UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY? ASSIMILATION, MULTICULTURALISM AND THE
DEBATE OVER WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN AMERICAN

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In late 20th century America, multiculturalism emerged as a doctrine of equal respect and a popular ideological framework for resolving intergroup relations. Despite its dramatic presence, many sociologists conclude that the rather vigorous and often contentious academic inquiries into multiculturalism left us without a solid understanding of its significance. In this dissertation I examine survey and personal interview data to more clearly identify patterns of ideological support for multiculturalism or assimilation in the U.S. public and to isolate the motivations for their preferences. Findings based on the survey data indicate that, despite multiculturalism's symbol appeal, it does not seem to guide preferences in favor of or opposition to assimilation/multiculturalism among members of most groups. According to the quantitative data, support for intermarriage is one of the few variables that positively correlates with preferences for assimilation.

The interview data indicate a strong tendency among many participants to conflate the meaning of multiculturalism and assimilation. Despite their stated aspirations, many self-identified multiculturalists do not favor cultural pluralism. Apparently a significant number of the interview participants use a synthesis of multiculturalism and assimilation to frame their preferences for social convergence within an assimilationist paradigm – a perspective that only marginally resembles multiculturalism's doctrine of equal respect. Contrary to the extant literature, patterns of support for multiculturalism among the interview participants indicate racial and ethnic cleavages and these patterns correspond to the U.S. social hierarchy. Because racial and ethnic meanings infused the multiculturalism debate with its energy, it is plausible that
the subtleties of racial discourse mask common aspirations among racial and ethnic group members. In the last chapter, I employ Alba and Nee's recent theoretical reformulation of the concept of assimilation to explicate the findings of this dissertation.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In October 1983, referring to a five-member commission he recently appointed, James Watt, Ronald Reagan's secretary of the interior and author of the book *The Courage of a Conservative*, declared, "We have every kind of mix you can have. I have a black, I have a woman, two Jews, and a cripple." This insensitive comment precipitated a hostile public reaction and soon after, Watt's resignation. While Watt's remark was obviously a sarcastic jab at affirmative action, for me the fact that laissez-faire conservatives like Watt were even jokingly acquiescing to the call for increased racial/ethnic incorporation signified a shift in the debate over assimilation. While I didn't know it then, thanks to the hapless James Watt, I had a dissertation topic and all I needed now was a few dozen courses, a couple of thousand hours of work, support from lots of family and friends (hello, a great wife like Les is a must), and help from some real sociologists. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the people that kept pointing me toward the light at the end of my Ph.D. tunnel.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Study of U.S. Racial and Ethnic Convergence in the 20th Century

Throughout the history of the United States, nation building through immigration has always been a source of contention (Alba and Nee, 2003). Each generation has engaged in public debates to determine the boundaries of the American community and establish what it means to be a member of that community. Inevitably, newcomers pushed for incorporation – demanding that America remain faithful to its egalitarian values – while "every previous generation of Americans – composed of the children of earlier immigrants – has seen itself as the native guardians of the Pure and Original America" (Levine, 1996, p. 131). Consequently, even as ardent antagonists rose up to claim their place in the American circle, the majority fought to control the course of racial and ethnic convergence and limit cultural change. And yet, because these debates were somehow anchored to the national motto e pluribus unum – out of many, one – champions of cultural pluralism continued to emerge in the public arena to demand an extension of the boundaries of the American culture (Newman, 1973).

The late 20th century debate on the merits of multiculturalism in the United States did not deviate from this historical pattern. According to Kwame Anthony Appiah (1998), professor of Afro-American studies at Harvard University, this debate was the longest-running deliberation on racial and ethnic convergence in U.S. history and was driven "by multiculturalists intent on schism" (p. 243). In this contemporary debate, despite profound changes in the attitudes of Americans on race and ethnicity, the American public remained loyal to a common civic identity (Citrin, Sears, Muste, and Wong, 2001), and the schism over unity or diversity dissolved into
unity in spite of diversity. As one of the participants of this study insisted: "We should never forget who we are, but . . ."

The academic study of intergroup cultural adaptations has paralleled the public's concern, but it too has often been contentious and disparate. Since the early 20th century, doctrine supportive of cultural homogenization and ethnic retention appeared as successive ideological interpretations of how to successfully build a vital civic society. According to William M. Newman (1973), proponents of the rapid acculturation of immigrants and their descendants first came to prominence in the U.S. early in the 1900s, only later to be challenged by the champions of an ideology that promoted unity through diversity – cultural pluralism. In response to the public's deliberation, social thinkers often struggled to disentangle social doctrine, ideology and social theory in their attempts to explicate intricacies in the debates over social boundaries. Over the years, however, along with the public's enhanced apprehension of intergroup relations, scholars increasingly integrated more complexity and sophistication into the analysis, augmenting it with a more in depth consideration of race and racism mid-century (Newman, 1973).

Late in the 20th century, social scientists continued the often contentious investigation of U.S. patterns of intergroup relations, as they attempted to conceptualize and contextualize public debates over multiculturalism in the U.S. Enabled by Canadian governmental policy deliberations on the preservation of African cultures (Sollors, 1998), the debate over the merits of multiculturalism burst onto the U.S. social landscape in the late 1980s and early 1990s. While multiculturalism in the U.S. evolved first in the field of education, public inquiries into its significance and application quickly spread into other arenas (Taylor, 1994; Gordon and Newfield, 1996). Henry A. Giroux (1994) concludes that multiculturalism became a central
concept in the discourse "over issues regarding national identity, the construction of historical memory, the purpose of schooling, and the meaning of democracy" (p. 323).

The social scientific literature devoted to theorizing and conceptualizing multiculturalism is voluminous. However, scholarly analysis of the patterns and levels of the degree of attitudinal support for multiculturalism is scant. Even though the public has employed multiculturalism as a major conceptual framework for apprehending intergroup relations (Gordon and Newfield, 1996), analysis emanating from survey data infers that the symbolic nature of this concept motivates a wide range of responses across, not within, most social categories (Downey, 2000). Apparently, confounded by the restrictions imposed by the ethnic pluralism–assimilation dichotomy, the public (as well as many scholars) did not think multiculturalism fit neatly in a coherent perspective on intergroup convergence. In other words, according to available research, the public was indifferent or waffled on their attitudes about multiculturalism. After a rather intense scrutiny into its meaning, therefore, we seem to be left without a clear understanding of this doctrine's constituencies, the reasons for their preferences, and more generally, multiculturalism's place in the long series of debates over social convergence in the U.S. (Downey, 1999, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of my dissertation is to address weaknesses in the literature mentioned above and decipher how the U.S. public's conceptualization of multiculturalism and racial/ethnic convergence. The study of the relative significance individuals place on their national, racial, and ethnic identities, and the societal dynamics associated with social boundaries, has always held a prominent place in the study of race and ethnicity. Situating the attitudes of the public on this
topic allows us to gain insight into the degree to which they ascertain (1) what it means to be an American and (2) the processes associated with the ongoing construction of a common culture in the U.S.

My dissertation has the potential to advance an underdeveloped line of inquiry and further an already rich literature associated with a more general understanding of intergroup relations and significant shifts in paradigms of racial and ethnic convergence. Based on the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, I seek to situate the attitudes of the U.S. public on the multiculturalism debates (1) in relation to the other concepts central to the public deliberation – assimilation and pluralism – and (2) in relation to the attitudes of people in different social categories. More specifically, I attempt to expand the scope of current attitudinal research on multiculturalism with an interpretative analysis of interview data, and thus augment a literature composed exclusively of empirical research. In addition, I seek also to consider the viability of multiculturalism as a new U.S. model of intergroup convergence, and theorize on its relationship to other ideologies of intergroup relations within the assimilation-pluralism framework.

Theorizing Patterns of Intergroup Relations

Herbert J. Gans (1997) contends that since the 1960s scholars of ethnicity can be grouped into two categories – assimilationists or pluralist/ethnic retentionists. He defines assimilation as (1) the process by which newcomers move out of formal and informal ethnic associations, as well as other social institutions, into nonethnic equivalents found in the host society and (2) different than acculturation, which involves the adoption of the host culture by newcomers. He suggests that if we allow for this difference between acculturation and assimilation, assimilation
is still a valid theoretical concept and remains a useful tool in the contemporary analysis of ethnicity.

While some scholars might agree with Gans, Richard Alba and Victor Nee (2003), and Nathan Glazer (1997) insist that assimilation currently wallows in disrepute. According to Alba and Nee, since the 1960s assimilation conjures up images of an era when minority group members were forced to shed their own cultures and adopt the values and practices of an Anglo-American majority – an era when functionalism reigned supreme. Glazer (1997) concurs, suggesting that much of the unpopularity of assimilation must reside in its unabashed macrosociological approach and its apparent disregard of agency. Despite the concept's unpopularity, Alba and Nee (2003) and Glazer (1997) maintain that assimilation is still a significant theoretical force in the delineation of patterns of ethnic and race relations in the U.S. In fact, Alba (1995) refers to the pertinence of assimilation as "America’s dirty little secret" (p. 3).

Until mid-century, assimilation was the foundational concept for the study of intergroup relations (Alba and Nee, 2003). In fact, Glazer (1997) reminds us that the "best-informed, most liberal and most sympathetic analysts of the ethnic and racial scene in the 1930s and ‘40s saw assimilation as a desirable consequence of the reduction of prejudice and discrimination" (p. 117). The concept of assimilation was developed early in the 20th century under the auspices of Chicago School sociology (a tradition that dominated North American sociology in the first half of the 20th century), Robert E. Park, his leading students and collaborators, and has endured as the foundational concept and theory in the study of intergroup relations (Glazer, 1993).

The sweeping economic, political and demographic changes in the early decades of the 1900s helped produce a dramatic transformation in the U.S. social structure, and Park and other
Chicago school sociologists (see Thomas and Zanecki, 1918; Wirth, 1928; Zorbaugh, 1929) looked to burgeoning urban areas for an understanding of intergroup relations and the effect of immigrant subcultures on the American mainstream. Park (1950) developed the race relations cycle (of which assimilation is an integral dimension) to characterize changes in "the relations of races" brought about by the "interpenetration of peoples" (p. 149-150). According to his hypothesis, Park states that ineluctable historical events (like migration and conquest) progressively and irreversibly produce the integration of culturally diverse people into a common culture. Park (1950) proposes that eventually the modern world is destined to resolve cultural and racial conflict by bringing "all the diverse and distant people of the earth together within the limits of a common culture and a common social order" (p. 116).

Despite harsh and sometimes legitimate criticisms of the old canon, Alba and Nee (2003) say that Park and the Chicago School's approach to assimilation, allowed for an insightful appraisal of a diverse mainstream society and attendant patterns of intergroup relations. Other sociologists concur, asserting that Park's race relations cycle has been one of the most influential theories of intergroup relations developed over the years (Marden and Meyer, 1978; Marger, 2003; Wacker, 1983, 1995). Alba and Nee (2003) believe the old approach to assimilation still retains conceptual and theoretical vitality today. In fact, they use it as the theoretical foundation for a contemporary analysis of U.S. racial/ethnic convergence (a more comprehensive discussion of Alba and Nee's book and their new approach to assimilation appears in the last chapter of this dissertation).

While the critics of the old approach to assimilation found fault in its inattention to diverse adaptive outcomes and unidirectionality, many scholars revised and revitalized the theory over the years in order to address its weaknesses (see Barth and Noel, 1972; Bogardus, 1930;
Lieberson, 1961). Several social scientists sought to strengthen assimilation by elaborating dimensions of the concept that determined the extent and speed of a minority group’s adaptation to the mainstream, such as the intensity of subordination, social distance, the strength and size of racial and ethnic sub systems, and the social and cultural hierarchy embedded within the societal framework (Cox, 1948/2000; Lieberson, 1961; Schermerhorn, 1949; Warner and Srole 1945). As proponents of the old canon acknowledged clear indications of the simultaneous existence of elements of both assimilation and pluralism, most grudgingly came to accept the notion that acculturation did not ensure complete integration and that inequalitarian pluralism was a potential outcome in the process of social convergence (Barth and Noel, 1972; van den Berghe, 1978; Yinger, 1981).

Despite the old paradigm's decline, assimilation retained a significant presence in the discipline into mid century. Not even the findings of newly recognized studies in the early decades of the 20th century, which implicated intractable barriers to assimilation based on race, could cause sociologists to reject assimilation unconditionally. Before this time, the study of race was taboo in the social sciences (Wacker, 1983), and it was not until the debut of a handful of research projects (see Drake and Cayton, 1993; Dubois, 1899/1967; Frazier, 1965) that the study of racial minorities was introduced to study of intergroup social convergence (Collins and Makowsky, 1998; Newman, 1973). The identification of intractable racial barriers called into question assimilation's relevance.

In the 1940s Gunnar Myrdal's (1944/1996) pioneering study of U.S. intergroup relations helped broach the topic of race and subsequently had a profound effect on the discipline. In stark contrast to findings based on the old approach to assimilation, he and his associates found that the experience of African Americans did not match those predicted by the old canon. Due to the
racial prejudice and discrimination, African Americans occupied a disadvantaged position in a pluralist hierarchy based on racial caste, and consequently, were not assimilating into the mainstream. Unable to relinquish assimilation theory, Myrdal maintained, however, that once Whites understood the depth of racial oppression suffered by African Americans, they would change their behavior to preserve the integrity of the American Creed, and implement a more progressive, color-blind integrationist policy (Blauner, 2001; Carr, 1997).

After Myrdal, sociologists like W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole (1945) and Milton M. Gordon (1964) continued to rely on assimilation as a core concept in their approach to theorizing ethnic and racial relations. Even into the late 20th century, and after the development of a substantial literature on the ongoing significance of ethnicity in the U.S.,^3^ many social scientists insisted that if we apprehend racial and ethnic relations with a long-range, comprehensive analysis, rapid acculturation coexists with a slower, uneven – or as Gans (1992) says – bumpy-line assimilation. On what he determined was ethnic retentionism's last gasp, Stephen Steinberg (2001) returns full circle to the Chicago School, quoting Park: "Every nation, upon examination, turns out to have been a more or less successful melting pot" (p. 74).

The elaboration of both assimilation and multiculturalism, as sociological concepts or as social ideology, is best understood when situated in the social and historic context in which it originated. The imprint of an ideology of assimilation – in the form of the melting pot – has existed in the American ethos since the countries' inception (Higham, 1967; Levine, 1996). During the early 1900s, the public increasingly was attracted to the Americanization movement and later, it emerged as the dominant ideology of assimilation of the times. Proponents of Americanization (an ideology that advocated the rapid acculturation and assimilation of immigrants) expressed sympathy for newcomers and endeavored to implement effective
techniques to successfully incorporate them into the American mainstream. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that early sociologists presumed American ethnic groups were to be quickly absorbed by the egalitarian values of the U.S., and that the degree and speed of their assimilation was determined by their ability and capacity to shed their old ethnic skins and emulate the Anglo-Saxon culture already in place (Alba and Nee, 2003).

As the political progressivism of the early 1900s waned, so did support for benevolent assimilationist ideologies and the social theory it fostered. Once American nationalism gained prominence and public unrest associated with rifts of class, race and political ideology burst onto the social landscape, the Americanization movement shifted from one that befriended outsiders to one that grew more hostile and coercive (Higham, 1967). Consequently, the White majority increasingly paid lip service to the melting pot, but still expected that ethnic minorities follow the path of earlier immigrant streams and conform to the extant Anglo culture (Manning, 1995).

In 1915 and in response to what he viewed as increasingly oppressive demands of Americanization, Horace Kallen, a professor at the New School of Social Research in New York City, was the first to elaborate the basic ideas of a new social doctrine he called cultural pluralism (Whitfield’s introduction in Kallen, 1924/1998). According to Kallen (1924/1998), "whatever else he [the immigrant] changes, he cannot change his grandfather" (p. 86), and to ask newcomers to melt in or assimilate was not only unrealistic but ultimately unnecessary. Instead, Kallen asserted that American democratic ideals align with cultural pluralism and that U.S. institutions should shepherd immigrants into a national community based on traditional values like freedom and cooperation. In the end, he believed that cultural pluralism would help create a more complete, more unified America. While Kallen's cultural pluralism emerged as theory in
the academy, in reality it was social doctrine that many in the public came to embrace. Dennis J. Downey (1999) recognizes it as the first decisive dissent against assimilation in the 20th century.

In his evaluation of intergroup convergence, Gordon (1964) concludes that acculturation without massive structural intermingling at the primary group level has always been the dominant motif in the U.S. and that cultural pluralism was not only utopian social doctrine, but ultimately unattainable. It too was precipitated by the social and economic conditions of the time and the groups that endorsed it (Newman, 1973). The validity of cultural pluralism's presumed preservation of ethnic practices within a framework that guarantees equality in the civic sphere is generally rejected as a valid approach to a scholarly analysis of patterns of U.S. race and ethnic relations (Marden and Meyer, 1978; van den Berghe, 1978). At the same time, because the old conception of assimilation is passé (Alba and Nee, 2003), alternative models and ideologies associated with social convergence continue develop as a means to more adequately address the contemporary experience of racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S.

The U.S. Deliberation of Multiculturalism

Although social thinkers question cultural pluralism's theoretical vitality, a set of ideas corresponding to cultural pluralism emerged under the rubric of multiculturalism in the 1980s and 90s. During this time, a series of loud and sometimes contentious public and academic debates on the merits of multiculturalism captured national attention (Glazer, 1997 Patchen, 1999). Like Kallen's cultural pluralism, and congruent with the current disregard for assimilation, the ideology of multiculturalism was built on the assertion that because of the end result (an Euro-centric orientation), assimilation must be rejected. Across the country, multiculturalists suggested that a societal-wide emphasis on the contributions of all groups should take place in
the field of education, as well as other business and governmental arenas, and the importance of maintaining cultural diversity formally protected (Dworkin and Dworkin, 1999). Much like cultural pluralism, the ideology of multiculturalism prospered as an answer to harsh demands for the complete assimilation of minorities and as a means to change institutional arrangements in order to raise minority cultures to parity with the culture of the majority (Alba and Nee, 2003).

Unlike cultural pluralism, multiculturalism emerged, not as theory in the hall of the academy but, as a rowdy and unfocused dissent against hegemonic assimilation in educational and business boardrooms across America (Gordon and Newfield, 1996; Taylor, 1994; Zavella, 1996). Many proponents of multiculturalism were members of racial and ethnic groups, who envisioned multiculturalist doctrine as a means to press their case for equal treatment (Gitlin, 1995). For them, the politics of multiculturalism dramatized the significance of racial or ethnic identity, and its objective – the formal recognition of each group's legitimate place within the American circle – had the potential to transform the social hierarchy.

The ideology of multiculturalism was not without paradox and conceptual confusion however. Advocates were demanding both inclusion (in the form of equal recognition) and protected exclusion (in the form of organized nurturance of cultural diversity) (Goldberg, 1994; Taylor 1994). Speaking to this paradox, Wendy Brown (1996) captures the enigma of multiculturalism: "Just when polite liberal (not to mention, correct leftist) discourse ceased speaking of us as queers, colored girls, or natives, we began speaking of ourselves this way" (p. 150).

Opponents of multiculturalism were quick to respond and engaged in what Appiah (1998) referred to, as the longest running jeremiad in American history. Journalist Richard Bernstein (1994) warned the U.S. public that the nation was being threatened by a narrow orthodoxy –
multiculturalism – and that a dictatorship of virtue built on this ideology, created through intimidation and decree, was causing a majority of the public to forego participation in civic discourse for fear of being branded a racist. Minus the obvious reactionary tone, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (1991/1998) – an author Jeffrey C. Alexander and Neil J. Smelser (1999) refer to as a Kennedy liberal – also vehemently opposed multiculturalism. He insisted that multiculturalists "instead of recognizing the beauty of *e pluribus unum*, prefer to dismiss *unum* and exalt *pluribus*" (p. 151), and that if "separatist tendencies go on unchecked, the result can only be the fragmentation, resegregation, and tribalization of American Life" (p. 23). According to Robert D. Manning (1995), even Washington D.C. poet Kwelismith took a stand against multiculturalism because he did not "want the uniqueness of the African American experience diluted or somehow obscured by the imposition of a multicultural lens" (p. 156).

And so, the antagonists in the multiculturalism debate engaged in a nation-wide deliberation that Wilbur Zelinsky (2001) characterized as a "constant, often obstreperous jousting for advantage, prestige, social and cultural power" (p. 195) and the playing out of identity politics. Scholars assert that because the debates overlooked larger social, economic, and cultural processes and social institutions, movements dedicated to multiculturalism existed primarily as symbolic crusades unconcerned with social justice, race and racism (Downey, 1999; Manning, 1995). Because of its antithetic dimensions, proponents of multiculturalism seemed to fall victim to shifting configurations of power linked to underlying social relations that were not addressed by the ideology's doctrine of equal respect (Bonacich, 1996; Cruz, 1996).

Ultimately, while the popularity of multiculturalism's message signified the continuing vitality of racial and ethnic communities, scholars suggest that unaccompanied with demands for more substantive change, the primary objective of this doctrine – equal respect – overwhelmed
the deliberative process. Consequently, social analysts assert that proponents ignored efforts to mobilize mechanisms that could transform institutional apparatus. Ironically, many multiculturalists inadvertently adopted a watered down form of the doctrine, promoting "equal admission to the mainstream" as a framework to create a common culture built on pluralist alternative (Glazer, 1997; Taylor, 1994; Zelinsky, 2001).

While configurations of power and racial/ethnic injustice ended up off limits in the multiculturalism debate (Zelinsky, 2001), racialized discourse is likely to have added to the confusion during the public's deliberation over cultural difference (Blauner, 2001). Consequently, many in the White majority might have assumed that advocating multiculturalism and the maintenance of ethnic difference was antagonistic to their support for a colorblind, non-racialized form of intergroup convergence. If this is true, much of the opposition to multiculturalism can be traced to individuals in the majority group, who considered multiculturalism to be a threat to the hegemony of the Anglo-American culture and counter to a color-blind philosophy of race relations. Teun A. van Dijk (1993) contends that the explosive debates about multiculturalism exemplifies how even a modest challenge to the dominance of the White Euro-centric culture is likely to be met by hostile reaction.

