined as transnational. This is not to suggest, however, that they are not having a significant impact on their non-transnational counterparts. The jury remains out on this issue.
One of the outcomes of the refinement of transnationalism is that theorists have begun to rethink its relationship to assimilation, viewing the former as a possibility within the parameters of assimilative processes. In other words, rather than treating transnationalism as an alternative mode of immigrant adaptation, like cultural pluralism and multiculturalism, it is viewed as a phenomenon that coexists with assimilation (see for example, Portes, Haller, and Guarnizo 2002). Morawski (2003: 133) expressed this position in the following way: "transnational involvements of immigrants and their children and their assimilation into the host society typically are concurrent." Kivisto (2003: 19) similarly argues that "transnational immigration and assimilation/incorporation should not be conceived as competing theoretical models, but rather need to be seen as interrelated." As with Castles, both Morawski and Kivisto consider evolving conceptualizations of citizenship in a globalized world to be of paramount importance in defining and shaping the nature of assimilation. For them and similar scholars, in contrast to Gordon's idea that structural assimilation was the keystone of assimilation, civic assimilation is accorded a position of privilege.

To a large extent, these efforts have been aimed at conceptual clarification and laying out the preconditions for the articulation of a theory of assimilation that incorporates multiculturalism and transnationalism into it. They have not claimed to produce the theory itself. One effort to date that has sought to theorize modes of incorporation with a similar emphasis on citizenship and civil participation is that produced by Jeffrey Alexander (2001). His neofunctionalist theorizing bears in part an unacknowledged resemblance to Parsons' earlier understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and citizenship, but it takes into account developments in the area of group rights and multicultural politics that Parsons did not consider. Alexander develops a typology of modes of incorporation into civil society in which he treats assimilation as one of three potential modes of incorporation, the other two being hyphenation and multiculturalism. Alexander notes that these are ideal types and that in actual practice it is likely that one will find all three operating at some level. Obviously, this approach differs from the thrust of those assimilationist theorists who argue that cultural pluralism, multiculturalism, and transnationalism can be absorbed within the larger framework of assimilation.

**Coda**

In Alexander's formulation assimilation and its alternatives are presumed to operate in something like a zero-sum game, an assumption that a number of other theorists, including those noted above, call into question even if they don't offer a fully articulated theoretical account of what a non-zero-sum game would look like. In terms of where the development of assimilation theory is headed, it is reasonable to argue that here is where the action lies. As the preceding pages make abundantly clear, there is a growing consensus among scholars of ethnicity and migration that we need to reintroduce the idea of assimilation—or if we prefer, a
A central theme of transnationalism is that theorists need to take assimilation, viewing the former as a simultaneous processes. In other words, rather than a simple process of immigrant adaptation, transnationalism, it is viewed as a phenomenon that is interrelated. For example, Porée, Haller, and Guarnizo (2002) view assimilation in the following way: "The assimilation of children and their assimilation into the larger society. Kivisto (2003: 19) similarly argues that assimilation/ incorporation should not be con- cerned, but rather need to be seen as inter- connected processes. Kawakami and Kivisto consider evolving in globalized world to be of paramount importance of assimilation. For them and similar, structural assimilation was the key to understanding the role of privilege.

Theoretical discussions have focused on conceptual clarifications and the articulation of a theory of assimilation. Alternative versions of transnationalism have been aimed at conceptual clarification and articulation of a theory of assimilation. Theorists have not been able to agree on whether they should emphasize citizenship or citizenship, but it takes into account the focus on multicultural politics that Parsons did. Several potential modes of incorporation into civil society have been identified in the study of multiculturalism. Alexander notes that cultural pluralism, multiculturalism, and the larger framework of assimilation.

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The Revival of Assimilation in Historical Perspective


Social Spaces, Transnational Immigrant Communities, and the Politics of Incorporation

Peter Kivisto

This chapter seeks to explore theoretically what some scholars of contemporary immigration describe as the emergence of 'transnational immigrant communities' within the advanced industrial liberal democracies (Fiast, 1998, 2000a, b; Glick Schiller, 1997; Gold, 2000; Levitt, 2001a, b; Portes, 1996a, 1998, 2001). It does so in a threefold way: 1) by exploring the idea of transnational social spaces; 2) by discussing in what ways some contemporary immigrants might be said to create transnational immigrant communities within these spaces; and 3) by relating transnationalism—a new concept in the sociology of migration—to a considerably older and much challenged concept—assimilation.

Migration researchers have increasingly embraced the concept of transnationalism, although we are still at the point where the question raised by N. Nyberg Sørensen (2000: 1) continues to be posed: is this a 'useful approach or trendy rubbish?' The rationale for this chapter is based on my conviction that transnationalism is a potentially useful concept for understanding contemporary immigration to the advanced industrial nations, albeit one that needs clarification and emendation. While discussing transnational immigration in broader terms, I am specifically interested in locating the idea of transnational immigrant communities within this larger framework.
THE SOCIOLOGY OF SPACE

From Simmel through the ecological urban theory of the Chicago school, sociologists have focused on the role of space in group life and its significance for social interaction, both inter- and intragroup. Nonetheless, the sociology of space has subsequently lost favor with sociologists. Space has long been considered the appropriate focus of social geographers, just as time has been ceded to a considerable extent to the historians (Friedland and Boden, 1994; Pries, 1999; Urry, 2001). While some have argued that it was Parsonsian theory that was chiefly responsible for sociology’s declining interest in space, others have suggested that other factors, such as the status attainment model in stratification research, played a critical (if unintended) role in marginalizing the study of spatial relations within the discipline (Anderson and Massey, 2001: 4-5). Whatever the precise nature of the causes of this situation, space has been for several decades an undertheorized concept in sociology.

This was evident by the time of the publication of the 1968 edition of the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, in which there is no entry for either ‘space’ or ‘social space’. Instead, geographer Ann Buttimer (1968) discussed the concept of social space under her subheading on the topic of ‘social geography’, which appeared within the larger rubric of ‘geography’. In identifying social space as a ‘central theme’ in social geography, Buttimer makes the following observation that has relevance for what follows:

> space has different meanings for different societies and thus distance and spatial movement can no longer be considered in traditional geodesic terms but must be considered in terms of those dimensions perceived by their human occupants. For example, groups of Italians, Poles, Pakistanis, and Negroes may live side by side in one section of a city. Yet each group, because of economic, historical, cultural, or other reasons, may possess an entirely different conception of space. Some groups may have a social horizon that scarcely transcends the block in which they live or the set of stores in which they work or shop, while others may have social contacts with relatives thousands of miles away. Whether contact with distant relatives is frequent or rare does not influence the fact that a bond is perceived which ignores the barriers of space and time. (1968: 139)

In a language both influenced by the regnant functionalism of the era and innocent of postmodern suspicions about notions of objective truth, she seeks to distinguish the ‘real’ from the ‘perceived’ aspects of space, the former being located in geographic space or the social environment, and the latter referring to the ‘subjective’ element of space that frames the capacity of groups to construct social space. Making use of Maximilien Sorre’s (1957) effort to effect a synthesis between geographic and social space, Buttimer identifies two tools useful in assessing the dynamism of particular social spaces. The first, noted in the quotation above, is that of the ‘social horizons’ of groups, which she not only contends offers
a means to permit comparative research, but ought also to be viewed as subject to change over time. The second tool is ‘circulation’, by which she means ‘all kinds of movement of goods, services, people, and ideas—any kind of spatial movement which occasions social communication’ (Buttimer, 1968: 142). Related to this discussion is Henri Lefebvre’s (1991: 416) assertion (at approximately the same time) that ‘groups, classes, or fractions of classes cannot constitute themselves, or recognize one another, as “subjects” unless they generate (or produce) a space’. In other words, the ‘production of space’ is integral to the politics of identity. I shall return to a discussion of the utility of these concepts later. However, first it is necessary to sketch out very briefly what has transpired in the sociology of space since the late 1960s.

John Urry (2001) has observed that, during the past three decades, space has begun to receive renewed attention among sociologists, aided in part by the opening of an interdisciplinary dialogue between geographers and sociologists. This is borne out by the fact that there are over 20 entries on space in the 2001 version of the International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences (Smelser and Baltes, 2001). Especially important influences from the geographer’s camp are the Marxist geography of David Harvey (1989, 1996, 2000) and the postmodern geography of Edward Soja (1989), while similarly influential from the sociological side of the disciplinary divide are the post-Marxist urban sociology of Manuel Castells (1977, 1978) and the structuration theory of Anthony Giddens (1979, 1981, 1984). For our purposes, three concepts are of particular relevance: Harvey’s time-space compression, Castells’s ‘theory of flows’ and Giddens’s ‘time-space distanciation’ (for useful commentaries on some of this work, see Gotham, 2002; Gregory, 1989; Pries, 1999; Tucker, 1998).

Harvey’s (1989, 1996) time-space compression derives from his consideration of Marx’s claim that capitalism leads to the annihilation of space by time, and from Heidegger’s foreboding about the implications of the shrinking of both time and space. For Heidegger (1971: 165, cited in Harvey, 1996: 300), this shrinking produces a ‘uniform distancelessness’ which he views as both unsettling and terrifying because it does not yield what he refers to as ‘nearness’, by which he means a sense of identity rooted in the particularities associated with place—the ‘locale of the truth of Being’. Leaving aside the anti-cosmopolitan bent of Heidegger’s philosophy (and its potentially reactionary political implications), it is the case that Heidegger has captured a sense of the dislocation of identity from place as a consequence of the penetration of the modern technological and industrial age.

Harvey concurs with Heidegger’s general orientation when he contends that space-time has been significantly reconfigured during the past three decades as a consequence of the dramatic globalization of capital accumulation during this period. The result is that some urban centers of the earlier Fordist age of industrialization—and he cites Detroit, Sheffield, Liverpool, and Lille as paradigmatic examples—have had their place-specific identities rendered vulnerable. Compounding this trend is the impact of improved transportation networks and enhanced
communication systems that have undermined the 'monopoly power inherent in place' (Harvey, 1996: 297).

Marx's relevance is evident in Harvey's discussion of the shift from the Fordist production methods of the industrial era to the post-Fordist emphasis of contemporary capitalism. Capitalism, as Marx understood it, was restless and rootless, and the modern consciousness that it engenders is one wherein 'all that is solid melts into air'. Part of capitalism's contradictory character is evident in the fact that it needs, on the one hand, to create fixed structures in particular places in order to permit accumulation but, on the other hand, must be perpetually prepared to be mobile. Schumpeter's notion of 'creative destruction' captures well the character of this inherent tension between fixity in place and mobility in space. More recently, the idea of flexible capitalism has taken hold in business school curricula and among the chattering classes. This reflects a growing conviction about the fact—whether one thinks this is a positive or negative development—that today space trumps place.

