

A last example is historically more complicated, but ultimately more relevant to our contemporary interests. A century ago America also experienced a large, sustained wave of immigration that massively increased our ethnic diversity in traditional terms, with the arrival of millions of immigrants of different 'races' – a term that then referred to the Italian and Polish Catholics, Russian Jews and others who were swarming into a previously White Anglo Saxon Protestant (WASP)-dominated society. Though I have not found any comparable survey evidence for that period, my strong suspicion is that that period also witnessed a good deal of hunkering, even within the immigrant communities. Yet fifty years later, the grandchildren of the WASPs and of the immigrants were comfortable in one another's presence.

The best quantitative evidence concerns ethnic endogamy. At the turn of the last century in-marriage was 'castelike for new ethnics from east and southern Europe', whereas by 1990 only 'one-fifth [of white Americans] have spouses with identical [ethnic] backgrounds'.⁴¹ Conversely, the cultures of the immigrant groups permeated the broader American cultural framework, with the Americanization of St Patrick's Day, pizza and 'Jewish' humour. In some ways 'they' became like 'us', and in some ways our new 'us' incorporated 'them'. This was no simple, inevitable, friction-less 'straight-line' assimilation, but over several generations the initial ethnic differences became muted and less salient so that assimilation became the master trend for these immigrant groups during the twentieth century.⁴²

Recounting exactly how that happened would require another article longer than this one. Such an essay would not tout the American experience in the twentieth century as an undiluted triumph, but America has been, as the historian David Hollinger (2000, 208) argues, 'a formidable engine of ethno-racial change'.⁴³ 'American identity', observes Charles Hirschman, 'is rooted not in nationhood but rather in the welcoming of strangers', as embodied in the Statue of Liberty (Hirschman 2005: 595).

That longer article would also have to address the complicated racial dynamics raised by so-called 'whiteness studies', or in the words of one leading scholar: 'how America's immigrants became white'.⁴⁴ This accommodation of the immigrants is sometimes said to have coincided with increased prejudice and discrimination against African-Americans, but was that link causally necessary or merely coincidental? Such an article would need to address the question of how the pace of assimilation was affected, if at all, by the long pause in American immigration between 1924 and 1964. It would explore the intriguing and unexpected history of American flag worship and the Pledge of Allegiance, a civic practice that was sought by (among other groups) American socialists as a way to symbolize that embracing American ideals ('one nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all') made you a perfectly good American even if you were not a WASP (Ellis 2005). Such an article would explore the effects of 'Americanization' in public schools, as

well as the transition in American nationalism during the 1930s and 1940s from 'ethnic nationalism' to 'civic nationalism' (Mirel 2002). It would reckon with the effects of the Second World War on American popular culture, including the ubiquitous movie foxhole that always seemed (and not by accident) to contain a Jew from Brooklyn, an Italian from Chicago and a Swede from North Dakota. It would explore the role played by political parties and religious institutions, especially the Catholic Church. It would grapple with the divergent meanings of assimilation, and the fact that Americans today are far more comfortable than Europeans with hyphens (Alba & Nee 2003; Alba 2005). It would weigh potential differences between the twentieth- and twenty-first-century waves of immigration, such as the possibly more visible distinctiveness of contemporary migrants, the structural economic differences, the increase of transnational ties, and the ideological and policy differences (such as affirmative action) between the two eras.

And most fundamentally and most controversially, that longer historical analysis would need to re-open one of the questions that I earlier set aside: To what extent are the two different forms of diversity in America today (i.e. that involving recent immigrants and that involving African-Americans) really analogous? I have argued that the *effects* of these two forms of diversity on social capital seem largely similar in contemporary America. The historical *origins* of the two forms are, however, obviously different, and that might well mean that the most effective public responses to the underlying issues must also be different.

Some tough research questions have been raised by my analysis that I have not yet answered. We need to learn more about the many possible mechanisms – from physiological to political – that link diversity and hunkering. We need to chart the conditions under which this linkage is strong, weak, or even non-existent. Is it equally true in all countries, for example? Even within the US, does diversity in the workplace or in church or in school have the same effects as the neighbourhood diversity I have examined in this article? We need to explore whether and when bonding and bridging social capital might be negatively related, because in such circumstances diversity could well produce a more classic in-group/out-group divide that I have *not* found in the contemporary US. We need to examine more closely the interaction between economic and ethnic diversity, asking whether diversity may have a more deleterious effect when ethnic divisions coincide more fully with economic ones. And most fundamentally, we need much more systematic research to confirm the hypotheses in this third section of my essay linking institutions, identity, and social capital.