Because of its perceived tendencies toward a soft form of intergroup accommodation, however, many scholars suggest that multiculturalism lost its capacity to mobilize political action dedicated to transforming U.S. organizations and institutions. Over time, opposition to multiculturalism's generalized call for equal admission to the mainstream diminished. In fact, Edna Bonacich (1996) contends that because advocates blinded themselves to the class dimension of race and gender, multiculturalism was co-opted by capitalist institutions, "who see it as a nonthreatening movement" (p. 329). According to Downey (1999), not only did
multiculturalism fail to mobilize natural constituencies devoted to societal change, but corporate multiculturalism "has facilitated market expansion and deepening, even as social inequalities are increasingly generated and rationalized directly by market mechanisms" (p. 270). In sum, David T. Goldberg (1994) concludes: the corporate take-over of multiculturalism in the 1990s suggests that cultural diversity was employed as an administrative instrument to constrain the resistance to institutional transformation, and legitimate economic inequities, while simultaneously paying lip service to the celebration of diversity.

As antagonistic energy in the debate waned, the ascendance of wide-spread support for multiculturalism seemed to correspond to a pragmatic admission by national elites that the dominant ideology of Anglo conformity no longer prevailed and that the ideology of multiculturalism must be manipulated to preempt broad-based pluralist movements (Manning, 1995). While the multiculturalism debates provided for a renegotiation of sociocultural space, Werner Sollors (1998) remains convinced that at best multiculturalism represents a compromise that allows for the construction of ethnicity, without challenging the prevailing racial and ethnic hierarchy. Historically, according to John Higham (2001), the principle way of managing intergroup tensions, especially ethnic tensions, has been to extend incrementally the circle of those acknowledged as relevant contributors to the American national identity. In this manner, the multiculturalism debates allowed the American universalist core to remain intact, while the implicit promise of uninterrupted inclusiveness was simultaneously held out for newcomers (Higham, 2001).

Despite multiculturalism’s widespread appeal, a pro-assimilationist culture, albeit masked, provided the foundation for the public deliberation on the proper mode of intergroup convergence. Apparently, because advocates of multiculturalism seem unsure of how much
social convergence to demand, they lapsed into the insipid encouragement of variation that offered no plan for the ongoing maintenance of cultural pluralism and did not effectively counter assimilation (Gordon and Newfield, 1996). In addition, it is plausible that many in the public perceive cultural reciprocity as a core U.S. value (Gordon and Newfield, 1996; Sollors, 1998; Taylor, 1994), and therefore, presumed that multiculturalism corresponds with the perceived presence of a value already in place. For them, real structural change is not required to reform a system that can be mended by enforcing available rules and regulations. In any event, while an enormous amount of energy for social change developed in the multiculturalism debates, clear and unambiguous patterns of support seemingly did not. In general, distilled in a cultural form and cut off from natural constituencies, multiculturalism too is now passé (Hollinger, 2001).

In sum, the U.S. public grappled with the proper amount of racial and ethnic convergence and cultural adaptation throughout the 20th century. Since the early 1900s, manifestations of assimilation and pluralism have appeared in successive ideological interpretations of social convergence in deliberative processes seemingly tied to the U.S. national motto – *e pluribus unum* – and the melting pot ideal. Much of the animosity in the debates stems from a combination of (1) ethnic and racial identification, (2) a sense of group position relative to the racial and ethnic stratification hierarchy in place, and (3) the perception of the efficacy of the ideology in question to deliver competitive advantages or losses in social distance via the implementation its objectives (Alba and Nee, 2003). Some of the confusion in the debates emanates from the symbolic and multivalent nature of the concepts central to the deliberation. In any case, the debates continue as a seemingly unlimited supply of antagonists provide impetus for a dialectic process whereby the common culture is transformed, albeit marginally.
Situating U.S. Attitudes on the Multiculturalism Debate

Published empirical research situating attitudes of the U.S. public on multiculturalism produce mixed associational patterns and often indeterminate findings. Apparently, a majority of Americans do not find preferences for multiculturalism and assimilation to be mutually exclusive. While racial and ethnic status predicts support for multiculturalism in some cases, the magnitude of the association is surprisingly modest (Citrin et al., 2001). Downey (2000) concludes the most significant finding in his attitudinal research on the multiculturalism is that central theoretical variables associated with the debates align with attitudinal extremity rather than actual preferences in support of or in opposition to multiculturalism. In general, Jack Citrin and associates (2001) suggest that as a theory of national identity, multiculturalism fails to resonate strongly in American public opinion.

Significance of the Study

Despite the indeterminate and mixed data in the extant empirical research, it seems implausible that (1) race and ethnicity fails to motive similar aspirations in a debate over racial and ethnic convergence, and that (2) multiculturalism has had a marginal impact on U.S. attitudes. Granted, multiculturalism is a cultural symbol that it is likely to inspire conceptual confusion. However, on the other hand, its protean nature should make it an ideal political symbol (Downey, 1999) and its message should engender strong affect sentiments within coalitions without creating reticence over specific or narrowly based policy initiatives. It is possible that people might be talking past one another in this debate, masking motivations for their preferences and divergent perspectives (Blauner, 2001).
To date, researchers on this topic have depended on the empirical analysis of survey data to formulate their ideas. However, no one has published research based on personal interviews wherein the public is asked to elaborate on their aspirations for proper amount of racial and ethnic convergence and divergence. The Lilly Survey of Attitudes and Friendships (LSAF) did just that in the summer of 2000 and my research analysis looks at the LSAF interviews to fill the gap in the literature. The analysis of this research project turns on the qualitative data analysis. Unlike all other published research, I attempt to decipher in a deeper and more concentrated way the public's perception of multiculturalism, assimilation, and what it means to be an American.

Summary of Chapters

In order to advance the inquiry into multiculturalism's meaning, significance and constituencies, I propose to conduct the following research agenda in my dissertation. In chapter 2 I extend the review of the historical and sociological context in which the central concepts and theories in the U.S. deliberation on intergroup convergence evolved. I also provide an in-depth discussion of the conceptualization process associated with these concepts. Chapter 2 includes a review of the scant empirical research devoted to situating U.S. attitudes on multiculturalism, cultural pluralism, and assimilation.

After the literature review and in the first part of chapter 3, I ground the concepts relevant to my quantitative and qualitative analysis in past social theory. Later in the chapter I present the hypotheses to be tested in the quantitative data analysis of this research and the guiding hypotheses pertinent to the qualitative data analysis. Chapter 4 provides a description of the quantitative and qualitative data to be employed in the analysis – the LSAF. I also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using the LSAF data sets and the methodology of LSAF
national telephone survey and personal interviews. Chapter 4 also contains the operationalization of the key concepts in the quantitative analysis and identifies the dependant and explanatory variables. As to the qualitative data analysis, in chapter 4 I review the methods by which coding categories were developed and briefly describe the general interview themes. A discussion of the limitations of the LSAF personal interview data is included.

The quantitative and qualitative data analyses appear in chapters 5 and 6. In chapter 5, I propose to replicate and amend the extant empirical research. By way of logistic regression, I employ a more recent national level data set to situate the attitudes of the U.S. public on multiculturalism, and moreover, investigate the degree to which the approval of intermarriage is linked to support for multiculturalism. The qualitative analysis in chapter 6 is the principal element of my research agenda. In chapter 6 an interpretative analysis of interview data allows me to address the issue of the apparent attitudinal ambiguity toward multiculturalism, and provides a means to focus on any racial attitudinal differences that might have eluded empirical research.

Finally, based primarily on the analysis of the LSAF personal interviews, chapter 7 is devoted to theorizing multiculturalism's relationship to other ideologies of intergroup relations. In their book on remaking the American mainstream, Alba and Nee's (2003) provides a cogent perspective on how renewed and wide-spread support for cultural pluralism signifies a significant change in intergroup relations and a transformation of institutional arrangements, without indicating a shift in the dominant paradigm of assimilation. I first review of their theory and then frame the analysis of the interviews with their reformulation of assimilation. Finally, I use Alba and Nee’s theory as a means explicate the mark the multiculturalism debate left on the
public's preferences for the construction of a common culture and attitudes toward what it means
to be an American.

Discussion

An analysis of the contemporary multiculturalism debate must attend to the possibility that multiculturalism is just one more deviation in the bumpy-line assimilation process, and that appropriate research methods must account for the flexibility and continuity inherent in a set of processes whereby the public negotiates the proper method of intergroup convergence. The research agenda of this dissertation has the potential to not only meet these objectives, but advance our understanding of the public's deliberation on social convergence and demonstrate the part these debates play in the construction of ideologies associated with the assimilation-pluralism continuum. Through a deeper and more focused look at qualitative attitudinal data, we gain insight into the construction or deconstruction of natural constituencies in the debates over what it means to be an American. Further, this research seeks to develop and expand social theory that explicates the role of public attitudes in the representation and impact of social doctrine on evolution and expansion of the national civic identity.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction: Century Long Deliberation on Racial and Ethnic Convergence

In the past century people in the United States often wrestled over the proper means to incorporate newcomers and their descendants, and how to maintain a vital and potent American culture. Before the 20th century, most Americans seemed insensitive or reconciled to racial and cultural segregation in the U.S. (Higham, 1967). However, after dramatic demographic and structural changes at the turn of the 20th century, many in White America increasingly became distressed that assimilation was not happening fast enough for Northern and Western Europeans, and conversely, too fast for other minority group members. As a result, an alliance of educators, social workers and many in the business sector joined together to form the Americanization movement, pressing for the implementation of techniques to "make the immigrants better Americans" (Glazer, 1997, p. 102). The advent of this movement marked a great crisis in intergroup relations in the U.S. and the ascendance of assimilationist ideology in 20th century America (Higham, 1967; Levine, 1996).

Since that time, manifestations of assimilation, pluralism, and the American melting pot have appeared in the U.S. public consciousness as successive ideological interpretations of the proper amount of cultural convergence and divergence (Newman, 1973). I dedicate this chapter to a review of the academy's century long response to these deliberations and the way in which social thinkers conceptualized the concepts central to issues relevant to racial and ethnic incorporation. Establishing the conceptual and theoretical foundation for these terms provides the means to not only define and operationalize them, but also to come to an understanding of the significance these concepts hold for those in the U.S. public. Moreover, by way of this literature
review, I seek to chart the evolution of pertinent theory and ideology and situate the development of each vis-à-vis other prominent ideologies of the times.

This chapter also includes a review the academy's response to the public's heightened concern with intergroup relations and attempts by social scientists to unravel ideology, doctrine and social theory. We will find that the intersection of ethnicity, race, and the public deliberation over what it means to be an American, compelled scholars to introduce more complexity and sophistication in their analysis over time (Newman, 1973). We will also find that, just as scholars introduced a measure of sophistication into their discussions, so did the proponents of assimilationist and pluralistic doctrines. I end the chapter with a review of the latest in a series of hotly contested debates over cultural convergence – the multiculturalism debate – a public deliberation that inspired a good deal of animosity in both the public arena and the academic world.

Theorizing Assimilation, the Melting Pot, and Cultural Pluralism

In what Alba and Nee (1997) refer to as a "canonical" account, Gordon (1964) offers three competing viewpoints on the nature of assimilation in the U.S. While he suggests that the most prevalent U.S. ideology of assimilation has been Anglo Conformity and that cultural pluralism explains only some elements of the American experience, Gordon (1964) notes that the more idealistic and generous tones of the melting pot theory attracted an enormous amount of support in the U.S. population and "a number of articulate interpreters of American society" (p. 124) at the turn of the 20th century. According to Gordon, the popularity of the melting pot theory rested on its vision of the cultural and biological fusion of all societal groups into a totally
new blend. The presence and power of this homogenizing process was to create a hybrid society, "melted together by the fires of American influence" (Gordon, 1964, p. 115).

Prior to the 20th century, Higham (2001) asserts that the U.S. majority seemed generally unwilling to address issues created by the presence of racial and ethnic disparity in their society, as well as most other matters related to the assimilation of the non-American other. This ambivalence did not last however. Structural and demographic changes associated with advanced industrialization at the turn of last century, and the concomitant rise in the numbers of immigrants, shook the complacency of many ethnocentric Americans, causing them to doubt the ongoing efficacy of conventional patterns of assimilation. Indeed, it was not until White America believed that the incorporation of Northern and Western Europeans stalled, did they finally embrace an ideology of assimilation (Glazer, 1997; Higham, 2001; Levine, 1996). This first contest in the 20th century over what it means to be an American marks the ascendance of assimilation and a burgeoning advocacy of the melting pot ideal in the U.S. ethos (Higham, 1967; Newman, 1973).

While the idea of the American melting pot was rooted firmly in the American consciousness long before, Israel Zangwill's 1908 play titled The Melting Pot seemed to capture the spirit of the times, and fuse that term to an ideology that has since dominated the public's thinking on the proper method of creating a common culture (Levine, 1996). The Americanization movement emerged as the prominent model of social incorporation during this time, and was often posed as synonymous with the melting pot ideal (Higham, 1967). However, while proponents of Americanization initially expressed sympathy for newcomers and worked to develop techniques that might "make the immigrants better Americans" (Glazer 1997, p. 102), this ideology increasingly grew xenophobic, hostile and coercive (Higham, 1967). According to
Levine (1996), as 20th century began to unfold, the melting pot ideal evolved into only one more ideological instrument for those seeking to bring about the rapid assimilation of newcomers into the dominant culture.

In 1915 and in response to the increasingly oppressive demands of the Americanization movement and advocates of the melting pot, Horace Kallen – a professor at the New School of Social Research in New York City – was the first to enunciate the basic tenets of cultural pluralism (Whitfield’s introduction in Kallen, 1924/1998). According to Kallen, asking newcomers to melt in and become Americanized was unrealistic and moreover, unnecessary. He believed that U.S. democratic ideals align with the goals of cultural pluralism and are represented best when U.S. institutions successfully incorporate immigrants into a society faithful to egalitarian values.

While assimilation was used to describe a set of processes that were (or ought to be) in place to ensure the integration of subordinate groups into the dominant common culture (Marger, 2003), the goal of cultural pluralists, like Kallen, was the maintenance of enough sub-societal separation to guarantee the continuance of ethnic cultural traditions (and the ethnic groups themselves) without interference in anyone's effort to carry out the standard responsibility of civic life (Gordon, 1964). For Kallen and others (see Bourne, 1964), a unified and stronger country would inevitably result if the ideals of cultural pluralism were put into practice. While Gordon (1964) asserts that the imagery of cultural pluralism worked its way into the vocabulary of some in the public and academy, the model approximates only an element of the early American experience and falls short in its descriptive power in many other ways.

During the sweeping economic, demographic, and political changes of the early 1900s, social scientists increasingly looked to the cities to study changing patterns of intergroup
relations. Many reported on the lived experiences of immigrants within the cultural mosaic of U.S. urban areas and the struggle these newcomers faced as they tried to find their way into the American mainstream (see Thomas and Zanecki, 1918; Wirth, 1928; Zorbaugh, 1929). While scholars found evidence of the ongoing maintenance of distinct ethnic cultures, many rejected the notion that cultural pluralism effectively captured the conventional means of structuring U.S. civic life. As a prominent member of the Chicago School during its dominance in American sociology, Park (1950) theorized that historical processes of migration and conquest engender societal division and conflict, but that the compelling processes of assimilation ultimately guaranteed the blending together of all people into one society despite their cultural differences. Looking back on the theories of intergroup convergence developed in early the 20th century, Glazer (1993) insists that under the auspices of Park, his leading students, and later Myrdal (1944/1996), assimilation theory reigned paramount in sociology until at least the 1950s.

As social thinkers acknowledged the ongoing significance of ethnicity, they increasingly realized that a true representation of the U.S. social situation included elements of both assimilation and pluralism (Glazer, 1954). This realization broadened as the recognized impact of race and racism gained salience in social scientific analysis (Wacker, 1983). Before the 1940s, the study of racial minorities did not engender much scholarly attention (Collins and Makowsky, 1998; Newman, 1973). Later however, inspired by celebrated studies of U.S. race relations, like Myrdal's 1944 *An American Dilemma* (also Drake and Cayton, 1993; Dubois, 1899/1967; Frazier, 1965), and the burgeoning post World War II civil rights movement, social scientists increasingly acknowledged the significance of race in the study of social incorporation (Collins and Makowsky, 1998; Newman, 1973; Wacker, 1983).
Gordon (1964) claims that by reorganizing an understanding of subsocietal types (based on a consideration of various combinations including race, ethnicity, social class, and residence), sociologists could further advance the analysis of cultural and social behavior and the impact of group identification. Against the backdrop of a number of conflicting studies on the degree to which race and ethnic group members were incorporated into the American community, Gordon asserted that the process of assimilation includes a series of seven stages through which these various groups pass. Accordingly, once minority group members engage in intimate, intergroup contact in social settings, large-scale intermarriage was likely to occur (marital assimilation) and structural assimilation advanced. In the end, Gordon concluded, however, that acculturation without massive structural intermingling at primary group levels (especially for racial minorities) remained the dominant motif in the U.S. and ultimately cultural pluralism appeared to be an unattainable ideal.

As social thinkers responded to clear indications that societies simultaneously exhibit elements of both assimilation and pluralism, they came to accept the notion that acculturation did not ensure complete assimilation (Glazer, 1954; Yinger, 1981). For them, theories of intergroup relations had to accommodate the obvious presence of incomplete assimilation and forms of inequalitarian pluralism in the U.S., as well as in other societies in the world (Barth and Noel, 1972; van den Berghe, 1978). Social scientists, therefore, increasingly delineated a variety of factors that influence patterns of social incorporation, including: the intensity of minority subordination, social distance, the size and strength of racial and ethnic sub systems, and the social and cultural hierarchy embedded within the societal framework (Cox, 1948/2000; Lieberson, 1961; Schermerhorn, 1949; Warner and Srole, 1945). Of all the social boundaries that affect U.S. intergroup relations, social scientists asserted that disparities based on visibility or
race run deeper than those created by ethnicity (van den Berghe, 1978; Warner and Srole, 1945). In fact, according to R. A. Schermerhorn (1949) and Park (1950), an obstructed path to racial incorporation is likely to strengthen racial subsystems and thus, stimulate pluralism in the form of nationalist movements.

By mid century, while support for melting pot theory and cultural pluralism waned, the persistence of formal and informal organization of ethnic groups provided evidence of the continued relevance of ethnicity in U.S. life. Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy (1944), and later Will Herberg (1955/1960), resuscitated the memory of the melting pot, suggesting that while the intermarriage of different nationalities led to amalgamation, intergroup unions tended to be channeled by religious affiliation. Glazer (1954) also found "fragments of nations in America" (p. 172) and proposed that the assimilation of ethnic group members or the "action of the melting pot" (p. 173) will depend on characteristics of the group itself and intergenerational differences with each ethnic group – a recurring theme in previously published literature (see Bogardus, 1930; Myrdal, 1944/1996; Warner and Srole, 1945) and one that reappears in the literature on segmented assimilation later in the century.

In the 1960s and 1970s many scholars renewed academic discussions on the relevance of ethnicity, pointing to the presence of an ethnic revival among U.S. Whites. Grounding their analysis in Marcus Hansen’s 1938 thesis of third generation return to ethnicity (Alba, 1990), these ethnic revivalists suggested that American ethnic groups possess the capacity to renew and transform themselves over generations, and that ethnicity was still a meaningful and effective organizing symbol for many in the U.S. (Glazer and Moynihan, 1963, 1975). Indeed, many of these scholars insisted that ethnicity’s capacity to organize collective affective sentiments endows it with a symbolic and political power, which transcends the personal exhilaration of
social identification with a cultural identity (Bell, 1975; Glazer and Moynihan, 1975; Yancey, Ericksen, and Juliani, 1976).

In 1979, Gans, however, rejected the notion of an ethnic revival and the significance of ethnic retention among U.S. Whites. According to Gans (1979), "there has been no revival" (p. 1) only the emergence of a new, highly visible form of acculturation and assimilation. He refers to this clearly understood, and easily expressed ethnicity as a symbolic ethnicity – "an ethnicity of last resort" (p. 1) and suggests that in the long run rapid acculturation coexists with a slower, uneven "bumpy-line assimilation" (Gans, 1992).

In general, Alba (1990) agrees with Gans' symbolic ethnicity hypothesis. Yet, he concedes that some form of ethnicity in White America persists. Despite indications of the declining significance of ethnicity for specific groups, Alba concludes that a newly constructed pan-ethnicity – the European-American – based on ancestry from anywhere on the European continent, does have meaning for many Whites in the U.S. He asserts that this new pan-ethnicity might become a way for Whites to organize politically in opposition to challenges from non-European groups. In sum, Steinberg (2001) concluded that many social scientists resisted an enormous amount of evidence that indicated an atrophy of ethnic communities, and in reality the so-called ethnic revival was just the dying gasp of ethnic retentionists.

Other than ethnic revivalism, additional academic criticisms of the old approach to assimilation emerged in the late 1900s. Responding to a vibrant multicultural bloom, alternate pluralist models, such as segmented assimilation (or downward assimilation) and transnationalism, were developed to better explain what critics argued assimilation theory failed to address – the adaptive experiences of non-European immigration and the effect of globalization on immigrants and their descendants (Alba and Nee, 2003).
A number of social analysts offer segmented or downward assimilation as theoretical explanation for various adaptive outcomes found in many contemporary non-European immigrant populations (Hirschman, Kasinitz, and DeWind, 1999; Portes, 1996; Portes and Zhou, 1993, 1994; Rumbaut, 1997; Zhou, 1997). They find that because the newest immigrant streams to the U.S. are not of European descent, contemporary immigrants and their descendants are deemed to be racially different. Consequently, for these newcomers, an imposed racialized identity and unfavorable changes in economic structures obstructs their path to rapid incorporation into the American mainstream and reduces their chances for upward social mobility. According to this model, members of the second and third generation are likely to pursue three adaptive patterns. (1) They might follow a traditional trajectory of incorporation, gradually forging a new Americanized identity and incrementally adopting the practices of the dominant culture. Or (2) because of their newly racialized identity and barred entry into common civic life, they might drop out of mainstream activities and end up incorporated into an improvised minority subculture. (3) If immigrant parents might seek to maintain their ethnic culture, they might seek to protect the children from downward mobility by restricting the children's association with poor native-born African Americans and Latinos. While assimilation into the mainstream is a possibility, segmented or downward assimilation brings our attention to the viability of other adaptive outcomes and alternative pluralist modes of social convergence.