Castells develops his understanding of the heightened salience of space vis-à-vis place in his articulation of the emergence of the 'network society', which is characterized by what he terms the 'space of flows'. He defines this concept as 'the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows', a flow being understood as meaningful and routinized exchanges and interactions in the dominant social structures of society (Castells, 2000: 442). Echoing Harvey, the network society is made possible materially by the technological transformation of communication and transportation systems. In such a setting, 'places do not disappear, but their logic and their meaning become absorbed in the network' (2000: 443). In a network society, places constitute the nodes and hubs of the network, and so 'the space of flows is not placeless, although its structural logic is' (2000: 443). Thus, for example, global cities become crucial hubs in financial and commercial networks, places where the managerial elites critical to the functioning of network society reside and operate. The significant differences between Harvey's interest in preserving capitalism as a central unit of analysis and Castell's disinclination to place capitalism center-stage in the space of flows need not concern us here. Of significance for what follows is their shared argument about the devaluation of place in the wake of an intensification of globalization, and in turn the reconfiguration or the production of new types of social space.

While Giddens (1979, 1981, 1984) has been accused of paying insufficient attention to the production of social space (Gregory, 1989), in his development of the concept of time-space distanciation we are offered an analysis that paves the way for a focus on the impact of larger patterns of structural change on everyday interaction. The imprint of phenomenological theorists such as Alfred Schutz is evident in his starting point, namely a consideration of the shifting impact of presence and absence in the interaction order. Without using the term, the phenomenological influences in Giddens's writings introduce for consideration a concern with the 'social horizons' of social actors. Noting that premodern societies were characterized principally by the physical co-presence of others, he observes
that modern societies have created myriad possibilities for new modes of interaction with those who are not physically co-present—possibilities that have accelerated dramatically in recent decades. The term ‘distanciation’ refers to the stretching of social relations across time and space (Waters, 2001: 68). Giddens agrees with Harvey that the rise of capitalist industrial society signaled a shift from a view of society as primarily involving the company of those co-present to a more expansive version wherein most of its inhabitants do not know one another.

However, in Giddens’s rendition, space and place are not posed in the dichotomous fashion of Harvey and Castells. It is not that co-present others become irrelevant, merely that the possibilities are created for social relations with those not physically co-present. Although Giddens does not develop this line of argument, the phenomenological thread in his theory would lend itself to a recognition of the claim on behalf of the compulsion of proximity (Boden and Molotch, 1994) which considers co-presence to be essential to all forms of durable social order and, in particular, in terms of social relations that are based at least in part on emotive ties. In other words, although modern communication technologies and transportation systems make possible new types of social relationships, such relationships evolve out of and remain dependent on co-present relations, which function as the templates upon which relations with those not co-present are modeled.

Another feature of Giddens’s (1985: 168-9) work is relevant here. In his particular account, the nation state plays a crucial role in defining insiders and outsiders. In so doing, it serves as a ‘storage-container of time-space relations’. Through its monopoly of the use of violence, it is capable of expanding and defining boundaries, which has implications for another major function performed by the state: adjudicating who is to be accorded societal membership and who is not. Not surprisingly, sociology, from its inception until recently, tended—often implicitly—to view society as synonymous with the nation state.

Also unsurprisingly, this viewpoint has been challenged as the lack of synchronicity between, on the one hand the state, and on the other hand both the economy and culture, has become more evident with the emergence or expansion of transnational capitalism (Sklair, 2001) and with the intensification of cultural globalization and hybridization (Appadurai, 1996). While a number of social theorists have suggested that these changes make necessary a reconsideration of our received understanding of what society is, none has been more persistent than John Urry (2000a, b) in his call for a ‘sociology beyond societies’ and for the development of a ‘mobile sociology’. While his call for replacing the study of societies with the study of mobilities strikes me as a bit overdrawn, it does call attention to the need to theoretically reckon with the networked, fluid, and globalizing character of much of contemporary life.

One of the key questions that must be addressed is the extent to which the changes noted above reflect an eroding of the power of the state as boundary arbiter. Is the state’s role more delimited at present compared to the past as transnational capitalism comes to play an increasingly powerful role in reconfiguring both economic and cultural (particularly through the mass entertainment industry)
boundaries? In other words, in seeking to comprehend the global penetration of capitalism in its quest for new places of production and new markets, how ought we to construe the respective contemporary roles of nation states and global corporate capitalism? What does this say about the analytical framework for research in this field? This is a crucial matter for researchers investigating the production of transnational social spaces from above.

**Transnational Social Spaces from Below**

But, of course, other social actors—albeit with considerably fewer resources—are also involved in the production of social space. If Lefebvre (1991) is right about the necessity of groups producing their own social spaces as an integral aspect of group identity formation, then one might assume that contemporary global migratory patterns are capable of yielding (or producing) potentially new forms of social space. In this light, Urry’s thesis resonates with the central themes of scholars who focus specifically on contemporary migrations. These theorists of transnational social spaces (Faist, 2000a, b; Glick Schiller et al., 1992, 1995; Portes, 1996a, b, 1998, 1999, 2001; Robinson, 1998), in seeking to comprehend transnationalism from below, argue that it is essential to abandon a container conception of international migration in favor of an ‘unbounded’ social science. This amounts to a call to re-examine the appropriateness of using the nation state where immigrants or refugees settle as the primary framework for immigration research. This call constitutes the underlying, initial premise of the concept of ‘transnational social spaces’.

The work of Thomas Faist (1998, 2000a, b) is of particular interest insofar as he offers an explicit definition and an amplified theoretical discussion of transnational social spaces. In his view, such spaces ‘consist of combinations of sustained social and symbolic ties, their contents, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that can be found in multiple states’ (Faist, 2000a: 199). This general definition applies to transnationalism from above, as with the rise of a transnational capitalist class (Skldar, 2001) and with the proliferation of International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) and think-tanks (Smith, 2001; Struyk, 2002). Thus, immigrant transnational social spaces are construed as but one type of a more general production of social spaces that transcend or crosscut existing nation state boundaries.

Faist (2000a: 200-10) locates transnational immigration within what he terms ‘pentagon relationships’ involving the immigrant group, the governments of both the homeland and the receiving nation, and the civil societies of both nations. The ties and networks noted in his definition involve, at varied levels of complexity, the ways in which immigrant groups are embedded in a matrix of relationships with the other four elements of the pentagon. He then proceeds to discuss three analytically distinct types of immigrant transnationalism: kinship groups, circuits, and communities.
Kinship ties are predicated on culturally received notions of reciprocity which involve the maintenance of familial obligations. Remittances from immigrants to those in the homeland are a key example of how reciprocity occurs across transnational social spaces.

Circuits refer to the circulation of goods, information, and people. Economic circuits constitute one instance of circuits. In this case they are instrumental in character, predicated on commercial exchange practices that are based on the exploitation of insider advantages in the formation of ethnic trading networks. Examples of such circuits include that of the Hong Kong- and Taiwanese-based banks that finance commercial ventures by Chinese immigrants, the business ‘aspirantes’ who travel frequently between the US and Asia, and the Dominican factory owners who rely on expatriates in New York both as sources of investment capital and as a market for goods and services. However, not all circuits are instrumental. Individuals traveling to their homeland in order to remain connected to their ‘roots’ represent a circuit based on emotive ties. At another level, one might note (although Faist does not) that the hybridization and globalization of mass—chiefly American—culture is a form of circuit predicated on the information flows made possible by new communications technologies.

**Transnational Immigrant Communities**

The third type of circuit refers to transnational immigrant communities which, in Faist’s formulation (2000a: 207), ‘characterize situations in which international movers and stayers are connected by dense and strong social and symbolic ties over time and across space to patterns of networks and circuits in two countries’. Such communities take two forms. First, they are bilocal or multilocal, based on the networks that arise between and among particular villages, towns, cities, and regions in the homeland and receiving nation. It is at this level that what Guarnizo and Smith (1998: 12) refer to as the ‘actual mooring’ and the ‘boundedness’ of transnationalism are most evident. However, transnational immigrant communities also exist in a broader sense whereby the networks are defined primarily by space and less by particular places (Faist, 2000a: 208). Borrowing from Castells’ discussion of hubs and nodes in network society, I would suggest that, while the place-specific community can potentially exist without the community defined in terms of space, this is not transnational immigration. In the case of transnational immigrant communities, the two are co-present, with the former nested in the latter. Transnational immigrant communities are conceived, in the felicitous but somewhat misleading phrase that Faist borrows from Melvin Webber (1963), as ‘communities without propinquity’. This is accurate in that this type of community is defined in terms of border-crossing social spaces, but is incorrect insofar as such spaces take institutional form in particular places. In other words, I would contend that contrary to Harvey and Castells, it is not that space trumps place, but that the two co-exist in a dialectical relationship. Thus, in any adequate research
program devoted to transnational immigrant communities, there must be, in Thomas Gieryn's (2000) phrase, 'a space for place'.

Immigrant communities operating in nation-specific social spaces rather than transnational spaces are also, in this light, communities without propinquity. Moreover, even within ethnic enclaves, it is not the case that everyone necessarily knows everyone else. While, in such communities, co-presence plays a crucial role in shaping interactional patterns, the ethnic group is nonetheless different from the kin group insofar as it also contains people who are unknown to coethnics. Those who have written about transnational communities have presumed that they differ from ethnic communities. The question that needs to be raised is to what extent can transnational immigrant communities be analytically distinguished from ethnic communities that are not transnational? Put another way, as Nancy Foner (1997) has done, the question to be answered is 'what's new about transnationalism?' To answer this question, it is instructive to explore briefly at the outset what we mean by community.

In offering a response, one confronts the rather daunting fact that sociology lacks a consensus about what this familiar term means. Almost half a century ago, George Hillary (1955) identified 94 different uses of the term. Due in no small part to the conceptual confusion that has persisted since the middle of the last century, Steven Brint (2001: 1) is not far from the mark in contending that, as a concept, community has 'largely passed out of sociological analysis'. His recent effort at resurrection is in part intended to be a corrective to the overly instrumentalist bias of social capital and network approaches, evident in his definition of communities. They are viewed as 'aggregates of people who share common activities and/or beliefs and who are bound together principally by relations of affect, loyalty, common values, and/or personal concern (i.e., interest in the personalities and life events of one another)' (Brint, 2001: 8-9; emphasis in original; for a parallel criticism explicitly concerned with earlier formulations of the idea of transnational immigration, see Kivisto, 2001: 567-8). Motives for interaction are thus centrally important in this definition, as they were for Toennies.