So, this article is but a prolegomenon to a larger project on how to manage the challenge that immigration and diversity pose to social capital and solidarity. Nevertheless, my hunch is that at the end we shall see that the challenge is best met not by making 'them' like 'us', but rather by creating a

new, more capacious sense of 'we', a reconstruction of diversity that does not bleach out ethnic specificities, but creates overarching identities that ensure that those specificities do not trigger the allergic, 'hunker down' reaction.⁴⁵ In this I share the view expressed by Trevor Phillips, chair of the British Commission on Equality and Human Rights, who has been quoted as saying: 'We need to respect people's ethnicity but also give them, at some point in the week, an opportunity to meet and want to be with people with whom they have something in common that is not defined by their ethnicity' (Easton 2006).

My argument here is that in the short run there is a tradeoff between diversity and community, but that over time wise policies (public and private) can ameliorate that tradeoff. Even while pressing forward with research to confirm and clarify these arguments, we must also begin to ask about their implications for public policy. This is surely not the place for a comprehensive proposal for immigration reform, but a few comments may illustrate the policy directions suggested by my analysis.

Immigration policy is not just about numbers and borders. It is also about fostering a sense of shared citizenship. Whatever decisions we reach on numbers and borders, America is in the midst of renewing our historical identity as a nation of immigrants, and we must remind ourselves how to be a successful immigrant nation.

- Tolerance for difference is but a first step. To strengthen shared identities, we need more opportunities for meaningful interaction across ethnic lines where Americans (new and old) work, learn, recreate, and live. Community centers, athletic fields, and schools were among the most efficacious instruments for incorporating new immigrants a century ago, and we need to reinvest in such places and activities once again, enabling us all to become comfortable with diversity.
- Most immigrants want to acculturate – to learn English, for example. Expanding public support for English-language training, especially in settings that encourage ties among immigrants and natives of diverse ethnic backgrounds, should be a high priority.
- Since the long-run benefits of immigration and diversity are often felt at the national level (scientific creativity, fiscal dividends, and so forth), whereas the short-run costs (fragile communities, educational and health costs, for example) are often concentrated at the local level, there is a strong case for national aid to affected localities.
- Our field studies suggest that locally based programs to reach out to new immigrant communities are a powerful tool for mutual learning. Religious institutions – and in our era, as a century ago, especially the Catholic church – have a major role to play in incorporating new immigrants and then forging shared identities across ethnic boundaries. Ethnically defined

social groups (such the Sons of Norway or the Knights of Columbus or Jewish immigrant aid societies) were important initial steps toward immigrant civic engagement a century ago. Bonding social capital can thus be a prelude to bridging social capital, rather than precluding it. To force civic and religious groups who work with immigrants to serve as enforcement tools for immigration laws, as some have suggested, would be exceptionally counterproductive to the goal of creating an integrated nation of immigrants.

But we need to work toward bridging, as well as bonding. Senator Barack Obama, whose life story embodies ties between immigrant and native-born America, has called for

... an America where race is understood in the same way that the ethnic diversity of the white population is understood. People take pride in being Irish-American and Italian-American. They have a particular culture that infuses the (whole) culture and makes it richer and more interesting. But it's not something that determines people's life chances and there is no sense of superiority or inferiority... [I]f we can expand that attitude to embrace African-Americans and Latino-Americans and Asian-Americans, then ... all our kids can feel comfortable with the worlds they are coming out of, knowing they are part of something larger. (Obama 2007)

Scientific examination of immigration, diversity and social cohesion easily could be inflamed as the results of research become part of the contemporary political debate, but that debate needs to be informed by our best efforts to ascertain the facts. It would be unfortunate if a politically correct progressivism were to deny the reality of the challenge to social solidarity posed by diversity. It would be equally unfortunate if an ahistorical and ethnocentric conservatism were to deny that addressing that challenge is both feasible and desirable. Max Weber instructed would-be political leaders nearly a century ago that 'Politics is a slow boring of hard boards.' The task of becoming comfortable with diversity will not be easy or quick, but it will be speeded by our collective efforts and in the end well worth the effort. One great achievement of human civilization is our ability to redraw more inclusive lines of social identity. The motto on the Great Seal of the United States (and on our dollar bill) and the title of this essay – *e pluribus unum* – reflects precisely that objective – namely to create a novel 'one' out of a diverse 'many'.

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