Several contemporary social analysts employ transnationalism in an attempt to address assimilation's limitations. According to this pluralist model, because of advanced technology, market integration, and readily available air transportation, international immigrants and their families can establish a new home outside their society of origin – creating new social and economic networks – and maintain a sustained commitment to relationships in their homeland.
(Basch, Schiller, and Blanc-Szanton, 1994; Levitt, 2001; Portes, Garnizo and Landolt, 1999). In the end, advocates of transnationalism argue that the furtherance of technology and globalization makes it feasible for members of ethnic communities to take advantage of flexible markets and labor economies without losing opportunities once thought to be granted to only those who are completely assimilated.

While Alba and Nee (2003) believe that transnationalism and segmented assimilation have their own spheres of validity, they see major weaknesses in both models. As for transnationalism, they maintain that the phenomenon is not entirely new, and based on past immigrant experiences, question the capacity of the second and third generations to sustain transnationalism on a mass scale. They contend that this mode of incorporation is likely to be confined to modest portions of the U.S.-born generations, as the "thick" (p. 276) connections required for transnationalism will degrade over time. They assert segmented assimilation risks essentializing inner-city Black culture and stereotyping the image of America's undeserving poor. Moreover, according to Alba and Nee, downward social mobility does not seem to be widespread, and note the softening of the rigidity of racial barriers for the newest immigrants. In sum, these two pluralist models of intergroup convergence appear to have their own share of limitations and, while valid in some respects, have limited theoretical application.

A number of less well-known theories appeared to counter the old assimilation canon. For instance, advocates of primordialism countered that racial and ethnic identities are unalterable and not likely to be influenced by changing social contexts or assimilationist processes. According to Harold R. Isaacs (1975), an ethnic identity is integrated into the self early in life and thus becomes an integral, unchanging, primordial dimension of each individual's personality. Other critics proffered circumstantialism as a substitute for assimilation theory.
According to this perspective, minority racial and ethnic groups are interests groups whose members use race and ethnicity as a means to adapt to the social and economic demands emanating in the circumstances of their lives. Under this school of thought, racial and ethnic identities might change, but they remain in some form, as minority group members use their identity to try to make social gains. In sum, advocates of these two perspectives believe that assimilation theory is inadequate and that racial and ethnic identities are likely to endure in spite of significant intergroup contact.

Looking back on theories of racial and ethnic convergence, Alba and Nee (1997) insist that assimilation theory, while unpopular and in need of conceptual revision, still has great power for understanding U.S. intergroup relations (a revision they address in their book reviewed in the last chapter of this dissertation). Glazer (1997) concurs. For him, assimilation is still the most powerful force affecting U.S. ethnic and racial minorities, and he concludes that much of the unpopularity of assimilation theory resides in its unabashed macro sociological approach and its apparent disregard of human agency.

How does a review of the prevailing ideologies of U.S. racial/ethnic incorporation and attendant social analysis inform our understanding of the significance of assimilation and pluralism on the negotiation of a national identity in the U.S.? What can we say about a nation that pays lip service to a paradoxical, yet surprisingly apt, national motto – e pluribus unum . . . out of many, one? In sum, in the U.S., while powerful and enduring assimilative processes exist, they are at times matched by renewed attention to cultural differences and pluralistic movements (Yinger, 1981, 1994). Therefore, while social thinkers concede that societies exhibit elements of both assimilation and pluralism simultaneously, public debates on the proper amount of intergroup convergence in the U.S. appear to be successive moments in a dialectic process
dominated by irresistible assimilationist forces. Apparently, the dominant group is willing to accommodate aspects of different cultures compatible with their preferences for a common culture and effectively shun those that are not.

In 1991, sociologist James Davison Hunter found evidence of the formation of a new set of antagonists in yet another battle over who gets to determine what it means to be an American. According to Hunter (1991), these culture wars include political disagreements on a range of issues including multiculturalism. In the next section, I briefly detail the contemporary academic deliberation on multiculturalism as a social doctrine. A review of the multiculturalism debate not only provides a look at the conceptualization process through which multiculturalism came to be defined, but also advances my endeavor to contextualize the multiculturalism debate within an assimilation/pluralism theoretical framework.

**Multiculturalism: The Conceptualization and Rise of a Social Doctrine**

Today, scholars of social incorporation suggest that multiculturalism is a set of ideas that correspond to cultural pluralism (Downey, 1999; Patchen, 1999). Accordingly, the principle tenets of multiculturalism have come to include: (1) a generalized rejection of Euro-centric assimilation; (2) society-wide acknowledgment of the ongoing socio-historical contributions of all groups; (3) advocacy of a doctrine of equal respect and the importance of maintaining and promoting cultural diversity; and (4) the presumed guarantee of economic and political parity with the majority group for members of minority group cultures (Farley, 2000; Feagin and Feagin, 2003; Marger, 2003; Patchen, 1999).

While some agreement on the general definition of multiculturalism appears in the literature, the usage and significance of the concept has varied dramatically. Apparently, debates
on the meaning and the merits of multiculturalism began in earnest in the field of education in the mid 1980s, as proponents called for the equal recognition of the contributions of all racial and ethnic groups to the development of the American mainstream (Zavella, 1996). The vigorous and rather hotly contested inquiries into multiculturalism quickly spread into other arenas. The number of universities, other governmental and administrative agencies, and corporate institutions involved in the deliberation of multiculturalism's message increased dramatically in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Chicago Cultural Studies Group, 1994; Downey, 1999; Gitlin, 1995; Goldberg, 1994; Taylor 1994). According to Zelinsky (2001), the ideology of multiculturalism inspired a national dialogue in which the contending groups engaged in a "constant, often obstreperous jousting for advantage, prestige, social and cultural power" (p. 195).

While Sollors (1998) points to Canada's policy deliberations on the preservations of African cultures as multiculturalism's origination in North America, the roots of the multiculturalism debate in the U.S. can be traced back to the social and cultural turmoil present in the 1960s. According to Downey (1999), the breakdown of formal racial exclusion after World War II provided "fertile soil for the emergence of multiculturalism" (p. 259) later in the century. Even though the multiculturalism debate finds its footing in the loosening of civic culture (Higham 2001), the respecification of American values in law and the articulation of immigrant access to schools, welfare, and citizenship grounded the legitimacy of multiculturalism's message into U.S. social institutions in the 1960s (Alexander and Smelser 1999).

The increasing numbers of immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia profoundly affected the role cultural pluralism played in contemporary intergroup relations and
the evolution of the advocacy of multiculturalism (Glazer, 1997; Manning, 1995). Beyond the impact of the new immigration, Glazer (1997) includes other societal developments that helped precipitate the rise of multiculturalism: (1) the remarkable expansion of the women’s movement, (2) the change in sexual mores, and (3) "the declining self-confidence or arrogance of the United States as the best, as well as the richest and most powerful, country" (p. 147). In the end, however, Glazer (1997, 2001) maintains that the principle reason for the ascendance of multiculturalism is unsuccessful U.S. attempts to assimilate African Americans. He believes that a build-up of frustration in the Black population over the perceived failure of civil rights reform strengthen the resolve of many Blacks to stand in opposition to any form of assimilation. "Blacks are the storm troops in the battles over multiculturalism" (1997, p. 94).

In sum, in the second half of the 20th century, multiculturalism emerged as a powerful political symbol that many advocates believed could (1) serve as a means to press the case for both equal recognition and treatment of racial and ethnic minorities, and (2) motivate people to seek greater equality in ethnic and race relations (Downey, 1999; Gitlin, 1995). In general while multiculturalism's message inspired a good deal of popular support and political mobilization, apparently it did not guide the affirmation of multiculturalism in clear and predictable ways (Downey, 2000). Consequently, even though multiculturalism emerged as a major conceptual device in the debates, it often appeared to be nothing more than a vague, feel-good concept in the public consciousness for which a coherent set of values and specific policy positions was conspicuously absent (Higham, 2001; Zelinski, 2001).

Social analysts and academic scholars joined in the contentious national injury into the significance of multiculturalism. In their attempt to disentangle doctrine, ideology, and theory, many scholars agree that the indeterminacy of the message resides its multivalence and inability
to articulate precisely the appropriate amount of cultural convergence and divergence (Gordon and Newfield, 1996; Sollors, 1998). According to David A. Hollinger (1998) multiculturalism "functions as a shibboleth behind which are concealed a range of initiatives often not in agreement about just how much ethnoracial particularism is wise" (p. 49).

In much the same way, others social thinkers note that multiculturalists tends to advocate simultaneously contradictory goals: the guarantee of color- and ethnic-blind treatment, and color- and ethnic-conscious protection of ethnic cultures and practices (Zelinsky, 2001). To use a cliché, they want their cake and eat it too. Still others suggest that the paradox of multiculturalism unknowingly leads proponents to long for a commonality only slightly different than the one they seek to replace – whereby the agreed upon maintenance of cultural distinctiveness, unity through diversity, stands in as a substitute for the creation of a common culture (Gordon and Newfield, 1996; Sollors, 1998; Taylor, 1994).

Goldberg (1994) asserts that the utter confusion among the debate's antagonists derives in part from the fact that virtually no one defends monoculturalism, and that ironically, multiculturalism is deprived of a natural opponent. In fact when social scientists examined the discourse of the debate's adversaries, much of the disagreement happened between those claiming to be multiculturalists: conservative or radical, pluralistic or particularistic, weak or strong multiculturalists (Berman, 1992; Goldberg, 1994; Gordon and Newfield, 1996). In 1997 in the title of his book, even assimilationist-minded Glazer finally conceded that We Are All Multiculturalists Now.

 Apparently, multiculturalism multivalent message worked against effective political mobilization around the issue. In the next section I look at empirical research papers that attempt
Attitudes on Multiculturalism in the U.S. Public

According to Downey (2000), because the issue was late to move beyond the academy arena and into popular debates, the research on social attitudes toward cultural pluralism or multiculturalism remains largely unreported, and virtually neglected in the literature on racial attitudes. In one of the first empirical research projects devoted to this topic, Michael W. Link and Robert W. Oldendick (1996) examined the relationship between the images Whites hold of their own race vis-à-vis their view of other racial groups (the social construction differential) and their position on race-related policy issues and multiculturalism. The authors of this study operationalize multiculturalism by the respondent’s attitudes on the increased presence of Hispanics and Asians in the U.S. population. In sum, the paper reports that the more positive the cognitive images Whites hold of Blacks, the more likely Whites are to support policies associated with equal opportunity, and the greater social construction differential, the less positive their attitude toward multiculturalism.

Both Downey (2000) and Citrin et al. (2001) attempt to situate social attitudes toward multiculturalism with the 1994 General Social Survey multicultural module – a set of thirty questions pertaining to integration, ethnic identity, immigration, and racial preferences. Their analysis indicates that, when asked whether or not racial and ethnic groups need to blend into the common culture (operationalized as assimilation in this paper) or maintain their cultural distinctiveness (multiculturalism for the purposes of this paper), survey respondents favor assimilation slightly more often than multiculturalism. While religiosity, education or income did
not have a significant relationship to attitudes toward multiculturalism, older respondents and whites were more likely to prefer assimilation (Downey, 2000).

Downey (2000) asserts, however, that a tri-modal distribution emerges along the seven-point scale used to determine the level of support for assimilation or multiculturalism – a strong central tendency (attitudinal neutrality) and a more modest elevation at either end of the assimilation/multiculturalism continuum (see also Downey and Huffman, 2001). According to Downey (2000), the most important associational pattern in the data is the tendency for attitudes to be stronger in relation to the importance of the issue for the respondent, rather than the respondent's actual preference for multiculturalism or assimilation.

In addition, Downey (2000) finds that the attitudes of African Americans are more dispersed and less centrally modal, and concludes that they tend to have more extreme attitudes than any other group, regardless of the nature of those attitudes. Because of the disarticulation of issue salience and preferences for or against multiculturalism – exemplified by the attitudes of African Americans – Downey (2000) concludes that patterns of political contention, weak alignment, and coherence with broader issue orientations, mitigate against deepening conflict and mobilization around this social doctrine.

Along with the GSS multicultural module, Citrin et al. (2001) examine data from a 1994 survey conducted in Los Angeles county. "Surprisingly," Citrin et al. (2001, p. 266) find only modest support in minority groups for multiculturalism. According to their analysis, a large majority of Americans across a majority of all ethnic groups favor the more inclusive "just an American" (p. 257) identity – although minority group members were more likely to support multiculturalism’s emphasis on ethnicity than whites.
While the public favors multiculturalism in school and college curricula, Citrin et al. conclude that a majority of the U.S. public opposes the articulation of ethnic identities when ethnicity competes with, rather than complements, the ideal of a common civic identity. Ironically, the authors find that the preference for a national identity seems to coexist with the widespread acceptance of more moderate, less formalized manifestations of multiculturalism. The public's attitude toward a minority's cultural customs is in fact not harsh, and even the study's more ardent assimilationists appear to oppose forced Americanization.

According to Citrin et al. (2001), multiculturalism fails to resonate strongly in the affective sentiments of the U.S. public. In general however, the authors conclude that, while statistically significant, the relationship between political liberalism and multiculturalism is weak and contingent on the way in which multiculturalism is operationalized. The authors conclude that racial animosity towards minority groups is more predictive of the opposition to multiculturalism, and that for many Whites, multiculturalism symbolizes special and unjust favorable treatment for minorities. Congruent with Downey (2000), Citrin at al. assert that (1) the inability of minorities to consistently unite in opposition to the White majority, (2) the allure of a single national identity and (3) the persistence prejudice among some U.S. Whites, constrain the inauguration of group-conscious remedies for racial and ethnic inequality.

Discussion

If we accept current findings in the empirical research, the ideology of multiculturalism fails to motivate a coherent response among likely supporters. While much of the U.S. public (majority and minority group members alike) see multiculturalism as a means for minorities to press their case for equal recognition and equal treatment (Gitlin, 1995), a close examination of
public attitudes appears to leave us with paradox, and ultimately, no clear indication of who is on which side of the debate. According to Hollinger (1998), defenders and critics seem to be backing into one another and then recoiling from the ethnocentrism of the other without regard for anyone's political preferences.

Moreover, Downey (1999) asserts that because the debate has placed racism, social justice and power off limits, the possibility of mobilizing political action to contest institutionalized arrangements is negligible. In fact, as multiculturalism's power to transform society did not materialize, indications of the co-optation of multiculturalism's message by elite groups, seeking to obstruct social change, did (Bonacich, 1996; Downey, 1999).

Higham (2001) believes that managing intergroup tensions historically involves the incremental extensions of the circle of those acknowledged as relevant contributors to the national identity. Plausibly, the multiculturalism debate served this purpose. As of yet, however, the empirical evidence only hints at the pertinence of this notion. For reason given above, the multiplicity of the message and the resulting complexity of attitudes seems to reflect a variety of motivations in the U.S. public that do not necessarily tell us why the political mobilization around the concept is defused.

In the end, Downey (2000) concludes that, while the data reflect a disarticulation of issue preference and issue salience, the current analysis of survey data tells us little about how and why the public rationalizes their attitudes. He asserts that the complexity of attitudes requires "more focused and deeper research" (p. 107). In the next chapter I attempt to establish the theoretical foundation for an unprecedented research agenda that addresses Downey's challenge.

Building on Alba and Nee's (2003) new theory of assimilation, my examination of the multiculturalism debate and the public's deliberation on the proper means of ethnoracial social
incorporation intends to show that, despite race and ethnicity attitudinal variation, multiculturalism is framed often within the bounds of American egalitarianism. For this reason, many in the public, who posture themselves as multiculturalists, ironically end up voicing their preferences in a pro-assimilationist manner. In sum, my research will help explain the paradox of multiculturalism—furnishing evidence that reveals how a univeralist core (founded on conventional patterns of assimilation) remains in place, despite the presence of a widely popular, seemingly antithetical campaign to replace it.
CHAPTER 3
THEORY AND HYPOTHESES FOR THE ANALYSIS

Introduction: Historical and Contemporary Definitions of Assimilation and Pluralism

While the fundamental concepts employed in the analysis of racial and ethnic incorporation possess multiple dimensions and varied real world applications, in this chapter I confine my review to theoretical conceptualizations that inspire a generic notion of the meaning of the terms within the socio-historical context of the United States. While scholars often elaborate fine distinctions between models of assimilation and pluralism, the public relies on more common understandings of these concepts. For the participants in the Lilly Survey of Attitudes and Friendships (LASF) interviews employed in this research, symbolic concepts, like the American melting pot or multiculturalism, were often treated as social facts with idealized characteristics. Therefore, below I provide general conceptualizations that are more likely to match the public's attitudes on this issue, and more effectively capture the essence of more commonly accepted definitions of the terms.

While social scientists have increasingly acknowledged that intergroup convergence cannot be represented with mutually exclusive models and that none of the outcomes are inevitable or irreversible, Martin N. Marger (2003) suggests that outsiders generally follow one of two paths. The first is assimilation and it refers to the process by which outsiders blend into an existing common culture. The second is pluralism and it entails practices associated with the ongoing maintenance of social and cultural separation. Let's first consider assimilation.

A detailed discussion of manifestations of assimilation would have to include mention of a wide variety of dimensions and forms – e.g., primary and secondary structural assimilation, biological assimilation, cultural assimilation, incomplete and complete assimilation (Gordon,
1964; Marger, 2003; Patchen, 1999). Recently, scholars note assimilation's unpopularity and suggest that much of the criticism of this concept emanates from the presumption that its end point is complete absorption into the Anglo-American core culture (Alba and Nee, 2003). For many in the traditional sociological canon, assimilation involved a one-sided process in which minorities unlearn and inevitably shed their own cultural patterns and adopt the behaviors and values present in the Anglo American core culture (Alba and Nee, 2003). Even the non-Americanized, more contemporary *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* (Marshall, 1998) defines assimilation in a more conventional way, equating it to the integration of a subordinate group into the dominant host society and the internalization of the values of the dominant group by subordinate group members.

Because assimilation is a contested idea, it is no wonder alternative models of intergroup convergence flourish. Alba and Nee (2003) maintain that assimilation still has a vital core and reformulate the concept by adhering to the classic definition enunciated first by Park and Burgess (more on this later in the chapter). In reaction to the implied ethnocentricity of the old definition, assimilation has more recently come to refer to the reduction of boundaries between racial and ethnic groups (Yinger, 1981). Despite its multivalence, in its complete form and without Eurocentric overtones, sociologists today typically portray assimilation as a homogenizing process within some total societal unit that erases social and structural differentiation based on ethnicity (Feagin and Feagin, 2003; Marger, 2003; Patchen, 1999). Alba and Nee (2003) suggest the conception definition above is not that far removed from the definition Park and Burgess developed in 1921 – homogenizing processes that bring ethnic minorities into the mainstream (1921/1969). For the analysis of this paper, when people suggest we are becoming more alike
(boundary reduction) and that we should create a common culture (erase ethnic differentiation), I assume they prefer assimilation to pluralist models of social incorporation.

Conceptual confusion aside, mid century Stewart G. Cole and Mildred W. Cole (1954) and Gordon (1964) insisted that the most prevalent ideology of assimilation in the U.S. was Anglo-conformity and that conventional practices pressed minorities to adapt to WASP cultural patterns. Despite a rich literature devoted to identifying alternative dimensions of assimilation, many sociologists agree that the conventional form of assimilation endures as the primary ideology of incorporation in the U.S., and that while they might not openly advocate it, many in the majority still expects minorities to adapt to and largely embrace the Anglo-American core culture (Glazer, 1997; Manning, 1995; Marger, 2003).

Today, because overt support for assimilation is tenuous, other ideologies, like multiculturalism, are likely to rise up in the public consciousness as popular alternatives. Not surprisingly, while the melting pot ideal has assimilationist footings, it too surfaced as an alternative viewpoint on the nature of social incorporation for many of the LSAF interviews. As I looked at how these interview participants voiced their preferences on intergroup convergence, I found many, in fact, distinguished between the more conventional approach to assimilation and the melting pot ideal. While these conceptual differences do not affect the quantitative data analysis of my dissertation, they do become important in my examination of the qualitative interview data.

Gordon (1964) asserts that like Anglo-conformity assimilation, the melting pot perspective envisions the disappearance of ethnic identity and the complete absorption of minority enclaves. Unlike Anglo-conformity, however, he notes that melting pot processes involve the cultural and biological fusion of all racial and ethnic groups into a totally new blend
– a hybrid society where all are "melted together by the fires of American influence and interaction into a distinctly [non-Anglo] new type" (p. 115). According to melting pot theory, all ethnic groups surrender their distinct cultural patterns and assimilate, but they assimilate into a new society that does not have a dominant ethnic group (Marger, 2003) and does have the potential for greater strength and combined advantages (Marshall, 1998). Congruent with the above, when people refer to a preference for ethnic adaptation and cultural fusion, and do not insist that the common culture remain unaltered, I will presume they harbor a melting pot ideology.

As a rival conception of assimilation, the melting pot has been a prominent paradigm of racial and ethnic convergence from the inception of the American experience (Levine, 1996). While the melting pot has worked as a strong metaphor, convention patterns of assimilation have not reflected its mythic message (Gordon, 1964; Newman, 1973). Clearly the melting pot did not happen in America (Alba and Nee, 2003; Glazer and Moynihan, 1963). Nevertheless, the melting pot ideal continues to attract popular support and does impact the attitudes of the U.S. public (Marger, 2003). Because a significant number of LSAF participants talked about the continuing relevance of the American melting pot, I believe its lingering presence had a profound effect on the multiculturalism debate – an impact revealed later in the analysis.