Brint's typology of communities is based on the following considerations: 1) the context of interaction, wherein he distinguishes geographic and choice-based communities; 2) the primary motivation for interaction, distinguishing activity- from belief-based motivations; and 3) the rules of interaction, which are predicated on ecological and motivational factors. The various combinations and permutations of these variables yield eight community subtypes: 1) communities of place; 2) communes and collectivities; 3) localized friendship networks; 4) dispersed friendship networks; 5) activity-based elective communities; 6) belief-based elective communities; 7) imagined communities; and 8) virtual communities.

While, at the outset of his article, Brint notes that the term community has been used to discuss transnationalism, nonetheless transnational communities are not included in his typology. Based on his descriptions of the abovementioned subtypes, it would appear that transnational communities bear some similarity to imagined communities which, borrowing from Benedict Anderson, Brint (2001:
to immigrant communities, there must be, in place for place’.

Dwelling in nation-specific social spaces rather than this light, communities without propinquities, it is not the case that everyone needs in such communities, co-presence plays a patterns, the ethnic group is nonetheless different also contains people who are unknown to about transnational communities have pre-communities. The question that needs to be normal immigrant communities be analytically inquiries that are not transnational? Put another way, the question to be answered is ‘what’s new’? This question, it is instructive to explore briefly unity.

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and 3) the rate of interaction, which are social factors. The various combinations and eight community stereotypes: 1) communities cities; 3) localized friendship networks; 4) dis-

based elective communities; 6) belief-based communities; and 8) virtual communities.

Furthermore, Brint notes that the term community has nonetheless transnational communities are on his descriptions of the abovementioned transnational communities bear some similarity to borrowing from Benedict Anderson, Brint (2001: 10) defines as ‘communities of belief in which members are not in face-to-face contact with one another’. They also share with virtual communities a reliance on computer-mediated communication.

However, there are differences. In Brint’s schema, imagined communities do not entail high levels of mutual support, while this should be found in a transnational immigrant community. Transnational immigrant communities would be—a continuum—expected to have higher levels of enforced conformity than imagined communities. The bonds of a transnational immigrant community presumably involve, on the part of individuals, a relatively powerful identification with the group that is defined in terms of shared histories, traditions, values, and so forth. This is the basis for the emotive ties that underpin such a community. Out of this, one can assume that group members (in contrast to members of imagined communities) expect relatively high levels of mutual support from fellow ethnics, be they movers or stayers. For example, while the former might be expected to provide remittances, the latter might be called upon to raise the children of immigrants in the homeland, away from the negative influences of inner city life. Just as expectations of mutual support derive from emotive ties, the more instrumental responses to survival issues are likewise embedded in the idea of one’s life chances being intertwined with the other members of the collectivity in culturally inherited norms of reciprocity.

However, the capacity of transnational immigrants to engage in effective collective action—be it in the quest for jobs, combating discrimination, involvement in homeland politics, the sustained care of family members left behind, and so on—entails the construction of an institutional framework. I would argue that what Lefebvre refers to as the production of social space takes tangible form most significantly in the construction of institutional complexes of the community. In this regard, Raymond Breton’s (1964) famous essay on institutional completeness is particularly germane because it provides a means for examining the viability of ethnic communities. His focus is on the immigration that occurred a century ago in the major settler nations. Some ethnic groups during that era created an institutional infrastructure that made possible a vibrant, place-centered community with an organizational matrix (typically also including regional or national level institutions) designed to meet the needs of group members. Other ethnic groups were less successful.

The result was that group adjustment to the migratory situation differed considerably, predicated in no small part on differing degrees of institutional completeness. While strong ethnic communities played a role in the preservation of ethnic consciousness and group allegiances, they also (by being decomposition chambers, making the transition from homeland to migratory land somewhat easier) had the—sometimes unintended—consequence of aiding ethnic groups in the process of incorporation into larger society. Moreover, they frequently assumed a role in dictating the terms of incorporation. Parenthetically, one of the least studied aspects of the incorporation of ethnicities involves the varied ways in which they transformed the host society in the process of being transformed.
How do transnational immigrant communities differ from ethnic communities? The former type of community is, of course, defined in terms of transnational social space rather than, as in the case of ethnic communities, nation-specific social space or place. According to all theorists of transnational immigration, the distinction is made possible because of advances in communication and transportation technologies over the course of the past century. Air travel combined with telephones, personal computers, and other forms of modern telecommunications have made possible the opportunities for immigrants to maintain sustained interpersonal contact with people remaining in the homeland. In Brint’s typology, this speaks to the contextual features that distinguish the two types of immigration. Put simply, contemporary immigrants are different from their predecessors insofar as modern technology has intensified the rate and extent of circulation between homeland and migratory destination. Not only does high-speed travel make possible routinized and frequent physical contact between movers and stayers, but it also, to employ Buttner’s (1968) terminology, accelerates the circulation of goods, services, and ideas or, to use Brint’s language, the ‘rates of interaction’.

Just how significant the differences are between immigrants past and present in this regard is an empirical question that is beginning to receive scholarly attention (Moraweka, 2001). There is an increasing conclusion on the part of scholars of transnationalism that the original formulation of transnational immigration by Glick Schiller et al. (1992) overstated the differences. In fact, both the back and forth movement of immigrants in the past and the number of those who ultimately opted to return to the homeland permanently were far more common than was often appreciated, as Mark Wymann’s (1995) research on the US makes clear.

If a convincing case is to be made that transnationalism is a qualitatively different form of immigration from the immigration of ethnics, finding ways to measure and assess comparative circulatory rates is certainly crucial. In doing so, it is important to avoid the accidental tendency of many scholars of transnationalism to embrace a version of technological determinism. Among the things we know far too little about at the moment are the actual travel patterns of new immigrants. How much travel actually takes place? How much travel to the homeland involves flying or, like Mexicans in the US, do they drive or take a bus? What role does distance play? How different are immigrants (again, such as Mexicans in the US) whose homeland sits the borders of the receiving nation compared to immigrants who must make transoceanic voyages to return home? What roles do social class and gender play in defining travel patterns (Philacka, 2002)? Shifting to communication technologies, we need to know considerably more than we do at present about ownership of or access to such technologies. In addition, as Claude Fischer’s (1992) social history of the telephone makes clear, communication technologies do not determine how they are used; rather, the uses of technology are ultimately socially defined. Thus, it is important to explore not simply access to communications technologies, but also the ways different groups employ them, predicated on their differing social horizons and, linked to such horizons, differing motivations for action.
tant communities differ from ethnic communities, of course, defined in terms of transnational space, the case of ethnic communities, nation-specific theorists of transnational immigration, the advances in communication and transport of the past century. Air travel combined with other forms of modern telecommunication has changed the way immigrants maintain sustained interaction in the homeland. In Brint’s typology, this distinction between the two types of immigration is different from their predecessors. Brident’s ‘rates of interaction’ has a different connotation on the part of scholars the circulation of transnational immigrants by scholars in the language of the ‘rates of interaction.’

In fact, both the back and in the past and the number of those who ultimately remain in the country is far more common than was often the case in the past. The research on the US makes clear that transnationalism is a qualitatively new immigration of ethnic groups. Few immigrants, such as Mexicans in the US, do they drive or take a bus? What role do immigrants play in the lives of the receiving nation compared to immigrant voyages to return home? What role do not only travel patterns (Phizacklea, 2002)? Shifts in travel patterns may be particularly common in the context of industrial or public culture in general and are sometimes prepared to get involved in the political arena.

Transnational Social Spaces Are Not Bubbles, or Why Assimilation Is Not Dead

Immigrants inevitably adjust and adapt to their new environments. Few immigrant groups seek to create a communal bubble that isolates them entirely from the impact of the host society. A few do, but earlier immigrant groups in North America such as the Amish and Hutterites today represent anomalies in the general pattern of immigrant adaptation and adjustment. The vast majority of contemporary immigrants in the advanced industrial nations become increasingly embedded in the social institutions and networks of the society where they reside. For example, it is there that they send their children to schools and universities, work in multiethnic settings, live in multiethnic neighborhoods (in the US, for example, hypersegregation characterizes the situation for poor blacks, but not new immigrants), are increasingly exposed to the mass entertainment industry and popular culture in general, and are sometimes prepared to get involved in the political arena.

This is not to suggest that immigrants are necessarily enthusiastic about all aspects of their new nation of residence; they are not. Workers know when they are being exploited. Parents feel that their children are too influenced by cultural forces that undermine their authority and traditional cultural values. Immigrants know prejudice and discrimination when they see it. Much of the adjustment process involves finding ways to resist or combat these other negative aspects of the immigrant experience. Contemporary immigrants seek to preserve aspects of their heritage while simultaneously being open to the impact of the general way of life of the receiving nation. In short, they do not live, nor do they generally seek to live, in splendid isolation.
Does this mean that immigrants are assimilating and, if so, what does this suggest about the future of transnational immigrant communities? One of the problematic features of most formulations of transnational immigration is that transnationalism tends to be treated as novel, an alternative to both assimilation and pluralism (Faist, 2000a; Glick Schiller et al., 1992, 1995). I would suggest that it is a mistake to construe the construction of transnational immigrant communities as antithetical to assimilation. Rather, I would propose that a conceptual framework is needed to articulate the interconnectedness of transnationalism and assimilation—their both/and rather than either/or character.

If the elements of ambiguity and conceptual inflation that surround the recent origins of transnationalism impede this task, compounding this situation is the fact that assimilation has been a lightning rod for ideologically charged conflict. 'It is not clear, however, what assimilation means,' So wrote Robert Park in 1914 (p. 606). Nine decades ago, during a peak period of immigration, Park thought that many of his contemporaries had 'greatly exaggerated' the extent to which assimilation was based upon homogeneity and life-mindedness. Indeed, under the clear influence of both Durkheim and Simmel, he understood modern civilization as entailing the freeing of individuals (members of both minority groups and the majority group) from many of the constraints imposed by both ethnic groups and the national society as a whole. The result is an increase in individual diversity across the board. What this means for group life is the emergence of what Park (1914: 606) called 'cosmopolitan groups', a harbinger of a line of thought developed at the end of the twentieth century by David Hollinger (1995).