As to the second path of social incorporation mentioned above, pluralism is the conceptual opposite of assimilation. Like assimilation, pluralism also entails variable forms and dimensions. In general, Martin Patchen (1999) characterizes pluralism as a set of cultural and structural arrangements in which racial and ethnic group differentiation is tolerated and protected within a societal system of political equality. Unlike assimilation therefore, pluralism emphasizes
group differentiation and the sustained (even encouraged) retention of each ethnic group's traditions, language, customs, and lifestyle (Marger, 2003).

As a principal dimension of pluralism, cultural pluralism presumes enough sub-societal separation to guarantee the maintenance of cultural traditions of ethnic groups but simultaneously entails the protection of the opportunity for all ethnic group members to carry out the standard responsibility of U.S. civic life (Gordon, 1964). This model expects that both ethnic separation and some level cultural and structural assimilation must happen for ethnic group members to have productive lives. According to Downey (1999), Kallen's cultural pluralism emerged as the most decisive dissent against coercive assimilation of the early 20th century and that multiculturalism is a contemporary version of cultural pluralism in the U.S. in the 1990s.

Other scholars of social inclusion agree with Downey, asserting that a set of ideas, corresponding to cultural pluralism, emerged in the U.S. in the 1980s and 90s under the rubric of multiculturalism (Alba and Nee, 2003; Patchen, 1999). In sum, when looking for attitudes favorable to the ideology of multiculturalism, I look for the following preferences: (1) a generalized rejection of Euro-centric assimilation; (2) the demand for society-wide acknowledgment of the ongoing socio-historical contributions of all groups; and (3) advocacy of policy dedicated to equal respect and the maintenance of cultural diversity (Farley, 2000; Feagin and Feagin, 2003; Marger, 2003; Patchen, 1999).

For the purposes of this dissertation, I presume that that multiculturalism and cultural pluralism are synonymous. I exclude the consideration of other indicators in the operationalization of multiculturalism in my analysis (e.g., ethnic identity construction, ethnic demographic representation, immigration, language and cultural policy initiatives). Again, because my research agenda is most concerned with the significance the ideology of
multiculturalism holds for the U.S. public, I focus on multiculturalism as a general social
document associated with ongoing maintenance of cultural uniqueness (Alba and Nee, 2003).

Hypotheses for the Empirical Analysis

In chapter 5, I examine national survey data to determine trends in attitudinal support for
multiculturalism and assimilation in the U.S. public. More specifically, I attempt to examine the
degree to which membership in various social categories correlates with the acceptance of
multiculturalism's message. Below, I provide a set of hypotheses I use to guide the quantitative
data analysis in my dissertation. Each proposed hypothesis is preceded by a brief review of the
theoretical or analytical justification for that hypothesis. Based on the literature, I present
assimilation and multiculturalism as contradictory theoretical concepts and therefore, in the
hypotheses I assume support for assimilation equates with opposition to multiculturalism and
vice versa.

Citrin et al. (2001) theorize that the young and well-educated – a multiculturalist
vanguard – are more likely to have been exposed to messages favorable to multiculturalism's
equal respect doctrine. Moreover, they hypothesize that because contemporary liberals
increasingly support racial equity, they are more likely to endorse multiculturalism. Finally,
according to Blumer (1958/2000), racial and ethnic group members develop a sense of their
group's position in a social hierarchy vis-à-vis other groups. Since minority group members
possess a sense of inferior status, they are likely to support ideologies that call for greater
equality like multiculturalism. In fact, past research indicates that younger age, higher levels of
education, political liberalism, and minority group membership correlate with racial liberalism
and more tolerant attitudes on issues concerning racial diversity (Citrin et al., 2001; Downey,
Therefore, as the public debates on multiculturalism are a relatively recent phenomenon (Downey, 1999) and associated with an ideology more supportive of cultural pluralism, I propose the following hypothesis:

H1a-1d: Younger ages, greater educational attainment, increasing levels of political liberalism, and minority group status positively correlate with support for multiculturalism.

This hypothesis represents a set of hypotheses, suggesting a separate relationship between a dependent variable and four independent variables. The logistic regression model enables a determination of the statistical significance of all four hypotheses in the set, and the analysis shall take note of each. However, by stacking the independent variables in one hypothesis, the analysis has the added advantage of looking at the effect of more tolerant attitudes on racial diversity on support for or opposition to multiculturalism.

According to the contact hypothesis, close and sustained intergroup contact yields more tolerant and positive attitudes on matters of racial and ethnic differentiation (Allport, 1954/1979; Ellison and Powers, 1994). Therefore:

H2a and H2b: Those who have lived in close proximity to those of different races and ethnicities, as well as those who have attended integrated schools, are more likely to support multiculturalism than those who have not.

For the most part, a test of the hypotheses above shall replicate prior research with more recent data. However, while available literature reveals a long history of scholarly deliberation on assimilation and intermarriage (Alba and Nee, 1997; Lieberson and Waters, 1988; Spickard, 1989), social scientists have not examined empirically the relationship between intermarriage and societal attitudes on multiculturalism and assimilation (I provide an extended discussion of
the literature devoted to intermarriage and race relations in chapter 5). The quantitative analysis in this paper amends this gap in the literature.

Gordon’s (1964) theory of assimilation equips the empirical analysis with an often-noted conceptual format to study the link between attitudinal preference for multiculturalism and intermarriage. According to Gordon, widespread acceptance of intermarriage within a society – marital assimilation – denotes a major advance in the successive assimilative process of intergroup adaptation. Presuming the above, I hypothesize:

H3a and H3b: More favorable attitudes toward intermarriage and interracial dating correlate with support for assimilation, and therefore opposition to multiculturalism.

In sum, the empirical analysis seeks to provide both a more elaborate statistical model of explanatory and control variables, and an examination of the correlation between the affirmation of intermarriage and attitudinal preferences for multiculturalism or assimilation.

Guiding Hypotheses for the Qualitative Data Analysis

Overall the research agenda of this paper turns on the qualitative data analysis. In chapter 6, I augment the study of the public's attitudes on multiculturalism with a more interpretative analysis of qualitative data generated by personal interviews. Many social analysts have offered their impression of the public's perception of multiculturalism, and a few have examined survey data, but no one has asked the U.S. public what part, if any, multiculturalism ought to play in the construction of a national identity. Several social thinkers remind us of the limitations of the empirical analysis of racial attitudes (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Bonilla-Silva and Forman, 2000) or attitudes on symbolic issues like multiculturalism (Downey, 2000). Because an interpretive analysis of the interview data has the potential to provide for a deeper and more concentrated
understanding of both the trends in issue preference and the motivations for those preferences on this topic, I include an exploration of how participants rationalize their support for or opposition to multiculturalism in chapter 6. Through induction, I identify themes in the participants' answers to the interview questions that are descriptive of their aspirations for U.S. social inclusion, paying close attention to the direct and/or indirect references to theories and ideologies salient in the literature (e.g., Anglo-conformity, conventional assimilation, melting pot assimilation, and multiculturalism).

Because (1) prior empirical research already looks for descriptive trends in categorical social data associated with preferences for or against multiculturalism and (2) because I intend to evaluate the data primarily in terms of models of racial and ethnic inclusion, my research agenda focuses on attitudinal variations in the participants based on racial and ethnic status. Therefore, while I rely on the theory and hypotheses above to guide the analysis of the qualitative data related to the other explanatory variables, I concentrate the qualitative data analysis to facets of the interviews that deal with race and ethnicity. To this end, the qualitative data analysis looks to the theories below to, not only frame this investigation, but as a means to rebuild or extend it (Burawoy, 1991).

Because the public deliberation over multiculturalism implicitly includes a discussion of racial meanings and social hierarchy, it seems implausible that racial and ethnic status fails to motivate clearly patterned responses in this debate. Cleavages in patterns of attitudinal support, therefore, might be masked by within the nuances of racial discourse. The interpretive analysis of the interviews must consider how the U.S. social structure channels the public deliberation on the proper amount of racial and ethnic convergence (Bonilla-Silva, 2001).
Herbert Blumer's group position perspective provides insight into how social conditions guide intergroup attitudes (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). According to Blumer (1958/2000; see also Blumer and Duster, 1980), social systems become racialized and a basic understanding of race relations requires an examination of a collective process by which racial groups form a sense of social positions vis-à-vis each other. Blumer concludes that since the majority group members possess a collective sense of superior status, they are likely to strive to maintain their privileged status based on a sense of entitlement.

Congruently, other social thinkers assert that we acquire our understanding of race relations through all forms of public discourse, and that the majority group dominates the production and interpretation of racial meanings through these deliberations (Schubert, 2002; van Dijk, 1997; Wetherell and Potter, 1992). Because of the perception that multiculturalism is a challenge to Euro-centric hegemony and thus, a threat to the foundation of the current racial hierarchy, a sense of a superior group position should influence the White participants of this study to embrace more traditional models of assimilation.

In general, the degree of assimilation of U.S. race and ethnic groups varies considerably, and yet the Black-non-Black divide still seems to dominate the U.S. system of social inclusion (Yancey, 2003). Glazer (1997) posits that, because of their frustration over thwarted attempts at assimilation, Blacks are a leading force for multiculturalism in the U.S. In fact, Downey (2000) finds that Blacks do support multiculturalism more often than other minority group members and Whites, but that ironically they also are more likely to support assimilation than all other groups. While Citrin et al. (2001) find the attitudes of Blacks align with those of Whites on some policy issues related to cultural assimilation; they concurrently align with Hispanics and Asians on others. Therefore, because of the persistent alienation of African Americans in the U.S. vis-à-vis
non-Blacks, the attitudes of African Americans should be distinguishable from both those of Whites and other ethnic group member participants. More specifically, Blacks are likely to reject assimilation in forms most closely associated with Anglo-conformity.

Because the newest immigrant groups (Marger, 2003) have more immediate, and in some cases ongoing, social, cultural, and historical ties to distinctly non-Americanized ethnic cultural origins, and because multiculturalism conveys support for sustaining these cultural differences (e.g. language, culinary appetites, and religion), support for multiculturalism should be more salient for members of non-Black minority group members than African Americans and American/European Whites.

A conceptual distinction between assimilation, multiculturalism and the melting pot ideal is established by social analysts in the literature, but situating the attitudes of the public on the melting pot ideal, within the bounds of the multiculturalism debate, has not yet been attempted in the extant research. The analysis of the qualitative data in the analysis finds the American melting pot to be significant, and provides insight into how this ideology fits in the U.S. deliberation on multiculturalism and assimilation.

Discussion

After I look for trends in U.S. attitudes on multiculturalism in the quantitative and qualitative data, I theorize on multiculturalism's relationship to other ideologies of intergroup relations in the last chapter of this dissertation. This will require an in-depth look at the old approach to assimilation as an underpinning for the contemporary inquiry into multiculturalism and the late 20th century scholarly endeavor to conceptualize and contextualize multiculturalism. In chapter 7, I focus on the new formulation of assimilation developed by Alba and Nee (2003).
In *Remaking the American Mainstream*, Alba and Nee (2003) theorize that, while the old approach to assimilation is currently held in disregard and pluralist models of incorporation possess spheres of validity, the vital core of assimilation retains utility in illuminating the experiences of contemporary and second generation immigrants. They reformulate the old approach to assimilation and emphasize that assimilation is best thought of as the "decline" of ethnic distinctions and cultural and social differences. For them, assimilation need not entail the disappearance of ethnicity altogether, but that ethnic differences between people are perceived with less and less frequency and in fewer domains. Unlike the conventional definition of assimilation, their reformulation allows for the easing of minority group members into mainstream social institutions without a rupture between their participation in these institutions and familiar cultural practices. At the same time, Alba and Nee's conception of assimilation grants the evolution of the mainstream in the direction of the incremental inclusion of cultural elements from other ethnic and racial groups.

While Alba and Nee do expect some blurring of ethnic boundaries, they do not view the assimilation of the near future as something that will resemble a redefining of non-European groups as White. The assimilation they see creates a composite mainstream culture, highly variegated by social class and other factors, made up of multiple layers that allows the forging of distinguishable identities for individuals and groups in ways that are still recognizably American. A comprehensive review of their theory appears in chapter 7.

Is an apparent weakening of resistance to the inclusion ethnic others into the American mainstream by the White majority evidence of a paradigm shift and a pluralist reconstruction of the American mainstream? Or does the public's apparent approval of multiculturalism belie their deep-seated attraction to American universalism? I employ the analysis of the qualitative data of
this dissertation to address this questions and thus test and extend Alba and Nee's (2003) new assimilation theory.

Beyond the minority group's refusal to accept subordinate roles, critical to theorizing the multiculturalism debate is an examination of the majority group's willingness to exclude others from the mainstream. In this paper I aim to evaluate the implications public deliberations, like the multiculturalism debate, have for the future of social incorporation and future battles over who gets to define what it means to be an American.
CHAPTER 4
DATA AND METHOD

Introduction: Attitudinal Research on Multiculturalism and Assimilation

Social research devoted to situating the U.S. public's attitudes on multiculturalism is scant and limited to empirical analysis of survey data. Moreover, the extant empirical research reveals mixed associational patterns and suggests that preferences for assimilation coexist with widespread acceptance of multiculturalism (Citrin et al., 2001; Downey, 2000). In this dissertation, I seek to augment and fill gaps in the attitudinal literature on this topic with both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. In chapter 5 I replicate and remodel the extant empirical analysis with more recent national data, adding a key variable absent in the literature. Further, with an interpretative examination of qualitative data in chapter 6, I aim to address ambiguous findings in current survey research and the apparent paradox of multiculturalism seemingly not amenable to empirical methods. Arguably, the focus of my research becomes the qualitative data analysis chapter, as it provides deeper and more focused research on nuances in the public's preferences for symbolic concepts like multiculturalism and assimilation.

Quantitative Data and Methods

Lilly Survey of Attitudes and Friendships (LSAF) generated the quantitative data employed in this paper to test the hypotheses stated in chapter 3. The LSAF was designed to assess individual attitudes, social networks, and involvement in religious life of congregations, and included a telephone survey of over 2,500 adults (aged eighteen and older) in the U.S. population. While the primary purpose of this survey was not to conduct research into social and racial attitudes, the LSAF design makes its data extremely applicable to my research agenda. In fact, in some ways it
rectifies serious gaps in previous survey research attempts to examine the social attitudes of the non-White U.S. public, especially Hispanic and Asian Americans. Below I discuss the advantages and disadvantages and the methodology of LSAF.  

The LSAF national telephone survey produced the quantitative data analyzed in chapter 5 of this dissertation. Using random-digit dialing and computer-assisted interviewing (CATI), the survey was conducted from October 1999 through April 2000 by the North Texas Survey Research Center in Denton, Texas. The LSAF phone survey not only produced a large number of respondents (essential to analyzing social attitudes), but also addressed the problem of the underrepresentation of minorities by oversampling African Americans, Asian Americans and Hispanic Americans. The LSAF methodology set specific racial quotas as targets so that, once those quotas were reached, members of that race were no longer surveyed. This design ensured that there would be enough racial minorities for the sample without compromising the generalizability of the survey.

While many of the telephone interviews with Hispanic respondents were conducted in Spanish, due to the variety of Asian languages, the LSAF survey includes only the interviews with English- and Spanish-speaking Asian Americans. Therefore, the LSAF represents the English- and Spanish-speaking adult U.S. population who have phones and, due to the study's aims in measuring residential issues and attitudes, have lived at their current residence for at least three months. The LSAF makes no other claims to representation beyond these parameters.

The response rate for the LSAF was 53%. According to Thomas W. Mangione (1995), response rates between 50 and 60% require additional information that substantiates the quality of the data. In order to address this issue, the LSAF research team engaged in further analysis to strengthen confidence in the representativeness of the sample. Based on the comparison of
sociodemographic variables of the LSAF and the U.S. Department of Labor's January 2000 Current Population Survey, the LSAF research team assert that its demographic data are representative of the population. Next, in order to assume that those who did not respond are like those who did, a comparative analysis on over fifty variables looked for differences between initial respondents and those who, after refusing to answer the survey, then participated. The two groups were extremely similar in the characteristics central to the issue of representativeness, and statistically identical on about 90% of the comparison variables.

During the telephone interview, each respondent was asked over 100 questions. To establish the dependent variable in the quantitative analysis, I employ the following survey question: "Some people say that we are better off if the races maintain their cultural uniqueness, even if we have limited personal relationships between races. Others say that we should create a common culture and close interracial friendships, even though the races may lose their cultural uniqueness. Which one do you prefer?" For the purposes of empirical data analysis, the first statement indicates support for multiculturalism (maintaining cultural uniqueness), and second equates with support for assimilation (creating a common culture).

The advantages of operationalizing multiculturalism with this survey question are three-fold. First, both Downey (2000) and Citrin et al. (2001) use an analogous question in their methodology. This gives me the opportunity to both replicate and build on their research. Secondly, the same question was posed to participants in the LSAF personal interviews, employed in the qualitative data analysis of chapter 6 (discussion of these interviews to follow). Participants of both the telephone and personal surveys are responding, therefore, to the same conceptualization of multiculturalism and assimilation. Finally and perhaps most importantly, because my research delimits multiculturalism to its meaning as a social doctrine, I argue that the
above captures the essence of the variable in summary form without introducing convolution. While the use of this question to operationalize multiculturalism does not exhaustively capture every nuance of the concept, it is both germane and parsimonious, concisely consolidating a full range of this ideology's attributes. Indeed, the question does not require the respondent to interpret the meaning of the multiculturalism and assimilation, but in a straightforward manner, calls on them to choose between racial and ethnic separation or cultural fusion.

The independent or explanatory variables, emanating from the LSAF data set, consist of the respondent's: age, in years; political conservatism – determined by the respondent's self classification on a seven point scale (extremely liberal to extremely conservative); educational level – based on the highest grade of school, year in college, or graduate degree completed; and race or ethnicity – Black, Hispanic, Asian and White. As a measure of the respondents’ attitudes toward intermarriage, I rely on the degree to which a respondent agrees/disagrees with the following scenario (based on a seven point scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree): "I would be upset if I had a child who wanted to marry _________." The survey methodology ensured that a racial or ethnic group other than the respondent’s (from a list of four—White, Black, Hispanic or Asian) was randomly chosen to fill in the blank, allowing for a clear test of the respondent’s attitude towards racial exogamy. As to the issue of social contact, the quantitative analysis of this paper employs three variables generated by yes or no answers to the following questions: (1) Have your ever dated someone of another race? (2) Not including your current neighborhood, have you ever lived in a neighborhood that was 20% or more non-[respondent's race]? (3) Not including any school you may be presently attending and not including college, have you ever attended a school that was 20% or more non-[respondent's race]? I employ the
data emanating from the respondent's answers to these questions to test the proposed hypotheses by way of logistic regression.

Qualitative Data and Methods

As a follow-up to the telephone survey, the LSAF research team conducted more than 140 personal interviews in four U.S. metropolitan cities in the summer of 2000. While the qualitative data from these interviews have limitations for my research agenda (reviewed below), the discussions emanating from the interviews are revealing and give me the rich detail needed to address many of the unanswered questions evoked in the empirical literature.

Before the interview began, each participant completed a short questionnaire that asked them to provide some personal social and demographic information, including gender, race, age, and where they grew up. After administering the questionnaire, LSAF researchers asked the participants approximately fifteen open-ended questions about U.S. race and ethnic relations, politics, intergroup social contact, and their religious life. The semi-structured interview format ensured that the same basic set of questions would be posed to each participant, but of course, a few variations in the order in which the questions were asked exists, as well as whether each question was posed at all. Look in the Appendix for a list of both the pre-interview questionnaire and interview items. The interviews lasted approximately one hour, were recorded on audiotape and later transcribed verbatim. The qualitative data analysis of this dissertation emanates from an interpretation of these transcribed interviews.

The focus of the qualitative data analysis falls on the participant's answer to a question about the proper amount of racial and ethnic convergence in the U.S. Similar to LSAF telephone survey, the interviewers asked the following question of the participants: "Some people say that
we're better off if the races maintain their cultural uniqueness. Others say that we should create a
common culture. Which do you prefer?" Unlike the telephone survey, interview participants
were also asked, "Or do you prefer a combination of the two?"

Typically, the answers to this question involve more than a simple statement of
preference for one of the three options. While most participants addressed the question, their full
answer often evolved into a rather complex rationalization of their motivations for supporting or
opposing multiculturalism. Indeed, more often than not, the participants spoke at length on this
issue and seemed to spend more time contemplating this question than any other question asked
in the interview. Apparently, the open ended format and the combination option pushed the
participants to explain in great detail the reasoning behind their preferences. Fortunately, for the
purposes of this research, the participant's deliberation on this question allows me to not only
classify their attitudinal preferences on assimilation and multiculturalism, but to gain insight into
the motivations for their preferences.

Based on the constraints of the question and similar to the quantitative analysis, I coded
each participant's initial answer to the question and situated them in one of three mutually
exclusive categories: "Maintenance of Cultural Uniqueness," "Common Culture," and
"Combination of Both." Once I assigned empirical codes to these and other categories in the
interview data, I entered and stored the coded responses in a data management application. For
the analysis, I compute descriptive statistics and a cross-tabular analysis based on the coded data.
Obviously, this is not a probability sample and I cannot perform tests of statistical significance,
but I present contingency tables as a means to augment the presentation of the analysis and
findings, and to give the reader a sense of the trends in the data.
As I reviewed the transcripts and began coding responses to the question, I noticed that the participants often referred to common viewpoints, reminiscent of past ideologies of social inclusion, in the elaboration of their answer. Beyond their initial response, themes expressed in the extended answers seem to cluster around preferences for conventional modes of assimilation (including Anglo-conformity), the melting pot theory, or multiculturalism. In fact, the number of times the participants directly referred to the melting pot and multiculturalism is substantial. The presence of these concepts in participant discussions was compelling and obviously important to my analysis.

Consequently, I allowed the themes associated with the concepts to emerge inductively. I coded each participant's answer to the question in its entirety as representative of one theme on intergroup convergence and characteristic of either (1) the conventional model of assimilation, (2) melting pot theory, or (3) multiculturalism. I coded and recoded all the emerging themes in the data until each one central to the research question was repeated, the data was saturated, and each answer was situated in mutually exclusive themes and categories. The intent of this research design is to organize the data in a manner that allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the participant's motivations for their preferences on this issue and how these motivations specifically correspond to ideologies of social convergence,

Besides the multiculturalism question, participants also addressed several other questions and statements about racial and political issues in America today. I examined and coded the answers to these questions and later considered this data within the context of the participant's generalized aspirations for intergroup relations. While the data emanating from the question on multiculturalism is central to my research agenda and is the focus of qualitative data analysis, I occasionally reference the participant's answers to the other questions as additional indicators of
the participant's sense of group position and as an augmentation of my interpretation of their attitudes on intergroup convergence.