This is a considerably different understanding of what assimilation entails compared to the bowdlerized accounts of its critics who suggest that assimilation means the total deracination of one's ethnic past, often brought about because of the demands made by the dominant group in a society. In one version, this meant that all ethnic groups would ultimately disappear, to be replaced by a new national identity. Thus, in Israel Zangwill's portrait of the US as a melting pot, the rise of the American was made possible by the eradication of all old world traits. The American was a qualitatively new creation. In the second version, assimilation meant the embrace of the mores and fashions of the dominant group, which was not seen as changing as a result of the presence of the 'other'. While the first version envisioned a reciprocal relationship between newcomers and established residents, the second did not.

The question of whether or not either of these versions of assimilation offered an accurate description of, and explanation for, the immigrant experience was increasingly intertwined with competing political agendas from the late 1960s onwards. In other words, questions of is and ought were often confused by critics arguing on behalf of cultural pluralism. This view became sufficiently influential during the past three decades that Nathan Glazer (1993) asked if assimilation was dead. I would like to suggest that Glazer was fundamentally correct when he concluded that, while it might be on the wane as an ideal, if 'properly understood, assimilation is still the most powerful force affecting' ethnic groups (1993: 122).
Concurring with Glazer's claim, an increasing number of scholars during the past two decades have called for a reappraisal of the efficacy of assimilation as an explanatory tool (Alba, 1998; Barkan, 1995; Brubaker, 2001; Kazal, 1995; Morawska, 1994; Zunz, 1985).

**Assimilation 'Properly Understood' and Transnationalism**

It may well be the case that the argument on behalf of the theoretical efficacy of assimilation cannot be heard because of the ideological baggage that it carries. Perhaps it is best to do as some have suggested—abandon the word in favor of one less burdened. But what might these contenders do? Words sometimes used as synonyms or near synonyms include acculturation, adaptation, accommodation, and integration. While cases can be made for each of them, the word that I think works best is incorporation. Among the definitions contained in the *Oxford English Dictionary* are the following: to admit to membership in a corporate body; to combine or form into a society; to unite in or as one body; to blend or combine thoroughly to form a consistent whole; and to put in or into another so as to form one body or integral whole. Coincidentally, the definitions for assimilation tend to be quite similar. For this reason I will treat these two terms as interchangeable.

As applied to immigration, with all of the definitions, there is no doubt that the term implies a transformation of immigrants and their communities. However, these definitions (or most of them) do not necessarily involve the elimination of ethnic distinctiveness. Rather, they would allow for the persistence of ethnic identities and communities over time, although the immigrants and their offspring would simultaneously: a) become participants in the host society’s major institutions; b) be open in varying degrees to the impact of that society’s culture; and c) interact in a wide variety of settings with people outside of the ethnic group.

The argument I am advancing is simply that transnational immigration and assimilation/incorporation should not be conceived as competing theoretical models, but rather need to be seen as interrelated. Empirically, Alejandro Portes has recognized this fact. Not only has he written about the advent of transnational immigrant communities, but at the same time he has spearheaded research into the assimilative trajectories of second generation immigrants. In their work *Ethnicities* (2001), Portes and Rumbaut examine the modes of adjustment and adaptation of the children of immigrants, concluding that assimilation is occurring. While this conclusion can be viewed as challenging certain pluralist/multiethnic theories, it should not be viewed as lending support to certain received notions of assimilation.

The reason for this is that Portes and Rumbaut argue that older versions of assimilation failed to assess precisely what it was that immigrants were assimilating into. That immigrants will assimilate is not the issue for them; rather, the question they seek to explore is into which segment of society will the second generation assimilate? By introducing the idea of ‘segmented assimilation’, they
seek to locate assimilation in class-specific terms. Operating with this concept, what they depict is a bimodal process of incorporation. On the one hand, one segment of the second generation offers clear indications that they are assimilating into the world of the upwardly mobile middle class. On the other hand, another segment enters the ranks of a 'new rainbow underclass' (Portes and Rumbaur, 2001: 45). An interesting feature of this book is that nowhere does the idea of transnational immigration appear. Thus, the discourses on transnationalism and assimilation appear to operate on two parallel tracks. The two empirical lines of inquiry that Portes has played a major role in opening up remain disconnected, I would suggest, because of resistance to efforts aimed at forging a theoretical linkage between the two concepts.

Richard Alba (1998; 2000), for one, is suspicious of this endeavor. Rather, giving what he—quite correctly—sees as a highly complex and fluid situation involving highly diverse immigrant groups, Alba prefers theories of the middle range. Although certainly not a postmodernist, he is opposed to grand narratives. It would appear that in his view, theories ought to be used as templates, whereby we can determine that group X fits the transnational model, Y the assimilation model and Z the pluralist model. The result of such an enterprise, it seems to me, is that it reduces the role of our models to that of mere description, foregoing their explanatory capacity.

But should we view these models as competing theories or as complementary ones? Milton Gordon (1964) makes more of an observation than a convincing theoretical case that assimilation and cultural pluralism could be treated as complementary: cultural pluralism could persist within the context of a larger process of incorporation. Can a similar case be made for linking transnationalism and incorporation? In developing a brief on behalf of such a linkage, it is worth noting that, while transnationalism refers to social processes occurring in space, assimilation refers to processes transpiring over time.

What follows is by no means an effort to cover all bases. Rather, it is limited to the central focus of this chapter: determining under what circumstances transnational immigrant communities are viable. Thus, we are not concerned here with the individual ethnic options (Waters, 1990) that present themselves in the aftermath of the fading of ethnic communities. A starting point would be to identify both the factors that facilitate ethnic solidarity and those that work against it. Under what circumstances do individuals embrace the ethnic group as a community of fate and when don't they? The answer to this question requires at the outset an appreciation of the fact that we do not have a particularly good handle on how to unravel the complex mixing of instrumental and emotional factors that bond individuals to the group. Not only should we expect to find differences in terms of the intensity and character of ethnic group identification among groups, but also within groups. Juxtaposing two recent newspaper accounts that appeared on the same day about Pakistani immigrants in Britain can serve as an illustration of the complex nature of this enterprise. The first article dealt with the conversion
experience of three young men who, until that experience, were unemployed and living on the streets in a small English town. They converted to militant Islam, left for Pakistan and were subsequently captured in Afghanistan with Taliban forces (Waldman, 2002). The second article reported on the successful attempt of a 19-year-old woman to have her arranged marriage annulled, one of 100 cases that have come before the British courts during the past decade (Bale and Gibb, 2002). On the one hand, a powerful desire for group solidarity and, on the other hand, a desire for freedom from the control of the ethnic community; the first motivated by feelings of exclusion from British society, the second by the prospects afforded by a culture of individualism.

There are lessons about the fate of earlier ethnic communities in the industrial nations that can inform empirical research about the potential future of transnational communities. First, some ethnic groups did better than others in forging institutional completeness. Those groups that found that their ethnic community could not meet their needs were forced to seek elsewhere. Second, ethnic communities declined when they were no longer seen as necessary, when they no longer met the needs of people. This occurred in most instances as early as the coming of age of the second generation, which is generally far more acculturated than the immigrant generation, embracing the language and many features of the cultural world view of the host society. Generational tensions between first and second generation immigrants resulted from a clash of old and new world cultures.

One of the things that worked against ethnic persistence in the US was the ending of mass migration for four decades, with the result that new infusions of immigrants could not be counted on to revitalize the ethnic community. However, even during periods of immigration, the lure of assimilation remained. The evidence on intermarriage suggests that, within several decades, the rates among ethnicities of European origin were quite high, and thus not only was cultural assimilation occurring, but also structural assimilation. As assimilation transformed ethnicities, the functional utility of their community institutions declined.

Two factors proved capable of serving as powerful brakes on this general trend: race and religion. Thus, ethnic groups defined as non-white confronted prejudice and discrimination intended to prevent incorporation; likewise with religion, with Jews being the paradigmatic example of a group that has had a powerful sense of ethnic solidarity due to persistent antisemitism. However, as the Jewish case vividly illustrates, when exclusionary practices by the dominant society decline, assimilation can occur quite rapidly, including a rapid acceleration in the intermarriage rate. Assimilation is not an inevitable process, but it is a powerful one. Where exclusionary tendencies are sufficiently potent, assimilation can be slowed or stymied—at least structural assimilation. However, ethnic groups have not been particularly successful in preserving ethnic allegiances to the community in situations free from exclusionary pressures. In other words, when ethnicities find a voice in the larger society, they have exhibited a willingness to exit, either totally or partially, the ethnic community.
THE POLITICS OF MULTICULTURAL INCORPORATION

But these were patterns from an earlier era of migration and it is not necessarily the case that they will be repeated in the future. In this regard, the role of the nation state is of particular relevance. It is a mistake to disregard the enduring power of the state in these matters. The modern nation state not only has a monopoly on legitimate violence, it also has a monopoly on defining membership within the societal community. Nations guard their right to distinguish citizens from non-citizens. At present, nation states remain the final arbiters in these matters, even with the rise of such transnational entities as the European Union (EU). And, insofar as this is the case, the character of the citizenship regimes of the various advanced industrial liberal democracies will play a significant role in determining the viability of transnational immigrant communities.

That being said, we are witnessing, in relatively embryonic form, the emergence of new forms of citizenship: nested citizenship, dual citizenship, and so forth (Delanty, 2000; Jacobson, 1996; Soysal, 1994). While far from the dream of being a citizen of the world, such modifications of citizenship regimes open up the prospect that people might legitimately maintain loyalties and connections to both homeland and settlement nations. For their part, the immigrant exporting nations today respond to movers quite differently than their counterparts a century ago. When Europeans in the past migrated to the major settler nations, they frequently encountered regimes—and cultural elites—critical of them for their presumed lack of loyalty to the cause of the motherland or fatherland. However, today’s exporting nations have found both political and economic reasons for being supportive of their emigrants. Some of them, such as the Dominican Republic, have enacted legislation making dual citizenship legal. The central point here is that states are potentially facilitators, rather than necessarily inhibitors, of transnational ties.

Seen in this light, multiculturalism as social policy ought to be viewed as a form of assimilation or incorporation strategy that requires the embrace by newcomers of core societal values, while simultaneously valorizing ethnic diversity. This interpretation of multiculturalism is clearly at odds with the ‘twilight of common dreams’ version, which postulates multiculturalism as a threat to assimilation rather than a form of assimilation.

In the two historic settler societies that have implemented multicultural policies, Australia and Canada, multiculturalism as a form of assimilation has been officially articulated. The logic of such policies is predicated on the assumption that multiculturalism threatens neither the core values of liberal democratic societies nor the incorporation of immigrants into the public sphere. ‘On the contrary’, Will Kymlicka (2001: 176) writes, ‘multiculturalism takes these political values as givens and assumes that immigrants will accept them, just as it takes integration into mainstream public institutions as given’. While not formulated as government policy in the US, a similar multicultural sensibility is nonetheless evident within the political-administrative and corporate-managerial classes,
Transnational Social Spaces and the Politics of Incorporation

The era of migration and it is not necessarily the end of the future. In this regard, the role of the modern nation state not only a monopoly on defining membership in these national entities as the European Union (EU), but its character will be determined by the acumen of the citizenship regimes of the member states that remain the final arbiters in these national communities.

In contrast to the rise of multiculturalism in these nations, other major advanced industrial democracies have to date proven to be less fertile ground. This is the case in France, where part of its republican ideal involves a view of France as a melting pot. This has meant that immigrants have, comparatively speaking, received less support for their efforts to maintain their particular identities because of the expectation that incorporation necessitates the denigration of old world traits. France remains the clearest example of a nation that defines assimilation as entailing the elimination of ethnicity in the process of becoming French. Even further removed from the multicultural current is Germany, with its historic 'blood and soil' nationalism which has served to preserve policies of political and cultural exclusion. However, there are signs in both nations that multiculturalism is making inroads (witness the recent reform of Germany's citizenship policies) and, moreover, because of the increasing significance of the EU in influencing the immigration policies of its member states, it is likely that this trend will continue. In contrast, the advanced industrial nation most hostile to multiculturalism at the moment is clearly Japan, where exclusion remains the operative orientation to labor immigrants and multiculturalism is not on the agenda of political or cultural elites across the political spectrum (Kivisto, 2002).

What are the implications of multicultural policies and practices for the viability of transnational immigrant communities? One can imagine such communities arising in states endorsing multiculturalism as well as in those promoting policies of exclusion. In the former case, liberal values make possible room for forging transnational ties without being inevitably accused of dual or divided loyalties. When multiculturalism leads to a more expansive understanding of the meaning of citizenship, it can increase the likelihood that sustained transnational communities might emerge. These would be cosmopolitan communities, reflecting the movement (psychic as much as physical) of immigrants in and out of the community, indicative of a general openness to the influences of both homeland and receiving nations' cultures and social institutions. In contrast, where powerful exclusionary forces are at work, transnational communities are forced to turn inward, resulting in parochial communities.

Transnational social spaces exist and it is likely that they will persist, the product of globalizing forces. This includes immigrant transnational social spaces. The central issue that I have explored in this chapter is how we can begin to think conceptually about transnational immigrant communities in an effort to assess
whether and where they exist and what their futures might be. I concur with Peggy Levitt’s (2001b: 201) contention that transnational immigrant communities need to be conceptually distinguished from the larger social spaces in which they are embedded. I also concur with the idea of promoting a research agenda that focuses particular attention on transnational immigrant communities and the citizenship regimes in which they are embedded, to complement the more abundant research conducted to date on transnational kinship ties and transnational entrepreneurship. This chapter was written with the conviction that such an agenda cannot proceed fruitfully without first developing an adequate conceptual map. While my intention herein has not been to articulate operational definitions, that would be the next task. This endeavor has had more the character of conceptual clarification, which involves a two-step approach. First, it has entailed clarifying what we mean by such crucial concepts as space, community, transnationalism, and assimilation. Second, it has attempted to indicate how we might best begin to understand the complex and varied ways that these concepts are interrelated.

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that their futures might be. I concur with those who argue that transnational immigrant communities are embedded within the larger social spaces in which transnational kinship ties and transnational mobility are their own life chances. To develop an adequate conceptual map, it is necessary to articulate operational definitions, that will help us to understand how these concepts are related.

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Theorizing the "Modes of Incorporation":
Assimilation, Hyphenation, and Multiculturalism as Varieties of Civil Participation

Jeffrey C. Alexander

In 1974, after 20 years of relatively successful struggles for the expansion of American citizenship, efforts that began with black Americans and expanded to include other racial minorities and women, a scholar named Peter Adler (1974:369-71) concluded a widely used anthology called Intercultural Communication by offering a definition of "multicultural." Emphasizing the "psychoculturally adaptive," Adler portrayed a protean, ever-changing, integrative actor who had the desire and ability to put himself in the shoes of the other person in a relativizing, crossover, nonjudgmental way. "Multicultural man," he wrote, "maintains no clear boundaries between himself and the varieties of personal and cultural contexts he may find himself in." He is "capable of major shifts in his frame of reference and embodies the ability to disavow a permanent character. . . . He is a person who is always in the process of becoming a part of and apart from a given cultural context. He is very much a formative being, resilient, changing, and evolutionary."
Fifteen years later, delivering her presidential address before colleagues at the Modern Language Association, the well-known feminist literary scholar Catherine Stimpson defined multiculturalism in a decidedly different manner. It means, she said (1992:43-44, italics added), “treat society as the sum of several equally valuable but distinct racial and ethnic groups.” At that same meeting, the editor of the explicitly multicultural Heath Anthology of American Literature defended his textbook’s race and gender organization of literary materials by insisting, “I know of no standard of judgment . . . which transcends the particularities of time and place . . . of politics in short” (Kimball 1992:75). In another scholarly presentation at the MLA, a Shakespearean scholar justified the need for a multicultural approach to literature by highlighting the boundedness of his own particular identity. Reading the work of a black woman author, he explained, “I do not enter into a transcendent human interaction but instead become more aware of my whiteness and maleness, social categories that shape my being” (Kimball 1992:69).

These juxtaposed quotations suggest more than a shift in intellectual reference from Eriksonian ego psychology to Foucaultian power-knowledge. They indicate a sea change in social understanding. In the early 1970s, “multicultural” connoted compromise, interdependence, a relativizing universalism, and an expanding intercultural community. In our own time, the same term appears to be ineluctably connected, not with permeability and commonality, but with “difference,” with the deconstruction and deflation of claims to universalism, with the reconstruction, rehabilitation, and protection of apparently autonomous cultural discourses and separated interactional communities.

In the course of this transformation, a highly visible conservative intellectual reaction has crystallized that is deeply suspicious about the motives of multicultural activists and sharply skeptical of the new and very different program for intergroup relations they recommend. Arthur Schlesinger, Kennedy liberal and cosmopolitan thinker of an earlier day, blames multicultural activists for revising “ancient prejudices” (Schlesinger 1991:15). Rather than seeing these thinkers as responding to continuing inequality and exclusion, Schlesinger claims that they have actually reintroduced divisions where none existed before. By “exaggerating differences,” he writes, “the cult of ethnicity . . . intensifies resentments and antagonisms” (p. 102), “producing a nation of minorities [and] inculcating the illusion that membership in one or another ethnic group is the basic American experience” (p. 112). In attacking multiculturalism as a new form of racial particularism, the conservative critics of multiculturalism claim that this movement has undermined the solidarity upon which American democracy depends. As Schlesinger sees it, a once united nation has now been torn apart. “The cult of ethnicity,” he (1991:112) decries, “has reversed the movement of American history, and he condemns it for “breaking the bonds of cohesion—common ideals, common political institutions, common language, common culture, common fate—that hold the republic together” (p. 138). According to Kimball (1992:65), “what we are facing is nothing less than the destruction of the fundamental premises that underlie . . . a liberal democratic polity.”
It is perplexing, but also highly revealing in a theoretical sense, that some of the most important intellectual advocates of multiculturalism actually seem to agree with such critics, suggesting that their movements are, in fact, destroying the American community. Their alternative normative ideal is a social system of insulated but equally empowered groups who, rather than experiencing some shared humanity and solidarity, would simply grant each other the right to pursue their distinctive and “different” lifestyles and goals. I propose to criticize this claim on empirical, theoretical, and normative grounds. I will propose an alternative model of incorporation in contemporary social systems, one that refers to the concept of “fragmented civil societies.” After indicating how this approach casts the debate between multiculturalists and conservatives in a different light, I will operationalize it by presenting three ideal-typical models of out-group incorporation into fragmented civil societies. Comparing the contemporary focus on difference with incorporative regimes that emphasize assimilation and ethnic-hyphenation, I will argue that multiculturalism can be considered, not as a separating emphasis on separation, but as a new and more democratic mode of civil integration.

**Recognition Without Solidarity?**

The most important theoretical articulation of the radical multiculturalist position is Iris Marion Young’s philosophical treatise *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Speaking as a feminist personally involved in the new social movements of the 1970s and 1980s, Young sees American and, indeed, modern democracies as neither cohesive “societies” nor real democracies. Rather, as Young explains it, modern democracies are composed simply of social “groups.” These groups are defined by particularistic, primary identities—she mentions age, sex, race, ethnicity, gender, and religion—and they are always and inevitably organized in a hierarchical way, that is, composed of “social relations [which] are tightly defined by domination and oppression” (Young 1990:32-33). The groups that compose such a system are, implicitly or explicitly, engaged in endless and mortal conflict with each other, with the sole aim of enlarging the field for the expression of their identity interests.

On the basis of this empirical description of the contemporary social organization, Young attacks the very idea of “civic impartiality.” The notion of an impartial “public” sphere, she asserts, “masks the ways in which the particular perspectives of dominant groups claim universality” and actually “helps justify hierarchical decision-making structures.”

With the hope for neutral territory and common understanding ruled out, Young links justice instead to the full expression of particularity and difference. “The good society,” she writes, “does not eliminate or transcend group difference” (p. 165). To the contrary, “group differentiation is both an inevitable and a desirable aspect of modern social processes.” For this reason, justice “requires not the melting away of differences, but institutions that promote reproduction of and
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revealing in a theoretical sense, that some of the cases of multiculturalism actually seem to point their movements are, in fact, destroying and constructing the system of a social and moral ideal is a social system of values which, rather than experiencing some shared by grant each other the right to pursue their goals. I propose to criticize this claim on social science grounds. I will propose an alternative model of social systems, one that refers to the concept of how this approach casts the debate on assimilation as a cultural-hyphenation, I will then consider, not as a separating emphasis on democratic mode of civil integration.

Outside Solidarity?

The radical multiculturalist position treatise Justice and The Politics of Difference involves in the new social movements of African and, indeed, modern democracies as democracies. Rather, as Young explains, it simply of social “groups.” These groups are identities—she mentions age, sex, race, ethnicity, ways and inevitably organized in a hierarchizations [which] are tightly defined by dominance. (32-33). The groups that compose such organized in endless and mortal conflict with each other, and define the terms for the expression of their vision of the contemporary social order of “civic impartiality.” The idea of an “universal” and commonly understood “helps justify solidarity.”