As to the limitations of the data, one of the principal objectives of the interviews was to elicit attitudinal data related to multiracial church membership. To fulfill this objective, the LSAF researchers interviewed primarily regular church attendees, and oversampled multiracial church attendees. This distortion in the population presents a limitation in the data for my research agenda. Regular church attendees are more likely to be politically conservative and to attain higher levels of education. Moreover, White multiracial church attendees typically possess more progressive political and racial attitudes than other Whites (Yancey, 2001), and racial minority multiracial church attendees have higher SES and educational levels than their others in their group (Emerson, in press). While these tendencies must be taken into account, I assert that other factors suggest that the information garnered in the interviews is not overly influenced by this distortion.

In an analysis of the LSAF interview discussions, the preferences expressed by the multiracial church attendees did not differ significantly from those of the uniracial attendees on the multiculturalism question. Moreover, choices of participants in either of these groups did not vary dramatically from those in most other social and demographic categories, including age, gender, region of youth, and education. I am convinced that the primary determinant in the deliberation of intergroup convergence is minority status and that any effect church membership or attendance might have on the development of ideological preferences is filtered through race and ethnic status. This limitation becomes even less pertinent since I do not include an analysis of the effect of multiracial church membership on the attitudes of the participants.
When analyzing the effects of political ideology and educational achievement on attitudes about multiculturalism in the U.S. public, the extant empirical research indicates that education level does not have any significant influence on the public's attitudes toward multiculturalism and assimilation (Citrin et al., 2001; Downey, 2000). While Citrin et al. (2001) find a significant relationship between political liberalism and support for multiculturalism, they conclude that it is a weak one and not conclusive. Downey (2000) insists that the issue of political alignment involves more than one dimension and requires additional consideration when studying attitudes on multiculturalism.

Consequently, Downey (2000) disentangles personal-moral issues from economic-justice issues when examining the relationship between political ideology and attitudes on multiculturalism. He finds the same curvilinear relationship – a strong central tendency and a more modest elevation at either end of the multiculturalism/assimilation continuum – among personal-moral conservatives that he found in racial groups. He maintains, therefore, that the dominant distributional characteristic of this tri-modal distribution is attitudinal neutrality on multiculturalism and that weak issue alignment actually mitigates against political mobilization in the population. For my research agenda then, because the extant research indicates that political ideology and educational achievement research do not overly influence attitudes in one direction, and because the LSAF intergroup comparison did not reveal attitudinal difference on the question posed to the participants, the limitations of using this sample are extenuated.

In fact, I contend that the attitudes of LSAF interview participants are not significantly different that the attitudes expressed by others in the U.S. public. After reading of the interview transcripts, I could not help but notice the similarity between the discussions of the LSAF participants and people cited in comparable research (see Blauner, 1989; Bonilla-Silva, 2001;
Bonilla-Silva and Forman, 2000; Wolfe, 1998). Since I started work on this paper, I conducted a number of interviews with university students in which I posed the same multiculturalism question. The responses elicited during these interviews resonate with those given by participants in the LSAF. While the above offers only a general assessment of the potential distortions in the data, I assert that the data from the LSAF sample are not significantly different than the U.S. public and are not overly influenced by the oversampling of multiracial church attendees. In fact, it is possible that the inclusion of more multiracial church attendees in my sample is potentially advantageous to my research.

Plausibly, because many of the interview participants coexist in the multicultural environment of their churches, they might confront issues associated with multiculturalism more often and on a more immediate basis than others. Their attitudes on my research question, linked to real world experiences, might reflect the thought processes of seemingly ambivalent Americans not as engaged in the debate over multiculturalism. An in-depth examination of the attitudes of my sample potentially improves my chances of transcending the apparent attitudinal neutrality embedded in the public deliberation on multiculturalism.

Another advantage of the interview sample is its social and demographic diversity. Table 1 compares the various social and demographic characteristics of the LSAF interview sample with those of the U.S. population. According to the information depicted in Table 1, the LSAF interview sample does overrepresent some social categories (e.g., Blacks, Asians) and, on average, possesses a higher level of academic achievement. On the other hand, the age of the LSAF sample is distributed across seven decades, and the sample is an impressive collection of a diverse group of people from each U.S. census region.
Table 1
Social and Demographic Characteristics of the LSAF Sample and the U. S. Population, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social/Demographic Variables</th>
<th>LSAF Sample</th>
<th>U. S. Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age^a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-89</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=127)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=139)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=138)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational attainment</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 0-11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Grad/Equivalent</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates Degree/Some College</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/Professional Degree</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=134)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where did you grow up? (LSAF)/U.S. native: region of birth (U.S. Census)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=117)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: A total resulting in more/less than 100 is due to rounding error or omission of categories.
^aFor the U.S. population, the table percentages reflect the percentage of the population aged 20-89.
Overall, because (1) the LSAF project provides us with the only systematic attempt to elicit the public's attitudes on the merits of multiculturalism in personal interviews, and (2) the diversity and size of the sample, the advantages of employing data from this sample to address my research agenda far outweigh the disadvantages.

Discussion

As we look back on the multiculturalism debates, it seems implausible that race and ethnicity failed to motive a patterned response in a deliberation over intergroup relations and social convergence. Moreover, it seems just as implausible that the debates had a marginal impact on trends in attitudes of the U.S. public on assimilation. Of course, assimilation and multiculturalism are symbols that are likely to inspire conceptual confusion. However, the protean nature of a concept like multiculturalism should make it an ideal political symbol, especially for ethnic groups (Downey, 1999). Its generic message should engender strong sentiments without creating the reticence a more narrowly based policy initiative might inspire. For this reason, I focus on differences in attitudes on the topic between racial and ethnic groups in the qualitative analysis of chapter 6. Because overt discussions involving race are taboo (Bonilla-Silva, 2001) and because differences in racial attitudes are difficult to assess (Blauner, 1989; Downey, 2000), it is possible that people of different races and ethnicities might be talking past one another in this debate (Blauner, 2001). As the focal point, the qualitative data analysis aims to reveal motivations for the public's preferences on this issue and look for divergent perspectives that might be masked in the nuances of racial discourse.
CHAPTER 5
EMPIRICAL DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction: U.S. Attitudes on Multiculturalism

In 1835, when commenting on race relations, Alexis de Tocqueville (1900) proposed that the presence of an isolated and subjugated Black population amounted to the "most formidable of all the ills" (p. 361) threatening the stability of the United States. One hundred years later, Myrdal (1944/1996) found the very same phenomenon looming on the U.S. social landscape – *An American Dilemma*. Optimistically, he theorized that the power of American ideals and a belief in a heritage of protected universalism would compel the White majority to eliminate their racist behavior, and culminate in the assimilation of African Americans into the U.S. mainstream.

More recently, another doctrine of equal respect and equal rights, multiculturalism, emerged as a popular ideological framework for resolving intergroup relations (Gordon and Newfield, 1996), and the debate over racial and ethnic convergence was revitalized. Historically, the U.S. public has witnessed successive installments of ideological interpretations of how to establish a common civic identity. While theorizing race and ethnic relations has vacillated over the years (Newman, 1973), the presence of an abundant supply of ardent antagonists in the debates over intergroup convergence has been a constant.

Yet, because the debates over multiculturalism moved from the academic world into the popular arena late in the 20th century (Downey, 2000), much of what we know about the U.S. public's support for or opposition to multiculturalism is based on the ideas or ideals of social thinkers, or reports based on anecdotal evidence. While scholars have produced innumerable articles, anthologies, texts and monographs on the subject, attitudinal research on America’s
relative position on modes of incorporation, like multiculturalism and assimilation, remains largely neglected (Downey, 2000).

In this chapter, employing the Lilly Survey of Attitudes and Friendships (LSAF) telephone survey data, I develop logistic regression models to more clearly identify preferences for multiculturalism or assimilation in the U.S. public and look for trends in attitudes on social convergence among various social categories. More specifically, I intend to scrutinize how the presence of intermarriage correlates with ideological support for multiculturalism or assimilation. While the research on public preferences associated with these two ideologies is scant, empirical analysis deliberating on the relationship between support for these modes of intergroup convergence and intermarriage is absent in the literature. Since intermarriage becomes important to the empirical analysis and has received limited attention, I provide a brief review of the literature devoted to this topic below to establish background information and augment the analysis.

Research Literature on Intermarriage

Through the study of intermarriage, social scientists have gained valuable insight into the nature of intergroup relations. Many contend that intermarriage works well as an indicator of social distance between minority and majority group members (Lieberson and Waters, 1988), and others add that intermarriage itself can be an engine of social change (Root, 2001; Goldstein, 1999; Yancey and Yancey, 1997). In order to better understand what role the burgeoning numbers of multiracial families plays in the national debate on multiculturalism and establish background for two research hypotheses, I briefly review the literature devoted to intermarriage and intergroup convergence below.
According to many scholars, increasing numbers of interracial unions signifies a reconciliation of antagonistic macro-level race relations and the continuing significance of assimilation in U.S. intergroup relations (Alba and Nee, 1997; Spickard, 1989). In fact, despite lingering societal resistance to intergroup unions, researchers note a sustained trend in the increasing number of people involved in interracial marriage over the last several decades (Davidson, 1991-1992; Goldstein, 1999; Kalmijn, 1993; Qian, 1997; Spigner, 1994; Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan, 1990).

Other social thinkers counter that the increasing overall rate of intermarriage is deceptive and that rates vary substantially on the basis of race and ethnicity, education, and regional racial compositions (Qian, 1999; Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan, 1990). For instance, scholars have found that despite an increase in interracial contact and Black exogamy, a stigma against Black-White intermarriage persists in the U.S. (Kalmijn, 1993; Spickard, 1989; Porterfield, 1982). In fact, of all U.S. racial groups, African Americans have the lowest rates of intermarriage (Qian, 1997; Davidson, 1991-1992; Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan, 1990). On the other hand, both Qian (1999) and Kalmijn (1993) suggest that more current trends in the data hint at the weakening of social norms that are antagonistic to Black-White intermarriage, and agree that interracial marriage helps break down the rigidity of racial division (Alba and Nee, 2003).

The formation of interracial relationships, as well as the resistance to their development, is affected by factors related to intergroup propinquity and social contact. According to some social scientists, intermarriage naturally results as an outcome of the higher interaction of different races and the lowering of social sanctions against interracial relations (Brow, 1987; Davidson, 1991-1992; Emerson, Chai, and Yancey, 2002; Yancey, 2002). Qian (1999) concludes that a higher rate of interracial marriage for minorities residing in regions dominated by Whites
implies that increased and more intimate social contact positively correlates with rates of intermarriage.

Once minority group members engage in intimate, intergroup contact in social settings, large-scale intermarriage is likely to occur and the structural assimilation of that group is advanced (Gordon, 1964). According to Gordon (1964), widespread acceptance of intermarriage within a population – a phenomenon conceptualized as marital assimilation – marks an accelerated stage in the incorporation of minority groups and is a significant indicator of a decline in racial and ethnic distinction. If Gordon's thesis is accurate, the recent increase in intermarriage must indicate a reduction in barriers separating majority and minority groups and therefore a shift in the public's attitudes on intergroup convergence. I employ Gordon's theoretical framework to form hypotheses 3a and 3b (appearing in chapter 3 and reviewed below).

For many, intermarriage is an integral variable in study of intergroup convergence. As a precursor to attitudinal change, Root (2001) suggests that intermarriage acts as an engine for social change, inspiring improved race relations. While "it is by no means certain that intermarriage heralds the obliteration of minority ethnic identity" (Spickard, 1989, p. 369), increases in intermarriage, at the very least, appear to be an indicator of progressive intergroup interaction and a significant factor in the racial and ethnic convergence process.

Overview of the Hypotheses

Grounded in theory and past empirical research, I developed a number of hypotheses to be tested empirically with the LSAF data and later operationalized the dependent and explanatory variables in chapter 4. For a review of the theoretical and analytical justification for
the hypotheses refer to the "Hypotheses for the Empirical Analysis" section in chapter 3. Before I discuss in the quantitative data analysis below, let's review the hypotheses.

Because younger ages, political liberalism, and minority group membership is correlated more tolerant attitudes on intergroup relations and social convergence, I propose the following: H1a-1d: Younger ages, greater educational attainment, increasing levels of political liberalism, and minority group status positively correlate with support for multiculturalism.

Moreover, close and sustained intergroup contact tends to yield more tolerant and positive attitudes on matters of racial and ethnic differentiation, and therefore:
H2a and H2b: Those who have lived in close proximity to those of different races and ethnicities, as well as those who have attended integrated schools, are more likely to support multiculturalism than those who have not.

Based on Gordon's (1964) straight-line assimilation theory, I hypothesize:
H3a and H3b: More favorable attitudes toward intermarriage and interracial dating correlate with support for assimilation, and therefore opposition to multiculturalism.

An Analysis of the LSAF Survey Data
Table 2 depicts descriptive statistics associated with the variables central to the analysis. Referring to the dependent variable – attitudes in support of or opposition to multiculturalism/assimilation – more respondents voiced support for the maintenance of a common culture (58.3%) than cultural uniqueness (41.7%). As to the explanatory variables, when asked: "I would not be upset if my child enters into a mixed marriage," overwhelmingly most people agreed. Over 70% of the respondents moderately or strongly agree with the idea that
Table 2  
Dependent and Explanatory Variables, LSAF, 2000 (N=1944)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mean (Standard Deviation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variable:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Common Culture</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of cultural uniqueness</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanatory Variables:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Upset with child’s intermarriage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Agree</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Agree</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Disagree</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>43.3 (16.9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dated interracialy</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Conservatism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Liberal</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Liberal</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>39.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Conservative</td>
<td>15.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Conservative</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level completed</td>
<td>13.7 (3.1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived in integrated neighborhood</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended integrated school</td>
<td>47.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>64.9</td>
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<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>12.0</td>
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<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The descriptive statistics reported above are based on the weighted LSAF sample data. A total resulting in more/less than 100% is due to rounding error or omission of response categories.*
they would not be upset if their child were to enter into intermarriage, with less than 20% voicing any form of disagreement with the above statement. The mean age of the sample is 43 years old, and 50% of the participants are situated between the ages of 30 and 54. According to the data, nearly 45% of those surveyed reported that they have participated in interracial dating. However, although most of the respondents reported being married or involved in a marriage-like relationship, only a small percentage (less than 5%) of the sample indicated that they are now involved in a biracial or interethnic marriage or marriage-like relationship. Because of the small size of this group, the variable intermarried was not used in the analysis.

Most of the respondents position themselves in the center or to the right on the political spectrum. A plurality identify themselves as moderates (39%), with a comparable number claiming to being slightly conservative, conservative, or extremely conservative (38.8%). Less than 22% of the survey participants adopt a slightly liberal, liberal or extremely liberal political identity. On average, respondents report completing approximately two grade levels after leaving high school. Over 55% of the respondents lived in neighborhood where 20% or more of the residents were not of their race, with almost half (47.3%) reporting they attended a school in which 20% or more of the student body was not of their race.

About 65% of the weighted sample is comprised of White or Caucasian respondents. Hispanic/Latinos represent the second largest racial/ethnic group in the sample (12.0%), followed by Black or African American (11.6%), Asian Americans (8.2%). Those identifying themselves to be of mixed ethnicity, American Indian, Native American or Other accounted approximately for only 3% of the total sample (not shown) and are not included in the analysis.

A regression analysis was performed to examine the data for trends in U.S. attitudes in support of or opposition to assimilation. Alternative logistic regression models were constructed
in an attempt to find the best model fit and the statistical results appear in Table 3. For the purposes of the logistic regression analysis and to establish the dependent variable, support for multiculturalism is coded 0 and assimilation is coded 1.\textsuperscript{7}

Model 3 represents the most comprehensive regression equation, including all the variables theoretically central to the analysis. Because my analysis pivots on the influence of the intermarriage variables (Not Upset With Child’s Intermarriage\textsuperscript{8} – based on a seven point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree – and Dated Interracially – a dummy variables with yes=1 and no=0), they are included in each model. In order to test the statistical difference caused by the propinquity variables\textsuperscript{9} I added them to model 2 (lived in integrated neighborhood and attended integrated school – dummy variables with yes=1 and no=0). Model 3 is the most comprehensive model, as the race and ethnicity variable was added (with White as the reference category).

The Nagelkerke $R^2$ of Model 1 (.027), Model 2 (.028) and Model 3 (.029) indicate that each model accounts for just under 3% of the variation in the respondents’ preferences for assimilation. The Model $\chi^2$ of the models is significant at the .001 level, indicating that at least one of the independent variables significantly affects the likelihood of favoring the creation of a common culture. A log likelihood ratio test, calculated to determined whether or not the differences in the $-2 \log$ likelihood of the models are statistically significant, indicates no significant difference between the models. Therefore, despite the addition of the propinquity and race variables, controlling for more variables in the logistic regression equations of Models 2 and 3 adds little their explanatory power.

In fact, regardless of the configuration, all bivariate (not shown) and multivariate analysis that I conducted produced virtually the same results, including OLS regression equations

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Table 3
Logistic Regression Estimates for Determinants of Attitudes on the Creation of a Common Culture and Multiculturalism in the U.S., LSAF, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Odds ratio</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Odds ratio</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Odds ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Upset With</td>
<td>.078**</td>
<td>1.081</td>
<td>.080**</td>
<td>1.083</td>
<td>.082**</td>
<td>1.085</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.024)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.024)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Child’s Intermarriage</td>
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<td>1.202</td>
<td>.213*</td>
<td>1.238</td>
<td>.214*</td>
<td>1.239</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.103)</td>
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<td>(.101)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dated Interracialy</td>
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<td>.991</td>
<td>-.009**</td>
<td>.991</td>
<td>-.009**</td>
<td>.991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.003)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.003)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.003)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>.010</td>
<td>1.010</td>
<td>.005</td>
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<td>(.016)</td>
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<td>(.017)</td>
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<td>.993</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>.991</td>
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<td>.993</td>
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<td>(.030)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Conservatism</td>
<td>-.074</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td>-.092</td>
<td>.912</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.106)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.107)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lived in integrated neighborhood</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.104</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.105)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.107)</td>
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<td>Race-White</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>1.116</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>1.303</td>
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<td>Black</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.191)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.039</td>
<td>.962</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.151)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>1.303</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.191)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>1.127</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>1.205</td>
<td>.216</td>
<td>1.241</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.319)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.323)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.338)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2 log likelihood</td>
<td>2603</td>
<td></td>
<td>2601</td>
<td></td>
<td>2598</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model $\chi^2$</td>
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<td></td>
<td>40.379***</td>
<td></td>
<td>42.920***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke $R^2$</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td></td>
<td>.028</td>
<td></td>
<td>.029</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees of freedom</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td></td>
<td>1944</td>
<td></td>
<td>1944</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001 (two-tailed tests)

Note: The odds ratio is the antilog of the B, and standard errors are in parentheses.
calculated by regressing a dependent variable consisting of 5 point assimilation scale on all three models (also not shown). Not Upset . . ., Dated interracially and Age consistently proved to be the only statistically significant predictors.\textsuperscript{10}

In Model 2 and 3, the results of the logistic regression show statistical significance at the .05 level for three of the predictor variables—Not Upset With Child’s Intermarriage, Dated Interracially\textsuperscript{11} and Age. According to the odds ratio, controlling for all other variables, each level increase in the respondent’s agreement with Not Upset With Child’s Intermarriage increases the likelihood of the respondent’s favoring the creation of a common culture by approximately 8%. This significant, positive relationship between Not Being Upset With Child’s Intermarriage and preference for the creation of a common culture supports the hypothesis to the same effect stated above. Similarly, referring to the odds ratio and all else equal, those who have dated interracially are about 24\% more likely to favor a common culture than those who have not dated someone of a different race. The hypothesized positive relationship between a favorable attitude toward intermarriage or intimate intergroup contact and the creation of a common culture or assimilation finds support in the data.\textsuperscript{12}

In each model, Age is statistically significant at the .01 level. According to the data in Table 3, as the age of the respondent increases, the likelihood of support for the creation of a common culture decreases, controlling for the other variables. The statistical significance of the negative age coefficient in the data contradicts the analysis reported in the literature and the hypothesis that proposes a positive relationship between age and support for a common culture. Tests for an interaction effect with race and education on this variable and the possibility of a nonlinear relationship did not significantly improve the fit of the models. Consequently, the lack of support for the above hypothesis, coupled with its significance in the opposite direction,
confound the analysis and might be one piece of evidence that attests to the multivalent nature of multiculturalism discussed by Downey (2000). A more complete discussion of this finding appears in the next section.

The estimated effects of all other variables in both models, including Education, Political Conservatism, Lived in integrated neighborhood, Attended integrated school, and Race, are not statistically significant. The hypotheses suggesting a positive relationship between multiculturalism and political liberalism, advanced education, and minority status are not supported. Overall, the effect of more tolerant attitudes on racial diversity does not equate with support for multiculturalism according the data analysis of this paper. Similarly, the propinquity variables are not statistical significant at the .05 level and thus, the data did not support the corresponding hypotheses.

Discussion

Considering the mixed findings in the extant empirical research and the lack of support for most of the hypotheses in empirical analysis of this chapter, we might conclude that the U.S. public's position on multiculturalism and assimilation eludes most prescriptive patterns. In fact the findings associated with most explanatory variables do very little to augment the empirical research to date. For some analysts, an $R^2$ of only 3% (all the indicators in each model explain 3% of the variation in attitudes on assimilation) might inspire misgivings about the choice of variables and fit of the models. However, a meager amount of explained variance was not entirely unexpected considering the literature, and might itself harbor consequence congruent with past studies. In fact, it’s plausible that what fails to emerge in this analysis is shielded, not by poor models, but preferences masked in the nuance of racial discourse and attitudinal
ambiguity caused by the public's disregard for the old approach to assimilation. Based on this set of findings, despite multiculturalism's symbol appeal, it does not seem to guide motivations for preferences in favor of it or opposition to assimilation. In general, finding trends in empirical survey data associated with the public's support or opposition to these two modes of intergroup convergence remains difficult.