Universal and common understanding ruled out. universal theory and common understanding ruled out. expression of particularity and difference. Not eliminate or transcend group difference’s entanglement is both an inevitable and a desira...” For this reason, justice requires not the institutions that promote reproduction of and respect for group differences without oppression (p. 47, italics added). Young argues that recent social movements should be seen in just this way. She reads them simply as emphasizing difference and particularity—as identity movements in the contemporary social science sense—suggesting that the discourse of a radical, separatist multiculturalism is not only rational and morally legitimate but politically effective as well.

My problem with Young’s argument is not with its logical coherence but with its empirical validity and its moral status, which are inextricably interwoven. Does Young have a realistic theory of the culture and institutional life of contemporary societies? Of how social movements for justice actually work? Young claims that “a selfish person who refuses to listen to the expression of the needs of others will not himself be listened to” (p. 106). But isn’t “selfishness”—the self-orientation produced by xenophobic, group-limited perception—what Young herself has identified as the defining characteristic of contemporary social life? When socially marginalized and culturally polluted groups make claims for recognition and respect, can the simple assertion of these claims, in and of itself, change the minds of the dominant groups who have made them marginal and polluted? It seems highly unlikely that more rational argument could be so sufficient unto itself.

In the remainder of this article I will suggest a very different position. It is not the mere fact of energetic positive self-identification, much less the simple demand for deliberation, but the construction of the social context within which claims for recognition are made that determines whether the negative understanding of social differences—“stereotyping” in an earlier vocabulary—can be ameliorated or reversed. An impartial civil sphere does not necessarily rest upon the kind of undifferentiated, homogeneous, melted social values that conservatives recommend and radicals deplore.

The Fragmented Civil Sphere

In order to substantiate this claim, we must redefine the object in relation to which claims for recognition are made. In order to do so, we must move from concepts like “society,” “common values,” and “community” to a notion of the “civil sphere.” While there are famously different approaches to this now highly controversial concept, I understand it as a social sphere or field organized around a particular kind of solidarity, one whose members are symbolically represented as independent and self-motivating persons individually responsible for their actions, yet also as actors who feel themselves, at the same time, bound by collective obligations to all the other individuals who compose this sphere. The existence of such a civil sphere suggests tremendous respect for individual capacities and rationality and also a highly idealistic and trusting understanding of the goodwill of others. For how could we grant a wide scope for freedom of action and expression to unknown others—as the democratic notion of civil society implies—if we did
not, in principle, trust in their rationality and goodwill? This trust in the goodwill of autonomous others is implied in the paradoxical proposition that the "free" members of civil society are at the same time solidaristic with each other. Insofar as such solidarity exists—and this is, of course, the problematic issue—we "see ourselves" in every other member of society. Imaginatively "taking the place of the other," our actions become simultaneously self-orientated yet controlled in some manner by extrindivial solidarity. In this way, we act simultaneously as members of a community and as rational, self-willed, autonomous individuals. The emergence of this kind of civil realm supersedes, but does not necessarily suppress, more particular commitments we feel as members of primary groups.

Such an idealistic vision of a civil social order has been a utopian aspiration of communities in different times and places, even while it has generated sharp tensions with other, more restrictive understandings that members of these communities have simultaneously held. With the institutionalization of the civil sphere in the formally democratic nation states of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these tensions, far from being resolved, only became more pressing and more central to the social systems of which they were an increasingly important part.

Thinking in functional terms about restrictions on the institutionalization of early civil societies, one may say that civil society remained only one sphere among others within a broader social system. English, French, and American societies were, and are, also composed of powerful and decidedly noncivil spheres. The family, religious groups, scientific associations, economic institutions, and geographically bounded regional communities produced different kinds of goods and organized their social relations according to different ideals and constraints. Families, for example, are bound by love and emotional loyalty, not civil respect and critical rationality; they are organized, moreover, in highly authoritarian relations, not only between parents and children but between husband and wife. The same can be said for the market relations that define capitalism, which emphasize efficiency rather than fairness, competition rather than solidarity, and, once again, hierarchical rather than egalitarian forms of respect. Religious organizations are similarly vertical in their organization, despite the significant horizontal relationships engendered in Protestant sects; at least historically, they have been committed to the highly elitist and exclusionary principle that only those born within a faith, and among these only those specifically called to God, were to be fully respected and obeyed. Scientific communities also manifest this exclusionary elitism—around truth rather than salvation—although they are even more associational and collegial internally.

These noncivil spheres did not simply sit outside the boundaries of civil society and conduct with it a courteous and respectful exchange, as the social theory of early liberalism imagined and as contemporary conservatives would so much like to believe today. To the contrary, they invaded civil society from its very inception, interpenetrating with it in systematic and fateful ways. The qualities, relationships, and goods highly valued in these other spheres became translated into restrictive and exclusionary requisites for participation in civil society itself. For example, familial patriarchy expressed itself in the widely held belief that women
were not autonomous, rational, or honest enough to participate in the public sphere. The force of capitalist economic institutions encouraged the belief that failure in the market sphere revealed a parallel incompetence in democratic life, hence the long-standing exclusion of the propertyless from full electoral participation and the polluting stereotypes about the irrationality and even animality of the "soot covered classes." It is easy to see the conversion of religious into civil competence in much the same way: only members in good standing of certified and dominant confessions could possess the conscience, trust, and common sense required for civil society itself.

But the utopian promises of civil society were also fractured for what might be called historical reasons, not only for functional ones, and it is these that will especially concern us here. Civil societies are not some abstract, free-floating space. They exist in real historical time as part of political regimes that are founded by conquest, immigration, and revolution. The founders of societies manifest distinctive primary, or "primordial," characteristics, qualities of race, language, religion, gender, sexuality, and national origins.7 In the historical construction of civil societies, therefore, one finds that the primordial qualities of these founders are established as the highest criteria of humanity, that they are represented as embodying a higher competence for civil society. Only people of a certain race, who speak a certain language, who practice a certain religion, and who have immigrated from a certain part on the globe—only these very special persons are believed to actually possess what it takes to be members of our ideal civil society. Only they can be trusted to exhibit the sacred qualities for participation.

These empirical considerations bring us to the crux of the problem for theorists involved in contemporary multicultural debates. The difficulty for liberal social theory, and for the participants in these "actually existing civil societies," is that these contradictory dimensions of formally democratic social systems did not, and do not, express themselves in a transparent way. To the contrary, these contradictions were hidden by constitutional principles and Enlightenment culture alike. As feminist social theorists were the first to clearly demonstrate, these early modern social systems were divided into public and private spheres. In the former, civil and democratic principles prevailed. In the latter, the private spheres, people were relatively "free" to do what they liked, to whom they liked, and in all sorts of decidedly undemocratic ways. In fact, in the famous essay Kant wrote in 1784, "What Is Enlightenment," he made this distinction the very basis of his defense of autonomous reason itself. In the public sphere, Kant declared, all men are enabled, indeed mandated, to challenge authority in the name of autonomy and to act according to the principles of universalism. Yet when these same men are in their private spheres—in the church, the business organization, the family, the army, or the state—they are not allowed to exercise these civil rights and they do not have to allow others to exercise them in turn. To the contrary, Kant insisted, they must obey noncivil authorities in a highly subservient way.

While this private-public distinction served after a fashion to protect the civil sphere from complete affixation, it also testified to its profound limitations.
For the public world was not nearly so shielded from the vagaries of the private worlds as Enlightenment and constitutional thinking proclaimed. To the contrary, as I have suggested, the functional and historical particularities expressed in private life invaded and distorted the understanding of civil life—culturally, institutionally, psychologically, and in interactional practices of everyday life. Jews may have been allowed to practice their religion in the privacy of their homes—although sometimes they were not—but “Jewishness” carried such a stigma that Jews were also excluded from most of the central institutions of public life. The same contradiction of the purported universality of the public sphere applied to other supposedly private categories, like race, gender and sexuality, ethnicity, class position, religion, and physical location.

**Varieties of Civil Incorporation:**

**Incorporation and Resistance in Civil Societies**

In the 300 years since the first democratic institutionalizations of civil society emerged, the crippling of its utopian promises has generated continuous struggle. These have not only been political struggles for power but legal, cultural, and emotional arguments about definitions of competence and identity, about symbolic representations of the primordial qualities of dominant and excluded groups.

Whether or not members of the core group of society become communicatively convinced—or are regulated to behave as if they are—that subordinate group members actually possess a common humanity, and thus are worthy of respect, is critical to the process that can be called “incorporation.” Incorporation points to the possibility of closing the gap between stigmatized categories of persons—persons whose particular identities have been relegated to the invisibility of private life—and the utopian promises that in principle regulate civil life, principles that imply equality, solidarity, and respect among members of society. Whether social movements try to close this gap or exacerbate it, they force their insistent demands vis-à-vis the imminent possibilities of this incorporative process. But incorporation does not only occur in the public arena of social movements; it is a process that proceeds along extraordinarily complex paths, extending from micro interactions, such as intermarriage, to macro arenas like labor markets. Insofar as social systems contain a civil dimension, members of their core groups always face the imminent question of whether in regard to a particular category of excluded persons—whether defined by class, region, gender, race, religion, or national origin—this gap should be closed. Should the incorporation of this particular group into civil society proceed?

As intensive symbolic and material conflicts develop between core and out-group, social movements emerge that issue challenges to the cultural legitimation of exclusion, criticizing stigmatizing interactions and challenging distorted institutions of communication and corrupt institutions of regulation. Such movements demand that out-group identities be reconstructed in terms of the civil
Civil Incorporation: Resistance in Civil Societies

Democratic institutionalizations of civil society promises have generated continuous struggle. Struggles for power but legal, cultural, and social identities of competence and identity become symbolizing qualities of dominant and excluded groups. The core group of society become communicative and behave as if they are—themselves subordinate group humanity, and thus are worthy of respect, is called “incorporation.” Incorporation points to the way in which stigmatized categories of persons—perhaps the invisible to the principle regulate civil life, principles that among members of society. Social and... 

1. Is the civil society of a particular nation-state really autonomous? Can it be vis-à-vis the historical primordialities instantiated in various forms of national stratification? Or is the nation’s civil realm so closely attached to primordial understandings that it should be regarded not as providing a counterweight to stratification but, instead, simply as a legitimation of it?

The other mode of argumentation that continually surfaces connects to but is [distinct] from the first.

2. How should the identities of outsiders be understood in relation to the dualities of the discourse of civil society? For example, are they rational or irrational, honest or deceitful, open or secretive, autonomous or dependent?

The democratic, Enlightenment answers to this pair of fundamental and fateful questions are straightforward. In real civil societies, however, such morally correct answers have not been fully forthcoming. What is particularly interesting from a sociological point of view, moreover, is that, even when such democratic answers have been given, they have been formulated and institutionalized in three very different ideal-typical ways—as assimilation, ethnic hyphenation, and multiculturalism.

Assimilation: Separating Persons from Qualities

Assimilation has been by far the most common way in which the historical expansion and revision of the civil sphere have taken place. For comparative and empirical reasons, therefore, as well as for moral ones, it is important to define assimilation very precisely. In assimilative incorporation, members of primordially
denigrated groups are allowed, and often encouraged, to "pass" into public life. As this notion of passing suggests, such incorporation is not merely the result of regulative institutions guaranteeing excluded groups civil treatment in a procedural sense. The communal life of societies is much too layered and culturally textured for that. Because civil competences are always interlarded with particular identities, any mode of incorporation must focus on the public construction of public identities, on how the civic competences of core groups are related to the abilities of subordinate ones.

Assimilation is an incorporative process that achieves this extension, or transformation, in a distinctive way. Assimilation takes place when out-group members are allowed to enter fully into civil life on the condition that they shed their polluted primordial identities. Assimilation is possible to the degree that socialization channels exist that can provide "civilizing" or "purifying" processes—through interaction, education, or mass mediated representation—that allow persons to be separated from their primordial qualities. It is not the qualities themselves that are purified or accepted but the persons who formerly, and often still privately, bear them. This is the genius of assimilation; it is also, from our contemporary, postmodern point of view, its limitation in both an empirical and moral sense.

From the perspective of the formal promises of civil society, and often from the perspective of core group members themselves, this assimilating purification process provides for the members of out-groups a civil education, imparting to them the competences required for participation in democratic and civil life. As we have seen, however, civil competence is, in fact, neither practiced nor understood in such a purely abstract, formally universalistic way. It is always and everywhere filtered through the primordialities of the core group. Insofar as assimilative processes occur, therefore, persons whose identities are polluted in the private sphere actually are learning how to exhibit new and different primordial qualities in the public sphere. What they are learning is not civil competence per se but how to express civil competence in a different kind of primordial way, as Protestants rather than as Catholics or Jews, as Anglos rather than as Mexicans, as whites rather than as blacks, as northwest Europeans rather than as southern or eastern Europeans, as middle class rather than working class persons.

Civic education is not an opening up to the abstract qualities of Enlightenment rationality per se; civic education means, rather, learning how to embody and express those qualities that allow core group members persuasively and legitimately to exhibit civil competence. When Eugen Weber (1976) wrote that the French Third Republic turned "peasants into Frenchmen," he was talking about exactly such assimilation. The qualities of peasant life, in and of themselves, remained highly stigmatized by the core groups of France, particularly by Parisian elites. Members of rural France learned how to manifest the qualities of Parisian Frenchness, qualities of lifestyle, bearing, language, religion, and thought, which when properly exhibited gave them a newfound status, a social respect that allowed them to be much more thoroughly incorporated into the civil and democratic life of France.
Encouraged, to "pass" into public life. As incorporation is not merely the result of assimilated groups civil treatment in a process is much too layered and culturally processes are always interlaced with particular focus on the public construction of meanings of core groups are related to the process that achieves this extension, or transition takes place when out-group members on the condition that they shed their on is possible to the degree that socializing, "civilizing," or "purifying" processes—mediated representation—that allow personal qualities. It is not the qualities themselves in who formerly, and often still privately; it is also, from our contemporary, in both an empirical and moral sense, promises of civil society, and often from themselves, this assimilating purification out-groups a civil education, imparting to ipation in democratic and civil life. As it is, in fact, neither practiced nor universalistic way. It is always everywhere the core group. Insofar as assimilation those identities are polluted in the private it new and different primordial qualities ming is not civil competence per se but different kind of primordial way, as Protestants rather than as Mexicans, as whites persons rather than as southern or eastern working class persons.

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Assimilation is historically the first and sociologically the most "natural" response to the contradiction between public civility and private particularity that has marked modern mass civil societies from their very beginnings. It is the most "natural" because incorporation can be achieved without appearing to challenge the established primordial definitions of civic competence. In assimilative incorporation, the qualities that define "foreign" and "different" do not change; rather, the persons who are members of foreign and different out-groups are, as it were, allowed to shed these qualities in their public lives. They can change from being "different" and "foreigners" to being "normal" and "one of us."

The plasticity of identity, its cultural and constructed character, allows such assimilative transformation to occur vis-à-vis every conceivable primordial quality. Not only ethnicity and language but the public identities of stigmatized members of religious and even race, gender, and sexual groups can be reconstructed in an assimilative way. The qualities of these groups remain stigmatized, but they can now be left behind at the door of private life; those who carry them privately can venture forth into the public exhibiting civic competence in a very different way. With assimilation—and this is the crucial point—the split between private and public remains in place; indeed, because the polluted qualities of stigmatized group membership are even more firmly restricted to the private sphere, this split becomes sharper and more unyielding. From a moral point of view, assimilative incorporation is paradoxical. On the one hand, it fails entirely to challenge the myth of "transparent" civility, leaving in place the illusion, so cherished by members of already established core groups, that primordial characteristics do not belie the substantive validity of the civil sphere. On the other hand, it is precisely this failure to challenge civil transparency that allows out-groups to be massively incorpo- rated in an assimilative way. The paradox is that precisely by failing to challenge negative representations of out-group qualities, by keeping them private and outside of the public sphere, assimilation reproduces demeaning stereotypes in its own way, confirming the substantive restrictions and debilitating contradic- tions of the promise of civil society.

**Hyphenation: Neutralizing Negative Qualities by Symbolic Association with the Core**

In its ideal-typical form, assimilation is an unstable social process. In social systems that have weaker and less autonomous civil spheres, this instability can lead not to a widening but to a narrowing, not to the emergence of cross-group identities but to the even further separation of primordial identities. In the name of threatened primordial groups, social movements arise that demand a more restrictive identification of civil competence and even the destruction of civil society itself (e.g., Mosse 1964). In social systems with relatively stronger civil societies, however, the instability of assimilation can push it in a more "ethnic," less dichotomized direction. This positive development involves a double movement.
Outsider particularities are viewed in less one-sidedly negative ways. Conceived as "ethnic" rather than "foreign," they are more tolerated in both private and public life. At the same time, the possibility of forming stronger and deeper cross-group bonds that bridge, or transcend, these particularities is viewed more positively as well. In this manner, the emergence of ethnicity can be said to "hyphenate" the primordial identities of the core group, suggesting some fluidity in the interchange of primordial qualities and, at the same time, contributing to the creation of a common collective identity that may be neither core nor peripheral in itself. The more fluid interchange can take place at various levels of civil society. Culturally, hybrid discourses can emerge from the symbolic codes and narratives of primordial groupings that were once entirely separated. At the interactional level, new sites for the public presentation of self can emerge, which provide opportunities for dialogue, understanding, and emotional bonding that lead to increasing rates of friendship and intermarriage between members of core and out-groups.

The notion of ethnic hyphenation, however, does not in any sense suggest the equal valuation of core and outsider qualities; to the contrary, significant stigmatization remains. It suggests, rather, a movement of relative revaluation that allows more fluidity and transferability between primordial categories that remain more and less polluted representations of civic competence. It is precisely because differential valuation remains that hyphenation, like assimilation, is not only an ambiguous but a highly unstable social form. The dynamics that produce it and that follow in its wake can lead to a more independent civil realm and more recognition for outsider primordial qualities, eventually even to the creation of a much less contradictory, multicultural civil society. These same dynamics, however, also can trigger reactions that close civil society down, sharply narrowing the range of primordial identities that are available for expressing civic competence in a positively evaluated way.

**Multiculturalism: Purifying Subaltern Qualities and Pluralizing the Civil Sphere**

The moral and sociological "problem" with hyphenation, and even more so with assimilation, is that its ambition does not extend to redefining outsider qualities as much as to allowing members of denigrated groups to be separated from them. For this reason, the anticivil narrowings of national communities can be demystified only by moving beyond hyphenation to a mode of incorporation that seems different not only in degree but in kind. Only very recently in democratic societies has there emerged such a third, "multicultural" possibility for expanding and revising the civil sphere. The rhetoric generated by this new model of incorporation still focuses on whether or not civil society can be truly universal and separated from the primordial restrictions of particular groups, and this possibility continues to be discussed in terms of "purifying" or reconstructing out-groups in terms of the discourse of liberty rather than repression. Instead of trying to purify the characters of denigrated persons, however, discursive conflicts that are mediated by the
multicultural mode of incorporation revolve around efforts to purify the actual primordial qualities themselves. It is the qualities of being woman, of being nonwhite, of being homosexual or lesbian, of being handicapped that core group and out-group members struggle to understand and experience. Insofar as outsider qualities are seen not as stigmatizing but as variations on civil and utopian themes, they will be valued in themselves. "Difference" and particularity become sources of cross-group identification, and, in this apparently paradoxical manner, increasingly common experiences are created across the particular communities that compose civil society. The great philosopher of hermeneutics, Wilhelm Dilthey, argued that social scientific "understanding" can never surpass the investigator's own experience of his own life. In contrast with assimilation, and even with hyphenation, multiculturalism expands the range of imagined life experiences for the members of a society's core groups. In doing so, it opens up the possibility not just for acceptance but for understanding. Insofar as such understandings are achieved, rigid distinctions between core and out-group members break down, and notions of particularity and universality become much more thoroughly intertwined.

Multiculturalism can be understood as a moral preference. Yet it is also very much an empirical process. While multicultural incorporation remains in its infancy and is more than ever subject to strenuous debate, the outlines of what it might entail for democratic societies are beginning to become clear. It is in motion by discursive and organizational conflicts over incorporation, conflicts that participants believe can be resolved only by more successfully legitimating their different qualities. In societies that have experienced intense racial and ethnic conflicts, and have deepened civil society by hyphenating core group identity with primordialities of different kinds, a universalizing movement toward the recognition of particularity begins to appear. In assimilation and hyphenation, the particular is universalized. In multiculturalism, the universal is particularized. In assimilation and hyphenation the ambition of out-groups is to replace ascriptive identification with status based on achievement. In multiculturalism, the ambition is to achieve—to perform and to display—which once appeared to be an ascriptively rooted, primordial identity. Because particular differences do not have to be eliminated or denied in order for this kind of incorporation to be gained, the sharp split between private and public realms recedes. Noncore primordialities become publicly displayed. They are folded into the culture of authenticity that communitarian philosophers like Charles Taylor (1989) have described as one of the most distinctive achievements of modernity. This is what the "recognition of difference," an important ideological slogan as well as a philosophical idea, means in sociological terms.