Plausibly for some, multiculturalism represents a means by which minority cultures can gain parity with the majority culture. While for others with similar more tolerant aspirations, it might symbolize a retreat to racial separation and the preservation of an environment conducive for misunderstanding, and social and economic exclusion. In another scenario, majority and minority group members, while possessing different ideologies of intergroup convergence, might harbor the same aspiration for cultural fusion or maintaining cultural uniqueness. Consequently, as suggested by Downey (2000), it is possible that support for multiculturalism could resonate for theoretically natural antagonists and divide natural constituencies.

The attraction of multiculturalism for some in the public might actually reside in the promise of racial and ethnic separation – despite the implicit reactionary implications of protecting rigid racial and ethnic boundaries. In fact, the statistically significant negative relationship between age and support for common culture in my analysis might support this hypothesis. Indeed, it is plausible that older, more conservative Americans might believe that we are better off if the races remain culturally distinct, even though the creation of a common culture is deterred. In this scenario, many older Americans might envision multiculturalism to be representative of the traditional model of race relations – where racial and ethnic segregation is the descriptive reality.
While some majority group members speak favorably of multiculturalism, their imputed support might belie an unwavering belief in the enduring significance of conventional patterns of assimilation – an assimilation that most likely resembles Anglo-conformity. For others, multiculturalism could represent nothing more than an alternative approach to assimilation – a compromise method of enticing nonwhites into a new and improved common culture. Within these scenarios, the practice of granting equal recognition or granting diversity aligns with more conventional modes of racial and ethnic convergence and conceivably is not at odds with the values at the core of American universalism (Gordon and Newfield, 1996; Higham, 2001).

The most telling finding reported in the quantitative data analysis is the significance of the Not Upset With Child’s Intermarriage, and to a lesser extent the Dated interracially variables. Due to the direct dealing with the public’s attitude towards intermarriage, the Not Upset variable prevails as a worthy indicator of Gordon’s (1964) marital assimilation. Consistently, across all models and statistical procedures, Not Upset positively correlates with support for assimilation. Despite all the apparent ambiguity created in the contemporary debate on intergroup convergence, marital assimilation emerges as an important indicator of support for the creation of a common culture, and Gordon’s theoretical framework proves predictive. According to my analysis, support for intermarriage must conjoin with and intensify intergroup adaptive processes wherein support for the maintenance of cultural uniqueness dissolves and preference for the creation of a common culture prevails.

Even though causality cannot be inferred, the relationship between support for intermarriage and support for assimilation does merit attention. Because of its singularity in the empirical models of my study, it indeed seems noteworthy. Apparently, the increased incidence of intergroup unions announces the progressive complicity of societal members movements to
weaken racial and ethnic boundaries. Whether they are an engine for social change or only an indicator of the public's support for assimilation, multiracial/multiethnic families exist as a beginning place where racial boundaries blur and attitudes on intergroup relations change.

But what about the absence of significant relationships between most of the explanatory variables in the analysis and support for the assimilation/multiculturalism? Is it possible that in general the nature of U.S. attitudes on intergroup relations has not shifted dramatically in recent years? Congruent with past research, the empirical data analysis of this chapter provides few answers in the inquiry to the significance of multiculturalism and the relevance of assimilation theory.

Based on the extensive support for the creation of a common culture in the sample, some form of assimilation appears to be marching on. It appears that the brunt of the recent assault of the multiculturalism debates on assimilation has been absorbed by a compelling drive for a common civic identity. According to my findings, multiculturalism fails to resonate with the U.S. public and the ideological of assimilation somehow continues to capture the support of a majority of Americans.

I employ the apparent absence of ideological salience in the public and the alternative explanations discussed above, as a platform to launch the qualitative data analysis of the next chapter. In chapter 6, I report on personal interviews in which participants were allowed to elaborate on their support for or opposition to the ideologies central to the debate and to express the motivations for their preferences. An interpretative analysis of these interviews allows me to delve deeper into the apparent attitudinal ambiguity toward multiculturalism and assimilation, evaluate the guiding hypotheses developed in chapter 3, and unlike the survey data, decipher
attitudinal differences lost in the intricacies of discussions associated with racial and ethnic difference.
CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF THE LILLY SURVEY OF ATTITUDES AND FRIENDSHIPS PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Introduction: The Rise of Multiculturalism

As he charts the evolution of multiculturalism, Harvard professor Werner Sollors (1998) remind us that, "It is a word that seems omnipresent now but has been part of debates in the United States for only a short time" (p. 63). Likewise, in his chapter on "The Multicultural Explosion," Glazer (1997: 1-21) reports that a Nexis search of major newspapers shows no references to multiculturalism as late as 1988, only 33 items in 1989, and a yearly "rapid rise" of hits after 1989 that peaks in 1994 with a whopping 1500 items. In fact, multiculturalism suddenly and forcefully exploded into the public consciousness in late 20th century America, and appeared as a contemporary installment of social doctrine that vigorously champions cultural pluralism.

The response to the public's heightened awareness of multiculturalism by social thinkers was just as dramatic, as innumerable publications appeared on this topic throughout the 1990s. Even a small sampling of these writings reveals the magnitude and breadth of the attempt by social analysts to conceptualize multiculturalism. Considering the inquiry into the meaning of terms like multiculturalism, Paul Berman (1992) finds that the "debate is unintelligible. But it is noisy" (p. 6).

The published literature on multiculturalism primarily involves: theorizing or conceptualizing multiculturalism; efforts to provide a social, economic or political context for the multiculturalism debate; or analysis that seeks to situate the attitudes of Americans in the debate by way of survey data. Yet, despite the dramatic presence of multiculturalism as a major
conceptual device for analyzing intergroup relations, Downey concludes that the rather vigorous and often contentious academic inquiries into multiculturalism has left us without "a more solid understanding of its significance" (Downey, 1999, p. 250). He and Citrin et al. (2001) maintain multiculturalism is a disarticulated symbol that fails to resonate clearly with the American public.

Despite all our efforts to understand multiculturalism's significance, researchers have yet to simply ask the public for their impression of multiculturalism and what they think Americans should do to establish a national identity. The Lilly Survey of Attitudes and Friendships (LSAF) did just that and in this chapter I engage in qualitative data analysis of those personal interviews to decipher how the public's preferences on this issue fit within their more general perspective on the proper means of cultural convergence, and seek to come to a more solid understanding of multiculturalism's meaning, purpose and promise for the U.S. public.

The Interviews, Combination of Both and a Typology of Interview Themes

In semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, all participants were asked to deliberate on the proper method of intergroup convergence in U.S. society. They were asked to reflect on the choice between antithetical statements that correspond to assimilation and multiculturalism, or to express a preference for a combination of both. In short the participants responded to the following set of questions: Should we, as a society, create (1) a common culture or are we better off if subgroups (2) maintain their cultural uniqueness? Or (3) do you prefer a combination of both? Based on the constraints of problem posed by the interviewers, I began the analysis by situating each participant in one of the three categories according to their initial response to the question of intergroup convergence.
Table 4: The LSAF Interview Participant’s Choice Between: the Creation of a Common Culture, the Maintenance of Cultural Uniqueness, or a Combination of Both (N=135)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common Culture</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of Cultural Uniqueness</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of Both</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted in Table 4, over 70% of the participants chose to answer this question in terms of a combination of both. In fact, in virtually every social and demographic category, more than 60% of the participants spoke to the problem posed by the interviewer in terms of a combination (the data in Table 5 show that the percentage for each category typically exceeds 70%). The salience of the combination choice in the interview sample is striking and stands in contrast to answers given by the LSAF telephone survey respondents and the extant quantitative research (Citrin et al., 2001; Downey, 2000).

When LSAF telephone survey respondents were asked to choose between assimilation and multiculturalism, a wide margin favored assimilation, as nearly 60% of the sample chose the creation of a common culture over maintenance of cultural uniqueness (see Table 2). In contrast, when LSAF interview participants were confronted with an analogous question but one that did not force them to pick one or the other, they choose assimilation the fewest number of times (12.6% for a common culture and 15.6% for cultural uniqueness). Clearly, the format of both the question and the interview influenced the participants' answers. However, the interview
Table 5
The LSAF Interview Participant’s Choice Between: the Creation of a Common Culture, the Maintenance of Cultural Uniqueness, or a Combination of Both by Social and Demographic Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Common Culture</th>
<th>Cultural Uniqueness</th>
<th>Combination of both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 (n=22)</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 (n=29)</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 (n=27)</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 (n=19)</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69 (n=9)</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>88.9</td>
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<td>70-89 (n=15)</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>53.3</td>
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<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<td>13.3</td>
<td>73.3</td>
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<td>69.9</td>
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<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Region of youth</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeast (n=37)</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South (n=27)</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>66.7</td>
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<td>West (n=25)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non U.S. Location (n=23)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* The respondent's region of youth corresponds to the regional categories established by the U.S. Census Bureau or situated within a non-U.S. category. A total resulting in more/less than 100 is due to rounding error or omission of categories.
participants' reluctance to express their attitudes only in terms of assimilation or cultural pluralism seems to be revealing something that remains undisclosed in the literature to date.

Thus far, empirical survey research has not detected directly the public's unwillingness to support either assimilation or multiculturalism exclusively, and only presumed such a result based on mixed attitudinal data, trimodal distributions (Downey, 2000) and varied responses to different operational definitions of multiculturalism (Citrin et al., 2001). The overwhemling number of combination responses pushed me to look beyond the initial choice of the participants for aspirations they might have that require more than a simple this or that answer.

As it turns out, seemingly ambivalent answers and mixed messages in the discussions of the interview participants were the norm and not the exception. In fact, most participants, including several who chose a common culture or cultural uniqueness, justified their preference on the issue in an equivocal manner. Many had to be prompted by the interviewer to answer the question definitively. For instance, the Black participant below eventually chose common culture, but not before he wrestled with his preference.13

Anthony: I don’t know. I’m kind of old school I guess. I’ve never been to Africa. Even though I know I’m from African descent. But being raised in the military, I believe in America and I’ve always loved history and I love American history. I think we have a country that I’m proud of. We have our faults but . . . . Like my family, we’re biracial. My wife’s from Italian descent. We don’t really focus on Italian customs or their history. We just do more with, just family heritage things.

Interviewer: So, are you arguing that you prefer a common culture to cultural uniqueness?

Anthony: [I’m] kind of middle of the road . . . I think a lot of it should be common. I mean we share all the benefits and the blessings of this country. I guess I will go with a common culture then more over a unique.

Few participants directly answered the question without including a rationalization of their ideological preferences on this topic. This is not to imply that equivocal answers were
trivial and vacant. While the participant's elaboration might appear to be indecisive, further analysis indicates that they typically answer the question in a manner that corresponds to, yet transcends the constraints of the question. Despite the struggle to articulate a definitive position on social convergence, the discussions of most participants evolved into a somewhat coherent ideological perspective. Obviously, the ways in which they rationalized their preference on the multiculturalism question and how they justified a combination becomes as important as their initial response, and hence the focus of deeper research into the participants' attitudes on social convergence.

As I assessed the participant’s elaboration of their initial response to the question, I looked for a generalized, yet definite approach to social convergence that went beyond the choices offered by the question. By attending to these elaborations, I found that the participant's preferences on social convergence coalesce around twelve identifiable themes, and that each discussion theme corresponds to one of the three ideologies salient in the literature – the conventional model of assimilation (or as Alba and Nee, 2003, describe it, the old approach to assimilation), multiculturalism (cultural pluralism), and the melting pot theory (or American universalism).

Before engaging in a more thorough examination of themes in the discussions and the significance of a "combination of both," I first want to review briefly my classification scheme and a typology of the themes. All themes situated in the three ideological categories (see Table 6) had to conform to the theoretical conceptualizations of those ideologies reviewed in chapter 2. Below is a brief description of the emerging themes.

The Conventional Model of Assimilation represents four themes employed by participants to suggest that the extant American common culture and national identity should
Table 6
Themes in the LSAF Interview Participant’s Elaboration on the Multiculturalism Question Situated Within Ideological Categories of Intergroup Convergence (N=132)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>% of category</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Model of Assimilation (n=23)</td>
<td>Americanization - Strong nationalism</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglo-conformity themes</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assimilation as inevitable</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We’re all the same - Unity in a common culture</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melting Pot Theory (American Universalism) (n=51)</td>
<td>Cultural mixing increases solidarity</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(and an understanding of our commonality)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fusion within Salad Bowl themes</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural fusion is important</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creates a Stronger Society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keep cultural heritage, but . . .</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(adaptation to common culture must happen)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism (Cultural Pluralism) (n=58)</td>
<td>Celebrate diversity</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnicity provides comfort</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can't we all get along (and still maintain uniqueness)</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A common culture is boring</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A total resulting in more/less than 100 is due to rounding error.
remain largely unaltered by the presence of racial and ethnic difference. The participants voicing an Americanization theme were most likely to express unwavering support for the construction of a national identity based on what they typically called traditional American values – euphemistically referred to as the American way or democracy. They believed strongly in the unity of an American identity and showed little or no interest in cultural adaptation. Like Americanization, Anglo-conformity themes represented participants concerned with people not integrating into the mainstream. Unlike the former, they emphasized support for English-only policy and one referred to the U.S. as a Christian Nation. The Assimilation as inevitable group framed their discussion as the label implies. They de-emphasized any ideological preference they might have on the issue, in favor of granting the process of assimilation an irresistible nature. Finally, the We’re all the same participants also believed assimilation was inevitable, but they supported sustaining the common culture, not through cultural fusion or homogenizing, but by way of color-blind egalitarianism – a value they thought is or ought to be already in place.

The perspectives of the participants in the Melting Pot Theory category clustered around themes focused on the creation of a composite culture. They are distinguishable from those in the Conventional Assimilation and Multiculturalism groups by their commitment to a homogenizing process built on some form of cultural fusion. The Cultural mixing increases solidarity group typically favored positive cross-cultural contact as a mechanism to dissolve racial and ethnic barriers and establish a foundation on which to build commonality. The most neutral theme of all twelve is represented by Fusion within Salad Bowl themes. While some participants situated in this category actually used the salad bowl metaphor, most supported cultural fusion generally without explicitly favoring any specific ideology. They did not favor unity through diversity, as much as they supported unity with diversity. The next theme, Cultural fusion is important, aligns
most closely with the standard definition of the melting pot theory. In general, these participants inferred that fusing cultural elements together creates a stronger, more vital hybrid society. Finally, participants expressing a Keep cultural heritage, but . . . theme start out as cultural pluralists, but in the end maintain a stronger preference for cultural blending.

The last and most popular category contains the Multiculturalism themes. Congruent with the sociological definition of multiculturalism, the highlight of these themes is a preference for the ongoing maintenance of ethnic cultural organizations and practices. Overwhelmingly, most participants situated in this category adopted a Celebrate diversity perspective. Without equivocation, they insisted on protecting and promoting cultural difference. The Ethnicity provides comfort theme captures the participant's appreciation for familiar cultural practices and networks, and their reticence to approve of mechanisms that might extinguish ethnicity altogether. Can't we all get along participants seem to back into their support of multiculturalism. They did not voice explicit support for assimilation or cultural fusion, but at the same time, would offer a less than enthusiastic preference for cultural pluralism. They suggested that a racial and ethnic truce was the answer to divisive intergroup relations. In the A common culture is boring theme, participants expressed their support for multiculturalism in a rather superficial way, suggesting that life would not be as interesting without the presence of ethnic cuisine, dress, music, and cultural festivals.

I know the distinctions between the themes are fine – a distraction in interpretative analysis. However, a complete reading of the entire interview, with attention paid to the participant's deliberation on intergroup convergence, filled in gaps and helped me recognize emerging themes. The distinctions are fine, but they are meaningful. I believe this classification scheme provides a clear picture of the participant's general perspective on ethnic convergence,
the motivations for their preferences, and further, allows for deeper analysis into the significance of the combination response.

The cross tabulation depicted in Table 7 reveals that in general the participant's initial choice of common culture or maintaining uniqueness is a significant indicator of a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conventional Assimilation</th>
<th>Multiculturalism</th>
<th>Melting Pot Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common culture (n=17)</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of both</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain uniqueness (n=21)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² Sig < .000

complimentary rationalization in the form of support for Conventional Assimilation or Multiculturalism themes. In fact, I found that the elaboration of almost 90% of those participants who voiced support for a common culture exemplified a Conventional Assimilation theme, and that over 95% of those who chose maintain uniqueness spoke to the issue in terms corresponding to those found in Multiculturalism themes. While the elaboration of a few participants did not match their preference, the strong correlation between the initial preference of these participants and corresponding ideologies indicates that the design of question succeeds in distinguishing between those coded as supporters of assimilation and multiculturalism.
What the analysis of the initial preferences does not do is provide for a deeper understanding of the perspective of those who chose a combination of both. More than 70% of all the participants fell in the combination category, and thus failed to choose a definitive position on social convergence. I contend that the combination category does not represent just participants that are indecisive or undecided, but instead, is made up of many participants who support a compromise ideology. One might argue that those combination participants, situated within the Multiculturalism category (39.4%), are not voicing a compromise, but for whatever reason (e.g., confusion over the concepts or the way the question is worded), use a combination to better characterize their preference for multiculturalism. While I do not seek to establish fine gradations between hard and soft multiculturalism in the analysis, I do think choosing a combination instead of maintaining uniqueness, before voicing a Multiculturalist theme, implies a softer form of advocacy and does reveal a tendency toward the compromise perspective that, I argue below, dominants the discussions of the participants that chose this answer.

The Combination-Multiculturalism group notwithstanding, according to my analysis, the aspirations of a majority of the combination participants in fact represent support for a compromise form of American universalism – a perspective that simultaneously promotes cultural fusion and equal respect. I group the themes in this category together in the analysis under the rubric of Melting Pot Theory. Granted, most of the Melting Pot Theory participants did not frame their aspirations on this issue explicitly in terms of social or biological amalgamation, or the creation of a hybrid society. Those in this category did talk about the proper means of intergroup convergence, however, by referring to a form of cultural fusion and adaptation that did not require adherence to traditional cultural values (e.g., unity through diversity).

Accordingly, I maintain that the Melting Pot Theory category is not a catchall category, but a
perspective that stands for a soft assimilation – a synthesis of more conventional forms of assimilation and a qualified advocacy of cultural pluralism.

Quite clearly, the magnitude of participant discussions placed in the Melting Pot Theory category dramatize the degree to which many of the participants were unwilling to voice support for either multiculturalism or more conventional forms of assimilation. In fact, if we hypothesize that the popularity of multiculturalism's feel-good message compelled some of those in the combination category to frame their discussion in terms of multiculturalism, masking a melting pot theory perspective, the significance of this alternative ideology of assimilation becomes even more noteworthy, and further attests to the enduring presence in American universalism. In the words of Benjamin, a Black male Melting Pot Theory participant, we should join together and strive to come to an understanding of one another:

Benjamin: People tend to follow the path of least resistance. It takes the adventurous person to step out and do his thing apart from what he had been accustomed to culturally. I would like to see people stepping out a little more from their culture, class, or whatever it is, and be more human and understanding where they’re coming from, understanding what they are thinking. You know, I would like my best friend to be a Korean and I would like to have my best friend as an Indian, I would like to have my best friend as a White person, I would like to have my best friend as a Black person. Far removed from culture because when you get very close to someone, for some reason or another you forget their facial features, you forget that he’s Black, you forget that he’s brown, you forget he’s Korean.

Trends in the LSAF Interviews

Beyond the compelling presence of a combination in the interviews, three additional trends emerge in an analysis of the participants' deliberation on intergroup convergence. First and foremost, the feel-good rhetoric associated with multiculturalism reverberates in the interviews. In general, across the classification typology and contrary to findings in survey data,
the appeal of multiculturalism's popular message obviously resonates with the participants.

Second and as a consequence of the first trend, the interview participants shied away from Conventional Assimilation themes and almost completely avoided voicing aspirations that might be construed as supportive of Americanization or Anglo-conformity. Lastly, after a comprehensive examination of the discussions, despite the obvious impact of the multiculturalism debate, the participants generally were unwilling to give up on assimilation as the proper means to social convergence in the U.S. Below I first look at the paucity of support for Conventional Assimilation themes.

As depicted in Table 6, only 17.4% of the interview participants voiced aspirations that correspond to Conventional Assimilation themes. More specifically, the attitudes of only a few participants indicate a preference for the creation of a common culture that emphasizes: Americanization (the importance of a strong national identity based on traditional values) or Assimilation as inevitable. The elaboration of fewer still (only two participants) resembles an Anglo-conformity perspective – the least preferred theme of the Conventional Assimilation group and of all the themes identified the analysis. The White Anglo-conformity participant quoted below exemplifies a strong assimilationist perspective. Andrea's statement also merits recognition, as an insightful example of multiple trends in the interview discussions. Her discussion illustrates how support for a more hegemonic assimilation can get tangled up with multiculturalism's feel-good message and the ideal of the melting pot.

Andrea: I've always been a very patriotic person, because I felt that America was unique in all the world and that we believed in the freedom to become anything you wanted to be . . . that's the way I always felt about America and even now, singing the Star-Spangled Banner makes me get tears in my eyes. But as far as uniting us, and I've always felt we were a Christian nation, nowadays it's not the same. I know there was a lot of immigration from Europe in the early days and I know that there was some prejudice against Irish and things like that, but still, after a while it was like a melting pot and they became Americans and I still think that’s important. I know right now in Texas we have
a lot of influx with Hispanics who cling to and who don’t seem to be learning the language. We’ve got so much bilingual here that it’s not like they are becoming Americans.

Interviewer: One of the other questions is whether the races should maintain their cultural uniqueness or create a common culture. Do you think . . .