In a multicultural community, incorporation is not celebrated as inclusion but as the achievement of diversity. When universal solidarity is deepened in this way, particularity and difference become the guiding themes of the day. Race, peripheral national origins, marginalized religions, subordinated genders and repressed sexualities, even minority languages and peripheral areas of the national
territory—all these primordial qualities are open to reinterpretation as representations of the "sacred" qualities of civility. Because there is a dramatic decrease in the negative identification of previously subordinated, or subaltern, identities, aspects of these identities begin to be embraced by core group members themselves.

A wide range of developments over the last two decades of American society can be understood in terms of this multicultural frame. "Black is beautiful" was not a slogan that emerged from the assimilative, race-blind program of the movement for civil rights. It was an idea that arose later, from the struggle to neutralize and invert its negative racial identification. It was expressed strongly and openly, and broadcast widely, because earlier models of incorporation into civil society were already beginning to take effect. Today, blackness is vigorously expressed in the world of fashion, and models of male and female beauty have dramatically crossed once forbidding racial lines. Intermarriage rates have also steeply risen (Farley 1999), indicating that civil interaction has broken down some of the most restrictive barriers of private life. Students of contemporary ethnicity have discovered that ethnicity is increasingly becoming an identity that is selectively pursued. As social observers such as Herbert Gans, Stanley Lieberson, and Mary Waters have shown, Americans display ethnicity "symbolically," because it is considered interesting and attractive rather than because it is treated by selves and others as an unchangeable and essential part of identity. As subordinated racial, gender, and religious ties are transvaluated, they have become fractured and displayed in increasingly hybrid terms. In American universities and critical circles, the centrality of canonical bodies of art is being displaced. As communicative institutions broadcast narratives by "minority" writers that make their own particularities sacred and cast their distinctive particularities as heroic protagonists, increasingly prestigious bodies of women's, black, Hispanic, Indian, and homosexual literatures have emerged, and their critical interpreters, themselves typically members of these once derogated groups, have assumed influential intellectual positions on the American cultural scene. Similarly, whereas the postwar generation of Jewish artists and entertainers, from Saul Bellow to Milton Berle, were intent on translating their particular experiences into universal, non-Jewish terms, contemporaries like Philip Roth and Woody Allen publicly display their religious identities, adding a new range of particularistic symbol roles for Jews and non-Jews alike.

The manner in which the regulatory institutions of civil society enforce these shifts in public opinion has begun to change in complementary ways. When legal rights are extended for fuller civil participation, procedures are now put into place with the express intention of preserving "authentic" and particular cultural communities. When access to the ballot box is protected, efforts are made to ensure that voting will allow the expression not only of individual rights but collective identities, including not just racial but linguistic minorities (Horowitz 1992:17). When the United States Congress radically opened up immigration flows in the mid-1960s, it discarded the national origins criteria that in the 1920s had been instituted to protect core group primordiality and to keep the assimilation model firmly in place. The millions of immigrants who have legally entered
American civil society since then have radically changed the racial complexion of the United States, adding demographic fuel to the struggle to allow incorporation to proceed in a more multicultural way.

**Conclusion: Analytic Clarity and the Messiness of Empirical Reality**

Because the “varieties of civil incorporation” I have presented in this essay are ideal types, it is important to recall Max Weber’s admonition that the empirical distinctions have been emphasized for analytical reasons. In practice, assimilation, hyphenation, and multiculturalism blend into one another, and in real historical time particular communities participate in all three of these processes at the same time. Members of the American black community continue to strive for assimilation and to be regarded in thoroughly nonracial ways, even as they become “African-Americans” developing hyphenated identities and, as members of a community of color,” strive to maintain and restore the distinctively different aspects of their racial culture and demand that it be recognized in a multicultural way. Economic divisions, territorial separations, and other disparities of place, time, and institutional position also complicate the different dimensions along which incorporation proceeds within any particular community.

I began this article by demonstrating how multiculturalism is often fundamentally misunderstood. Not only social conservatives but radical multicultural intellectuals describe it as a process that is organized around separation and difference rather than inclusion and solidarity. By placing this new and challenging model of interrelation into the broader framework of civil society, and by connecting it with other modes of incorporation, I have tried to suggest, to the contrary, that multiculturalism sits between difference and solidarity as these terms are commonly understood. Multiculturalism frames a situation in which groups publicly assert the right to be admired for being different. Multiculturalism thus represents not the diminution but the strengthening of the civil sphere, a sphere that in cultural, institutional, and interactive ways has carved out a domain in which collective obligations and individual autonomy are precariously but fundamentally intertwined. Multiculturalism is a project that can be attempted only in a situation of increasing, not diminishing, feelings of common humanity. Only when solitary feelings have been extended significantly to persons can they finally begin to be extended to their qualities.

**Notes**

1. For this discussion of Young, I draw upon Alexander (1998).
2. I discuss my own take on this literature in Alexander (1998), where I also offer a more formal definition of civil society as “a solidary sphere in which a certain kind of universalizing community comes gradually to be defined and to some degree enforced. To the degree this solidary
community exists, it is exhibited by ‘public opinion,' possesses its own cultural codes and narratives in a democratic idiom, is patterned by a set of peculiar institutions, most notably legal and journalistic ones, and is visible in historically distinctive sets of interactional practices like civility, equality, criticism, and respect” (1998:7).

3. To avoid any misunderstanding, let me affirm that primordial qualities do not exist in and of themselves. Qualities are constructed as primordial rather than being objectively so. Primordial qualities are those that form the basis for the ethical in Hegel's sense, for communization in the Weberian. Any human or social quality can be treated in a primordial manner, although certain characteristics have repeatedly received such treatment in the course of history.

4. I choose this as a more value-neutral term than, for example, "inclusion," which suggests a more *gemeinschaftlich* kind of participation, a true opening up that involves something like authentic recognition. At the same time, I choose incorporation to describe the ascension of outgroups to emphasize a movement "into" society, in the Durkheimian sense of Parsons and Shils, rather than simply the assumption of greater power by a dominated group.

5. This notion of civil impartiality as merely a legitimation of primordiality is exactly the claim made by the radical multiculturalists I discussed above.

6. The discourse about the qualities of outsiders and insiders is, of course, much more symbolically complex. The discourse is conducted in reference to a culture structure that specifies desirable and undesirable qualities in terms of actors’ motives, their relations, and the kinds of institutions they form. For a combination of systemic, institutional, and cultural reasons, this overarching cultural framework has changed surprisingly little over centuries of time. Cf. Alexander and Smith (1993).

7. To speak of “exhibiting” or “manifesting” civil qualities suggests not only a theoretical emphasis on self and agency but a sense of the complexities of the self, one whose relation to social values must be conceptualized more fully than any simple notion of value internalization and externalization implies. As Erving Goffman (1956) suggested, actors generally try to “present” only those elements of their selves that embody social values; that is, they may publicly available only those parts of their identities that they hope will be regarded by interactional partners or observers as typifying dominant, institutionalized values. This frontstage behavior may be markedly different, of course, from backstage. While Goffman’s dramaturgical sociology of public interaction has extraordinary relevance to the interactional dimensions of civil exclusion and incorporation, he himself never historicized this approach. Rather than viewing the normative criteria mediators interactions culturally or comparatively, Goffman tended to describe them as generic human behavior as such. Neither did he relate his notion of the fragmented self to the notion of the fragmented civil sphere, with its split between public and private.

8. The extraordinarily public debates about multiculturalism and the literary canon have so politicized this subject that it is almost inevitably employed as an example to cast multiculturalism in a separatist, fragmenting light. The leading critics of their community’s own literature, however, often see their own efforts in a much more universalizing and incorporative light. On the one hand, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., W. E. B. Du Bois Professor of the Humanities at Harvard, defends his efforts to reveal black literature’s distinctive qualities.

Long after white American literature has been anthologized and canonized, and reconceived, our efforts to define a black American canon are often derided as racist, separatist, nationalist, or “essentialist.” Attempts to derive theories about our literary tradition from the black tradition... are often greeted by our colleagues in traditional literature departments as misguided desire to secede from a union that only recently, and with considerable kicking and screaming, has been forged. (1992:197)

Yet Gates also argues that black literature is, in fact, neither particular nor separated from the wider democratic culture.
possesses its own cultural codes and narratives which are often decried as racist, separatist, nationalistic, and exclusionary. Our literary tradition from the black tradition and the traditional literature departments as marginalized and with considerable lack of recognition.

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A similar perspective is expressed by Enrique Fernandez, the editor of Más, a national Spanish language magazine.

Multiculturalism has a separatist current (if I'm Latino and you're not, you can't use my secret handshake), and some of it is, alas, necessary for survival—literally, in some streets culturally in some parts. It also has an integrationalist current. And that means closing the barriers erected by chauvinism. In that current, culture is no one's hegemony, not one nationality's, not one class's, not one gender's, not one race's, no one's. It's culture as integration, instead of submission and assimilation... If it's human, it's yours. Take it. Share it. Mix. Rock it. (1992:197)

Though civil qualities are not only a theoretical dilemmas of the self, one whose relation to social meaning and personal notion of value internalization and externalization are suggested, across generally try to "present" only to the public available only by, the social bonds and not by change. The cultural sociology of public interaction has extraordinary civil exclusion and incorporation, he himself according to his own criteria externalizing interactions as generic to human behavior as such. For the notion of the fragmented civil sphere, multiculturalism and the literary canon have been employed as an example to cast multiculturalism as the historical interpreters of their community's own literature more universalizing and incorporative light. On the one hand, Professor of the Humanities at Harvard, multiculturalism.

Every black American text must confess to a complex ancestry, one high and low... but also one white and black. There can be no doubt that white texts inform and influence black texts (and vice versa), so that a thoroughly integrated canon of American literature is not only politically sound it is intellectually sound as well... The attempts of black scholars to define a black American canon, and to derive indigenous theories of interpretation from within this canon, are not meant to refute the soundness of these pressures of integration. (Ibid.)

REFERENCES