Andrea: I think it would be very important to maintain your culture, where you are from, the things that are important to you. I mean, I don’t think you should ever lose that . . . but at the same time, we should bond together in this new country. I guess just that we are in this country working together to keep it a good place to live . . . I have heard some criticism about people not being willing to enter into the mainstream.

The discussions of most of the participants in the Conventional Assimilation category are not this provocative. Several other participants emphasized proven American qualities, patriotism, or deferred to assimilation’s inevitability, as their rationale for the creation of a common culture. Blake, a White male, is one of the few participants that overtly adopted assimilation by suggesting that Americanization is the best way to create a strong society.

Blake: I want to say a little bit of both, but America reached its heyday by people basically assimilating and becoming Americans. Henry Ford started this where he was hiring a lot of ethnic people and literally after work they would go to English classes. They would graduate, he would give them a suit and they would lose their ethnic clothes and that’s what built this country. It’s good to have a little of that type of culture, but I think that basically people should speak English and learn the American way and reach for American ideals.

Most of participants in the Conventional Assimilation group expressed the fourth most popular theme overall, proposing that Americans should assimilate because in the end We’re all the same anyway (9.8%). These participants prefer the creation of a common culture but suggest that such a society should be color- and ethnic-blind – one without a dominant ethnic culture.

While many in this group are minority group members, several are not (more on the significance of racial attitudes later). The African American participant below, Alexis, framed her preference for a common culture in a way that typifies this theme.
Alexis: I don’t think that it’s up to us to create nothing. I just believe in what’s there. For all these years I’ve been on this earth. And I’ve seen how it works. If you just be kind to one another, it just removes all racial, all differences before you know it.

Most of the remaining participants voiced discussion themes that more or less recognize the significance of multiculturalism's doctrine of equal respect. The prevailing sentiment of participants situated in the Multiculturalism and Melting Pot Theory categories (82.6% of the sample) affirms the impact of the multiculturalism debate and the powerful effects a popular ideology can have on intergroup relations. This trend in the qualitative data also substantiates the claim that traditional forms of assimilation are currently held in disregard (Alba, 1995; Glazer, 1997) and clearly reminds us of the widespread appeal of multiculturalism's feel-good message. What the data do not implicate is the public's unqualified acceptance of cultural pluralism.

According to the classification typology, the aspirations of the Multiculturalism and Melting Pot Theory group participants are distinguishable, albeit marginally in some cases. While most in the Multiculturalism and Melting Pot Theory categories rationalized their preference by referring to importance of maintaining cultural practices, the Multiculturalism participants did not include mention of the equal or greater importance of cultural adaptation, or in the end talk about cultural fusion as functionally imperative. Even though the multiculturalists often acknowledge the importance of assimilation in the civic sphere, these participants believed that respect for diversity, symbolized by multiculturalism, engenders a level of cultural tolerance and acceptance that is necessary to ensure all the opportunity for all to realize their responsibilities in civic life. In general, the Multiculturalism group (43.9% of the sample) represents the most popular approach to ethnic convergence in the analysis.

The most popular theme in both the Multiculturalism category and overall is labeled Celebrate diversity (81% of the responses in the category and 35.6% of all coded responses).
Participants with Celebrate diversity aspirations more than doubled those place in the second most popular theme – a comparable Melting Pot Theory theme called Keep cultural heritage, but . . . (16.7%). The widespread popularity of the feel-good Celebrate diversity is undeniable, and the participants situated in this category appear to unequivocally favor cultural pluralism. Typically, these participants suggested that the maintenance of ethnic culture is essential for both personal actualization and the preservation of America's strong commitment to egalitarianism.

Comments from Brady, a Black male, and Gary, a White male, exemplify the Celebrate Diversity theme.

Brady: We should never forget who we are. If you're from African American descent, you should always celebrate your heritage. If you're from Jewish descent . . . We should be proud of where we're from. But we also have to be tolerant of the other person's culture. We need diversification. Everybody needs a place. I think America has the right attitude. It's supposed to be a melting pot, and you come in here and you all become one.

Interviewer: So you say you prefer cultural uniqueness, but you also think that there should be a common culture?

Brady: What I'm saying is that I think we should maintain our racial diversity, but come together in what I call a logical grouping, which is Americans. . . . We're bound together in a logical sense through common goals – activities, workplaces. We should be able to exercise whatever dream we have.

Gary: I believe in the uniqueness of culture and I believe that it can be preserved in an atmosphere of harmony where we intentionally go outside of ourselves . . . Don't do away with your culture. Celebrate your culture and all of that. But be willing to come outside of your culture in order to learn and to humble yourself to another culture in order to learn because it makes you a better human being.

Other participants in the Multiculturalism group talked about maintaining diversity, but included an emphasis on the personal comfort provided by ethnicity – Ethnicity provides comfort or the rich contributions to society provided by cultural festivals, food, or music – A common culture is boring. Those in the Can't we all get along category worried over the divisive nature of multiculturalism, but in the end remained committed to maintenance of cultural uniqueness.
Allison, a Can't we all get along Black woman, stridently affirmed the merits of cultural pluralism, and at the same time, could not conceal her concern for its potential for disunity.

Allison: My personal feelings (this is me), if you don't want me to come over here, I'm not coming over here. Okay? And there are areas where I don't even want to associate with my own Black people because of their behavior. I would like to see people get on much better. This is [a land of] all immigrants that came to America. So why should I think my culture is better than yours?

Interviewer: To get back to the question, are you saying then we should have a common culture or should we emphasize keeping your culture unique?

Allison: No keep your culture. There's no reason for you to change. Just be more friendly to people.

The last group of themes to be discussed fall under the Melting Pot Theory. This group represents more than a third of the sample (38.7%), and in general, contains discussions themes only slightly less popular than those in the Multiculturalism category. While those in the Melting Pot Theory group often engaged in discussions somewhat supportive of multiculturalism, I maintain that their rationalizations are distinguishable from those of the multiculturalists. Ultimately the participants in the Melting Pot group stressed cultural adaptation and fusion over maintaining uniqueness. Their perspective often allows for tolerance, and emphasizes understanding, but in the end, their preferences drift toward American universalism. Despite their well-meaning rhetoric, their aspiration for maintaining cultural diversity runs secondary to establishing a recognizable national identity. The sizable number of participants in this category seems to indicate the strength of the public's drive to create a common culture, albeit one without a dominant ethnicity.

Participant discussions placed in the second most popular theme in the analysis, and the most popular theme in the Melting Pot category, typically begin with the participant's insistence that No one should forget their cultural heritage. Inevitably, however, the members of this group
finish their elaboration with a qualifying Keep your heritage, but . . . Consider the Keep your heritage, but . . . quote from a White male below.

Clayton: I don't think you have to necessarily give up your cultural background. I think it's kind of neat to be honest with you. So I don't think being a blended melting pot is just the only way to go. Although in saying I like to be separate or different, celebrate my heritage on these days or whatever, that continues the same abrasion. So I don't see that we have to stop it in terms of it's different. But at the same time that only perpetuates the same sentiments that have been there a long, long time. You think about the different immigrants that have come to this country. Certainly there is still segregation when it comes to how they can interact but as time goes on, we are melting together and since many people now are not from the old country any more, it is becoming more and more of a common thing as opposed to so different.

Clayton's reluctance to wholeheartedly embrace multiculturalism is typical of the attitudes of participants voicing this theme. They are not cultural pluralists, and yet they harbor an affinity for multiculturalism's promise of equal respect.

Another strong theme in discussions situated in the Melting Pot category is Cultural mixing increases solidarity. At 11.4% of the sample, it is the third most popular theme overall. Indicators for this theme (e.g., cultural sharing, mixing, learning, and tolerance) focus on cross cultural contact as a means to come to an understanding of our commonality – developing an appreciation for cultural diversity as a mechanism to bring about cultural solidarity.

The Cultural mixing elaborations appear to be similar to the We're all the same in the Conventional Assimilation group. In fact, if we consider all themes depicted in Table 6 as situated on a continuum, starting from the top theme shown in Conventional Assimilation category down to the Ethnicity provides comfort theme in the Multiculturalism category, the Cultural mixing Melting Pot theme does sit next to (and is similar to) We're all the same Conventional Assimilation theme. The Cultural mixing participants' concern with societal disunity goes beyond the softer admonitions for cultural adaptation expressed in Keep cultural heritage, but . . . This makes it more assimilationist, but at the same time it retains a strong
affinity for maintaining some cultural uniqueness. While the Cultural mixing participants firmly emphasize societal unity, their preference for the preservation of ethnic culture keeps them in the Melting Pot category. The following statements from Denise, a White woman, and Sandra, a Black woman, exemplify Cultural mixing.

Denise: I like the diversity, I wouldn't want to lose that. I like the different cultures, but I would like to see everybody come together without losing their heritage—to be able to peacefully live together and find the commonalities of each other. We all do have the same desires and hurts, but yet our cultures . . . I would want a combination in the best way, you know, just getting rid of the negative. I would love that, if everybody could love each other and be there for each other and not see a difference in a level or a better or worse or different generalizations but to respect each others' cultures.

Sandra: I think every culture should teach their children about their culture and their difference. But teach them that the differences in working with other cultures will make one common cause and there will be unity for all the cultures all together.

The other themes in the Melting Pot group are less popular and exist somewhere between Conventional Assimilation and Multiculturalism on the proposed assimilation-multiculturalism continuum mentioned above. These themes capture the aspirations of participants who seem to pay lip service to cultural pluralism without expressing ardent assimilationism. Tradition melting pot rhetoric, Cultural fusion is important, or the equally idealistic Salad Bowl perspective, appeared in the discussion of several of the Melting Pot participants. Their perspective remained firmly grounded in some form of cultural fusion.

In sum, I argue that most of the Melting Pot theme responses tend to favor assimilationist doctrine more than they do cultural pluralism. The members of the Melting Pot category spoke of building solidarity, coming to an understanding of our commonality, and fusing together as the most efficient way to form a unified, functional society. While they seemed to embrace cultural pluralism, generally they insisted that America must find unity amongst diversity, and must develop strategies to eliminate racial and ethnic divisiveness in order to build harmony.
After a review of the data depicted in Table 6, we are again faced with the question: why do many participants frame their perspective on ethnic convergence in terms of a combination and then couch their aspirations in terms of the melting pot theory? According to the data, the widespread, yet superficial popularity of multiculturalism mixes with a stronger tendency for American universalism, and as a result, a compromise ideology of assimilation emerges – a form indicated by both the prevalence of the combination choice, a soft advocacy of multiculturalism, and melting pot theory rhetoric. Spurred on by the quandary over societal disunity and the old approach to assimilation, apparently a significant number of the participants use a synthesis of these concepts to frame their preferences for social convergence within an assimilationist paradigm only marginally shifted toward cultural pluralism.

According to the data depicted in Table 6, while only 17.4% of the sample seemed to eschew multiculturalism altogether (the Conventional Assimilation group), ironically, pervasive sentiment in the sample favors American universalism – preferences salient in the discussions of both the assimilationists and the melting pot theorists. If participants in both these groups are combined, we find that 56.1% of the respondents favored some form of assimilation and this finding that corresponds to the 58.3% of LSAF telephone respondents that favored assimilation (Table 2). In the end it is possible that many participants recoil from multiculturalism's message of cultural separation, and revisit assimilation in order to solve the paradox of creating unity without destroying cultural diversity.

I end this section with quotes from Jessica and Whitney. These Black Keep cultural heritage, but . . . women preferred a combination of both but their statements also exemplify how many of the discussions drifted toward assimilation. Bearing in mind the widespread appeal of multiculturalism and the public’s current disregard for assimilation, the popularity of
multiculturalist rhetoric is not surprising. However, the willingness of the participants to espouse a dedication to American universalism attests to the power of assimilation. Assimilation might remain America's a dirty little secret (Alba, 1995), but its pertinence as a sociological theory endures the analysis of the LSAF data.

Jessica: Well, I want to see uniqueness but I don't want to see a Bosnia. We should keep our family history. We should keep lessons that our parents teach us. That should stay unique. But some common cultures (especially as you have more interracial marriage) is eventually going to happen.

Whitney: I don’t believe people who are the same should just stick together. I think that if it were so, then we wouldn’t have been put in a situation where it obviously is necessarily for us to integrate. I think it would help for them [all others] to still kind of hold onto some of the uniqueness because that’s what makes them who they are. They should be open enough to adapt because it wouldn’t hurt. It makes us who we are and from the different backgrounds that we have come from but it wouldn’t hurt to also adapt to the culture that they have become a part of.

Racial Cleavages in the LSAF Deliberation on Social Convergence

The most spectacular clashes between racial and ethnic groups often happen in periods of social, demographic, and economic transition (Newman, 1973; Park, 1950), and for many, the contemporary turmoil in the United States, triggered by the multiculturalism debate, is no different. According to Alexander and Smelser (1999), the increasing presence of new immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia in post-1965 America energized a nation-wide discussion on the politics of recognition and a respecification of laws concerning racial and ethnic discrimination. For many scholars the break down of institutionalized means of ethnic and racial exclusion (Manning, 1995), the expansion of social movements calling for equal respect (Goldberg, 1994), coupled with the failure to assimilate African Americans (Glazer, 1997), gave the multiculturalism debate its impetus. Consequently, in the late 1980s and
1990s the United States witnessed an enormous amount sentiment in the population mobilized by multiculturalism (Downey, 1999; Glazer, 1997; Zavella, 1996).

Apparently, the fervor of the ensuing multiculturalism debate signified a growing concern over cultural pluralism and a concomitant struggle to reestablish a consensus on race relations (Higham, 2001; Sollors, 1998). However, according to the empirical research, race and ethnicity did not significantly influence attitudinal support for multiculturalism or assimilation (Citrin et al., 2001; Downey, 2000). In fact, the extant research tells us little about the meanings attributed to multiculturalism by racial and ethnic constituencies and the relationship, if any, between these imputed meanings and support for or opposition to multiculturalism.

Because the hotly contested public debate over the merits of multiculturalism in late 20th century America implicitly include a discussion of racial meanings and social hierarchy, it seems implausible that racial and ethnic status failed to motivate racially patterned responses. Literature on racial attitudes suggests that divergent racial perspectives are often masked in the contemporary deliberation over race and racial meanings – partially obscured in discussions in which no one seems to defend the dominant Anglo culture (Blauner, 2001; Bonilla-Silva, 2001). Consequently, because of the symbolic, almost taboo, nature of the public's consideration of racial meanings inherent in the multiculturalism debate, part of my effort to recast the examination of the discussions of the interview participants is devoted to analysis of racial attitudes on ideologies of intergroup convergence.

Table 8 summarizes the data found in Table 6 and groups it by the race and ethnicity of the participants. The trends revealed in this data suggest that race and ethnicity do in fact influence ideological preferences on social convergence. Moreover, the ways in which the
participants talk about incorporation expose, not only divergent racial perspectives, but perspectives that correspond to the current U.S. racial and ethnic hierarchy.

Looking at the data depicted in Table 8, three trends stand out. First, Black and White participants expressed less support for Multiculturalism, and spoke more favorably of Conventional Assimilation themes than Hispanic and Asian participants. In general, Blacks and Whites appear to possess similar generic attitudes on racial and ethnic convergence and these attitudes stand in contrast to those expressed by the Hispanic and Asian participants. Second, while a similar number of participants in all racial and ethnic groups voiced their preferences in terms of Melting Pot themes, Hispanic and Asian participants were much more likely to say Keep cultural heritage, but . . . than and Blacks and Whites. This finding further reiterates the notion that the aspirations of the Black and White participants are distinctly different than the Hispanic and Asian participants. Finally, while the attitudes of Black and White participants appear similar at first glance, of all the racial groups, including Whites, the Black participants were significantly more likely to articulate their aspirations for Conventional Assimilation or Melting Pot themes in a manner that called for color- and ethnic-blind assimilation and/or social solidarity.

As to the first and most salient trend in the data, the discussions of the Black and White participants are similar, especially when set in contrast to the aspirations of the Hispanic and Asian LSAF participants. Other than the attitudinal differences between Blacks and Whites associated with multiculturalism (a questionable difference that I discuss later in the analysis), the general ideological preferences of the Blacks and Whites match across all three ideological categories.
Table 8
Themes in the LSAF Interview Participant's Deliberation on the Multiculturalism Question
Situated Within Ideologies of Intergroup Convergence and Grouped by Race and Ethnicity (in Percent of Column Total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology Theme</th>
<th>Black (n=42)</th>
<th>White (n=43)</th>
<th>Hispanic (n=18)</th>
<th>Asian (n=26)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Assimilation</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americanization - Strong nationalism</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-conformity themes</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation as inevitable</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’re all the same</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melting Pot Theory</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural mixing increases solidarity</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fusion within Salad Bowl themes</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural fusion is important</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep cultural heritage, but . . .</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate diversity</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity provides comfort</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't we all get along</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A common culture is boring</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2 \) Sig. = .011

Note: A total resulting in more/less than 100 is due to rounding error or omission of categories.
Specifically, according to the data depicted in Table 8, Blacks (26.2%) and Whites (23.3%) were noticeably more likely to support Conventional Assimilation themes than Hispanic (0.0%) and Asian (7.7%) participants. In fact only two participants other than the Blacks and Whites voiced preferences in themes coded as Conventional Assimilation. Beyond general ideological preferences however, the aspirations of the Whites differ dramatically from those of the Black participants. Most of the White Conventional Assimilationists discussed their preferences for the creation of a common culture by advocating Americanization (and the development of a strong American identity based on traditional values), Anglo-conformity themes (e.g., English-only), and/or offered Assimilation as inevitable. In contrast, all but one of the Black participants voiced a We're all the same theme. Beth's statement below serves as a clear example of a White Conventional Assimilationist, as she incorporates parts of all of the three of the Conventional Assimilation themes mentioned above.

**Interviewer**: Is there anything that you see uniting all Americans, anything you see dividing all Americans?

**Beth**: I think what used to unite all Americans was a sense of shared purpose, of creating a place where people could be free to live out their dreams. I think a lot of that has been lost in the last generation unfortunately so. I don't think we have the same strength of purpose . . . I think language is a division. I mean, I want my children to be bilingual, but I do think that a country has to have a common language because your language is your lens into your culture. And I think it's wonderful for kids to know about their family cultures but if they're not gonna become Americans, everything just kind of starts to fragment in too many ways. I think schools have not done a very good job of helping kids assimilate, especially immigrant kids.

**Interviewer**: Are we better off if the races maintain their cultural uniqueness or should we create a common culture?

**Beth**: I think there has to be a common culture if America is going to have any kind of internal strength.

**Interviewer**: What do you think should remain in common?
Beth: Well, I think the language. I think the democratic values, and I think the sense of commitment to trying to make the world a better place.

The Black Conventional Assimilationists did not suggest that the creation of a common culture requires adherence to (or at least acquiescence to) America's traditional ideals. Instead, these Black participants support American universalism because in the end We’re all the same anyway. While three White participants agreed with them, overall the differences between the attitudes of the Blacks and the Whites within Conventional Assimilation category are conspicuous and, I argue, understandable.

Unlike the Whites, Black participants shied away from Anglo-conformity rhetoric and an ideology of assimilation that resembles Americanization. Instead they talk about intergroup convergence in terms of color-blind universalism. In general, the apparent similarity in racial attitudes between Blacks and Whites conceals contrasting motivations that surface in elaboration of their aspirations for intergroup convergence. The following statements come from two Black We’re all the same participants.

Nicholas: It’s time that we all should get together because we’re all the Lord’s children, regardless of what color you are. We are all God’s children and by that you will find that it will be more cooperative within that race. Now if you still don’t want to talk to this person over here because he’s white or she’s Mexican, you’re wrong.

Helen: We’re all the same anyway. To be racist or prejudiced is something you were raised with. You don’t just wake up one day and be like [a bigot]. You’re raised like that. I mean, I was raised with Black and White people. Some of my best friends were White and that’s how I raise my kids so that they don’t look at it like she’s White, she’s Black. I don’t have a label like that.

Looking at the Multiculturalism category in Table 8, overall the Celebrate Diversity theme garners the most support within each racial and ethnic group. The elaborations of all Hispanic participants and a large percentage of all the other groups in the Multiculturalism category speak to the issue of social convergence in terms of this theme. Seemingly, the Asian
participants were less likely than members of the other racial groups to talk about ethnic convergence with a Celebrate Diversity theme. However, while the discussions of the four Asians in the Ethnicity provides comfort category do not match the convivial nature of others situated in Celebrate Diversity, their aspirations are similar. For the Ethnicity provides comfort participants, the familiar confines of an ethnic subculture is worth preserving, in that it is an essential element in the day-to-day lives of those not fully incorporated into the American mainstream. An Ethnicity provides comfort woman contemplated the multiculturalism question below.

Crystal: I look at the heritage of America [and] if you said you had to create a common culture, there’s not one existing that people can adhere to. I think we are in the process of defining a common culture. I think there are factors that shape it more strongly in certain generations, like wars or whatever, but I think it’s happening. As I was growing up as a Korean-American, for a while I hated Korean food and didn’t want to speak Korean to my mother, but I think when you have it to go back to, it’s a real special feeling at the core of you, to know that you have this culture behind you and I think it would be sad if people denied their cultures.

While Crystal infers that the creation of a common culture might happen one day, and that at one time she was committed to assimilation, she explains how her ethnicity remained an important aspect of her identity. Whether the Asian Ethnicity provides comfort participants spoke exclusively of the comfort of their own ethnic culture or were referring to the comfort of ethnicity for anyone, they still are clearly in favor of maintaining cultural uniqueness. I contend this makes them more like the Celebrate diversity participants and less like the other two themes in the Multiculturalism category.

In fact, unlike the Asian participants above, White participants situated in the A common culture is boring and Can't we all get along themes did not articulate their preference for multiculturalism in a straightforward manner. All four of these White participants unequivocally voiced opposition to the creation of a common culture and talked about the continuing pertinence
of diverse ethnic practices in the U.S. Consider the statement of Zachary. This White A common culture is boring man offers a less than enthusiastic motivation for supporting cultural pluralism.

    Zachary: A common culture? A common race? I would say no. There are differences in how people may do things that aren't bad. They're just . . . I would not want the Black or Hispanic people in the church to start carrying themselves or trying to go to the same kind of humor [or] whatever I do, to be like me. I would find that incredibly boring.

And yet, when the Whites in both categories were asked about other racial issues, all lamented the animosity created by racial and ethnic divisions. For instance, a White A common culture is boring woman stated:

    Meredith: I notice there is a lot of African-Americans moving over here. I don't have no problem with any of my neighbors or what ethnic background they would be. What I have a problem with is the attitude of a lot of people. I've taken care of enough African Americans in the hospital that have an attitude that really bothers me. It's like you owe me, our insurance is paying for this or if you don't do this . . . When I see an attitude like this then it bothers me a lot, because I think we should all work together. We should eat and live together.

Interview: Do you think there is too much talk about racial issues?

    Meredith: It's always racial, anything that comes up it's a racial thing. I don't believe it's always a racial thing. I just think it's how we believe. It has nothing to do with whether we're Black, White, Yellow or Green. I just feel that people don't understand each other, and to say it's always racial just irritates me.

    Based on the interview discussions of these four White participants, I argue that despite their aversion to the creation of a common culture, they exhibit a sense of group position that Richard Delgado (1996) refers to as false empathy. According to Delgado, false empathy is an ethno-racialized perspective of a White person who claims to have an understanding of the plight of minority group members but does not harbor a real commitment to the amelioration of racism. This kind of empathy is shallow. According to Delgado, Whites use false empathy to conceal a superficial understanding of race relations and/or racist attitudes. Consider the statement from
the White Can't we all get along participant below. Isaac seems to contradict his sense of group position and exclusionary leanings, with a position only marginally resembling multiculturalism.

Isaac: I think people should never forget their heritage. But at the same time, I don’t think they ought to drive it down somebody else’s throat. It’s like ... I’m a deacon, consequently I preach . . . Somebody [might say], he’s trying to force his religion on me. I’m not forcing anything on him because the religion was here long before he was. He’s trying to force his newfound adaptations on me. I’m not forcing my life on him. He’s forcing it on me. One’s as bad as the other. But I still think each person should understand their heritage. Don’t ever stop that. Every once in a while I’ll hear [an all Black choir], and they’re inspiring. They really rock the church when they get in there and they sing. Everybody, including the Whites, get to rocking. They don’t think of it as the Blacks are singing and here comes the great spiritual movement. This is what I’m talking about. They’ve got that culture there. They should keep it up, yes. But do it in their church. They can do it in my church periodically.

I suggest this kind of rhetoric resembles false empathy. By supporting the ideal of multiculturalism, these White participants can appear to be free of prejudice, and supportive of measures designed to address racial and ethnic inequality, without having to express support for policy that might in fact transform the social hierarchy. I contend that the elaboration of Zachary also exemplifies false empathy.

Zachary: But do I believe America is a culture that is based on success . . . in America you have the opportunity to be what you choose to be whether for great or small. I don’t think that really matters. But the idea seems to be so prevalent [today is] well, if you're born Black, Hispanic or White in an inner city and you're poor, you know, you're oppressed by every body else and you're not gonna make it and it's their fault not yours. I think it should be a culture where we say we are all based on the fact of striving to succeed and nowhere should a group be culturalized into failure, like sometime the media or leaders in certain groups try to culturalize groups into. Well, inner city kids in East L.A. have to fail because they are set up to unless they become rap stars or big time drug dealers. I think if that is coming from a culture that they live in, than that culture is flawed and should be thrown out.

Earlier in Zachary's interview, he complained about racial and ethnic divisiveness, the activities of race conscious leaders like Jesse Jackson, and spoke negatively of affirmative action policy. And yet, when asked to comment on social convergence, he said: "I find [the practices] of other cultures interesting – the food, some of the different humor." I believe that the overall
preferences of White participants using these themes do not actually align with cultural pluralism. I have left them participants in the Multiculturalism category, but question their commitment to cultural pluralism.

If we consider the above statements as representative of false empathy, the characterization of the White participants who voice them as proponents of multiculturalism seems inaccurate. However, based solely on their elaborations, the Multiculturalism category best represents their rhetoric, even if it fails to capture their false empathy. If these four Whites were to be reclassified and removed from the Multiculturalism category, the second trend mentioned above – that Blacks and Whites appear to possess similar generic attitudes on ethnic convergence, and these attitudes stand in contrast to those expressed by the Hispanic and Asian participants – gains credibility.

In the chapter 7, I include a discussion of the significance of White false empathy and what this means for the discussion of assimilation and multiculturalism. But for now, the presence of false empathy notwithstanding, I leave the four White participants mentioned above in the Multiculturalism category, and continue with a discussion of the above trends in the data related to the attitudes of participants situated in the Melting Pot Theory category.

The preferences of the Melting Pot Asian and Hispanic participants (specifically the Keep cultural heritage, but . . . participants) hint at a willingness, albeit a hesitant willingness, to give up their ethnic culture and assimilate. Again, if the themes of the participants found in Table 8 are placed on a continuum – ranging from support for Conventional Assimilation on one end to the Ethnicity provides comfort in the Multiculturalism category on the other – the Melting Pot Keep cultural heritage, but . . . theme is assimilationist, but only slightly different than Multiculturalism's Celebrate diversity theme. In fact, the Keep cultural heritage, but . . .
participants often recommend Celebrate diversity, but finish their elaboration by underscoring the importance of societal unity – but we all must adapt to the common culture. In sum, Hispanic and Asian participants were not likely to support Conventional Assimilation themes, more likely to embrace an unqualified Multiculturalism theme, and more likely to favor the Keep cultural heritage, but . . . Melting Pot Theory theme than the Blacks and Whites. More than the other two groups, Hispanic and Asian participants adopt a perspective that allows for incremental cultural adaptation. Plausibly their newer immigrant status and non-Black identity (Yancey, 2003) engenders a compromise ideology of assimilation that signifies the perception that incorporation in the American mainstream is available to them.

Finally, as to the third trend mentioned above, while a similar number of Black and White participants support Conventional Assimilation themes, the preferences of the Black Conventional Assimilationists are more likely to embrace color-blind assimilation than their White counterparts. This trend reverberates in the discussions of Blacks placed in the Melting Pot group. Reminiscent of the color-blind rhetoric of the Black Conventional Assimilationists, the Black Melting Pot Theorists in the Cultural mixing increases solidarity theme reiterate benevolent assimilationist themes in their aspiration for cultural fusion. Carolyn, a Black Cultural mixing increases solidarity woman quoted below, believes that openness to understanding is instrumental in creating a more vital social environment, and sounds similar to some of the We're all the same rhetoric discussed earlier.

Carolyn: I think everybody should have their uniqueness, and I think at some point, I think there should be things where we come together . . . I say we just need to get to know people individually because we all are made from the same substances, basically.

Because these Black participants express a concern for maintaining cultural uniqueness, along with a stronger preference for progressive social solidarity, their aspirations align with the
Blacks in the We're all the same Conventional Assimilation category. In fact, unlike other participants in the other racial and ethnic groups, Blacks tended to emphasize a coming together based on equal respect, and often framed their ideological preferences for social convergence in a way that promoted racial and ethnic-blind universalism.

The preferences of the Blacks and Whites can be distinguished from those voiced by the Hispanic and Asian participants. However, the aspirations of the Blacks are distinctly different that all others, including the Whites. The Blacks were much more likely to talk about unity and equality no matter which model of social inclusion they preferred. In sum, not surprisingly, White participants were the most avid proponents of Anglo-conformity and Americanization, and the Hispanic and Asian participants expressed a strong desire for cultural pluralism and incremental inclusion. In general, more than any other group, Blacks seem to advocate a building of solidarity or the integration of Americans based on a commitment to the inclusion of all minorities, including (and maybe especially) themselves.  

Discussion and Conclusions

The scholarship devoted to conceptualizing multiculturalism is voluminous, and if there is a consensus among scholars on multiculturalism's significance, it is that there is no consensus. Manning (1995) asserts that multiculturalism is only an umbrella term for minority group inclusion, a new tribalism. Others believe it to be: an intellectually appealing, but rather vague concept without theoretical models (Heisler, 1992); a collective rejection of assimilation (Glazer, 1997); or a means to press for equal respect (Gitlin, 1995). While Giroux (1994) thinks it is a concept central in the public discourse over national identity, others scholars see it as an insipid encouragement of variation (Gordon and Newfield, 1996), a jeremiad (Appiah, 1998), a dérapage
(Bernstein, 1994), a shibboleth (Hollinger, 1998). In sum, Higham (2001) contends that multiculturalism is nothing more than a buzzword, a gigantic mystification.

For many social thinkers, much of multiculturalism's multivalence resides in the incongruity of its two main dimensions – (1) ethnic-blind egalitarianism and (2) the protection of cultural differences based on (the same attribute to be ignored in the first dimension) ethnic identification (Gordon and Newfield, 1996; Taylor, 1994; Zelinsky, 2001). Goldberg (1994) reminds us that the utter confusion in the multiculturalism debate derives in part from the fact that virtually no one defends mono-culturalism. In the end several scholars of race and ethnic relations make the following convincing argument: because the debate was a contest over the legitimacy of cultural concepts and therefore did not challenge the prevailing hierarchy of intergroup relations, multiculturalism's potential to mobilize political action designed to transform institutionalized power arrangements diminished over time, causing natural constituencies to work at cross purposes (Downey, 1999; Gitlin, 1995; Gordon and Newfield, 1996; Hollinger, 1998).

Therefore, it seems the late nineteenth century debate over multicultural lapsed into the insipid encouragement of cultural variation, as multiculturalism's defenders struggled to recognize the enemy. And yet, late in the debates, multiculturalism commanded an overpowering presence, and served as a major theoretical framework for analyzing intergroup relations (Gordon and Newfield, 1996). According to Downey (1999) and Gitlin (1995), multiculturalism emerged as a popular symbol in the public's consciousness that proponents believed could be employed to promote social equity. Recognizing multiculturalism's remarkable impact on American culture, near the end of the century Glazer (1997) conceded "We are all multiculturalists now" (p. 160).
How can we reconcile the academy's insistence that multiculturalism's meaning was lost on the U.S. public, and the doctrine's capacity to mobilize a great deal of public attention? How can a doctrine, blanched of its capacity to transform, linger as the most powerful dissent against assimilation since the turn of last century?

The qualitative data analysis in this chapter identifies the public's concern for multiculturalism's paradox – unity through diversity. When presented with a choice between multiculturalism or assimilation, the participants appear hesitant to support either ideology exclusively. On the surface, they seem to prefer both cultural unity and cultural separation at the same time. Yet, under closer inspection, while the benevolent message of multiculturalism appeals to many participants (worthy of recognition), the allure of American universalism is just as strong, if not stronger. I contend that overall the rationalizations of a majority of the LSAF participants reveal a strong desire for a compromise form of assimilation – a combination of more traditional forms of ethnic-blind assimilation and a more benevolent melting pot assimilation.

Academic inquiries find multiculturalism to be the innocuous approval of cultural variation and empirical survey research tends to confirm this assertion. Yet, the deliberations of the participants of this study lead me to believe that the advocacy of multiculturalism does not represent indeterminate or vacant preferences in the attitudes of the U.S. public. Instead, because most participants were unwilling to support unequivocally maintaining cultural uniqueness and often tempered their advocacy of multiculturalism with melting pot theory or color-blind assimilation, I assert that the interview data indicate a strong tendency among many participants to conflate the meaning of multiculturalism with a benevolent form of assimilation. Therefore, I conclude that many in the U.S. public endorsed multiculturalism's popular message of equal
respect without fully accepting the doctrine’s implied cultural segregation. In reality, in spite of their best intentions many multiculturalists do not favor cultural pluralism, as much as they oppose the old approach to assimilation.

For many in the public, intergroup relations appear to be improving and they, therefore, are open to a redefinition of the national identity, but not a redefinition that entails a drastic transformation of what it means to be an American (Downey, 2000; Citrin et al., 2001). Consequently, during the multiculturalism debate, those assimilationists seeking compromise might have adopted a weak ideological connection to cultural pluralism – acknowledging the importance of assuaging animosities created repressive intergroup relations and masking their stronger aspirations for a strong national identity and cultural fusion.

The analysis of the interviews explains apparent indeterminacy in the attitudes of the U.S. public found in survey data and reveal how the paradox of multiculturalism is possible and relevant in the analysis of intergroup relations. Many in the public must believe that creating a common culture and maintaining cultural uniqueness are not mutually exclusive enterprises. In late 20th century America the multiculturalism debates were not impotent, however, as they allowed the dissent against coercive assimilation and an affinity for social equity to converge. In sum, many advocates believed that multiculturalism symbolizes a kinder, gentler form of assimilation. For them, while multiculturalism did not represent cultural pluralism, it was an acceptable alternative to Americanization and Anglo-conformity.

The hotly contested, widespread contemporary public deliberation on multiculturalism indicates that U.S. did engage in racial realignment. According social thinkers, the construction and institutionalization of racial meanings and social hierarchy involves a dynamic, ongoing process built on a negotiated consensus (Blumer, 1958/2000; Blumer and Duster, 1980; Omi and
Winant, 1986). During transitional periods, the efficacy of maintaining the consensus on racial stratification undergoes stress, which in turn increases the likelihood of a change in the social hierarchy (Shibutani and Kwan, 1965). The multiculturalism debate corresponds to the dramatic changes in intergroup relations brought on by the social and cultural turmoil present in the 1960s and 70s, and signified a new period of accommodation in race relations. Plausibly, the multiculturalism debate energized the recursive deliberation of racial meanings, and consequently, pushed the U.S. public even farther away from more traditionally accepted forms of assimilation, like Anglo-conformity.

According to Alba and Nee (2003, p. 289), "multiculturalism may already be preparing the way for a redefinition of the nature of the American social majority, one that accepts a majority that is racially diverse." Yet empirical research indicates that while racial and ethnic categories inspires attitudinal cleavages, the differences present in the data are surprisingly modest (Citrin et al., 2001; Downey, 2000). In contrast, according the qualitative data analysis above, while the aspirations of those in social categories appear similar, racially charged motivations prevail. Indeed, patterns in racial and ethnic attitudes of the interview participants indicate racial and ethnic cleavages, and moreover, the differences correspond to the U.S. social hierarchy. Because racial and ethnic meanings infused this debate with its energy, if cleavages failed to emerge in the empirical data, it is plausible that the subtleties of racial discourse mask common aspiration among different racial and ethnic groups.

Because social and structural barriers obstruct social inclusion, members of minority groups reject assimilation's efficacy (especially an assimilation built on a dominant Anglo-American culture), and consequently, ally themselves with ideologies like multiculturalism. However, according to my research, even though a favorable shift in the attitudes of many
Americans toward accommodating cultural diversity might accelerate, the allure, power and resiliency of constructing a common culture seems to overpower pluralist tendencies, even and especially among African-Americans.

While America's inability to assimilate African-Americans into the mainstream enabled the rise of multiculturalism, ongoing racial segregation and discrimination did not cause African Americans to reject all forms of assimilation. While Blacks were as reluctant as Whites to embrace ethnic separatism, they rejected Anglo-conformity and refrained from espousing the superiority of traditional American ideals. More than the other minority group members, Blacks voiced motivations in favor of minority assimilation, and even when they spoke favorably of cultural pluralism, they were more concerned with solidarity and racial equity. Indeed, the aspirations of Blacks were often framed in ways supportive of the color-blind integration of the past.

While the findings presented above clearly reject Glazer's thesis that African-Americans are the storm-troops of multiculturalism, this assertion must be qualified. To be sure, the past futile attempts to assimilate have made African Americans susceptible to anti-assimilation ideologies like multiculturalism. However, based on my analysis, African-Americans reject multiculturalism when multiculturalism equates with cultural pluralism. If we accept the notion that the public has conflated multiculturalism with a benevolent form of assimilation, then indeed Blacks will appear to be more open to an ideology of multiculturalism when it stands for anti-Anglo conformity assimilation.

This finding helps explain why African Americans appear divided on the issue of assimilation and multiculturalism. A significant number of African Americans voice a preference for cultural pluralism under the latest guise, multiculturalism. However, many more
apparently prefer non-conventional forms of assimilation (e.g. motivations characterized within the Melting Pot Theory category in this study). In fact, looking at Table 8, if the number of participants that voiced aspirations for either of the two assimilationist categories (Conventional Assimilation and Melting Pot Theory) are combined, then more Blacks can be said to support assimilation into the American mainstream than those in any other group, including the Whites.

More than other Asian and Hispanic Americans, African American historical embeddedness in American civil society must facilitate their commitment to a national identity and the creation of a common culture, despite persistent anti-black discrimination and the intractable Black-White divide. So when African Americans take a perspective that seemingly runs counter to assimilation, their motivations might not be anti-assimilation, as much as they are anti-Anglo Conformity. The data in this study infer that African-Americans harbor a lingering ambition to find their equal stake in America's mainstream.

In sum, in subtle yet meaningful ways, the attitudes of minority group participants coalesced more prominently than Whites around support for the incremental extension of the circle of those deemed relevant contributors to U.S. society. Congruent with Blauner (2001), the findings of this paper suggest that Whites are talking past minority group members on the issue of intergroup convergence, masking their strong assimilationist aspirations. Even when Whites advocated the Celebration of diversity, a hint of we versus them, and false empathy, remained only thinly veiled. Whites were much more likely to suggest that minority group members should adopt proven American traditions, and adapt to cultural patterns firmly established by the first American immigrants. The fact the first immigrants were Anglo American does complicate the issue for many Whites, but for them creating societal unity with the historically proven Anglo culture already in place can be accomplished with far less divisiveness than trying to build an
entirely new, ethnic-free common culture. For many Whites, support for multiculturalism might be a rearguard action – a concession that the gates must be opened and race relations reordered, but an advocacy built on the notion that multiculturalism is not a real threat to the status quo.

The data in this study remind us that race and ethnicity continue as powerful factors in the complex formula of racial and ethnic convergence. Even though the multiculturalism debate contributed to the redefinition of racial meanings in the U.S., the findings of this study portend only a slight weakening in the significance of ethnic status. All minority group members expressed a willingness to assimilate into the mainstream. Therefore, to further keep the paradox alive, apparently the more debates over social convergence change things, the more they remain the same. The multiculturalism debate appears to have opened the door to alterations in racial meanings and the racial and ethnic hierarchy, without radically changing the template of race relations – a template that is likely to continue to adapt and shape the social hierarchy of the future.
CHAPTER 7

THEORIZING MULTICULTURALISM

Introduction: Drawing the Line of the American Circle

The affinity for cultural blending among the Lilly Survey of Attitudes and Friendships (LSAF) interview participants – a soft advocacy of assimilation and a generic, yet across-the-board disapproval of Anglo-conformity – is indicative of a substantial dissatisfaction with the ongoing hegemony of a Euro-centric culture in the U.S. public. Even though tones of accommodation, reminiscent of multiculturalism, resonate in the rhetoric of most of the participants, in the end innocuous discussions favorable to cultural pluralism drift toward a real concern for creating social unity and national solidarity. Apparently, the multiculturalism debates of late-20th century America were not entirely an unintelligible deliberation on cultural diversity, but the reiteration of a familiar assimilationist process – the absorption of compatible aspects of even antagonistic viewpoints by the U.S. common culture and a cautious reconstruct of the notion of what it means to be an American.

Despite reports of (1) multiculturalism's questionable or even negligible impact on U.S. intergroup relations, (2) the co-optation of multiculturalism's message by and for corporate and governmental interests, and (3) multiculturalism's failure to mobilize efficacious political action, apparently the multiculturalism debates indeed helped widen the circle of those to be considered legitimate contributors to American civil society. If we accept that the multiculturalism debate altered U.S. patterns of intergroup relations – neutralizing America's stubborn, yet weakened devotion to Anglo-conformity assimilation – we must also recognize that the change was incremental and the doctrine itself could not match the overwhelming power of the U.S. common culture to universalize. In this chapter I seek to theoretically frame this paradoxical process in a
way that reconciles the power of a popular symbol for cultural segregation and an even more powerful assimilationist process to which it is inexorably bound.

In the past social thinkers have suggested that America’s dominant social systems seem to possess an inherent, built-in toleration that promotes assimilation without demanding total conciliation (Greeley, 1974; Higham, 2001; Park, 1950). In order to theorize findings in the data that tend to support the claims above, I employ Alba and Nee's (2003) recent theoretical reformulation of the concept of assimilation. Even though the U.S. is a diverse and ethnically dynamic society, they insist that a new rethinking of assimilation works well to theorize the social process of intergroup convergence in the U.S. I maintain that assimilation, albeit a soft form, dominates the public’s perception of intergroup incorporation, and that Alba and Nee's rethinking of assimilation provides an apt theoretical framework to explicate the findings of this dissertation. Their theory further illuminates how the widespread approval of multiculturalism can signify a shift in intergroup relations and altered institutional arrangements without indicating the complete demise of assimilation's theoretical prominence. After a review of Alba and Nee's rethinking of assimilation, I use the analysis of the interview data to validate and expand their theory.

Alba and Nee: Rethinking Assimilation

According to Alba and Nee (2003), assimilation was the preeminent social scientific paradigm within which social thinkers advanced the understanding of immigrant adaptation and intergroup relations in America. They assert that since the 1960s, the salience of assimilationism has declined, as the concept's validity has increasingly fallen into disrepute with scholars of intergroup relations and the U.S. public. According to critics, assimilation is ethnocentric and
outdated – an ideologically laden, worn-out concept that is better replaced with alternative models that do not require minority group members to shed their own cultures "and wrap themselves in the mantle of Anglo-American culture" (Alba and Nee, 2003, p. 2).

Alba and Nee concede three major weaknesses in the application of the old conceptual framework of assimilation. First, assimilation is often considered a one-sided process within which cultural homogeneity is established according to adaptation to middle-class cultural patterns of White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants. By using the a WASP, middle class reference point, the old approach implicitly equates assimilation with "full or successful incorporation" (p. 3) and therefore ranks the degree of assimilation of minorities according to their willingness and capacity to conform to the Anglo-American standard. Second, the old approach to assimilation fails to recognize the absorption of elements of minority ethnic group practices into the American common culture. Finally, the old framework does not address the significance of surviving ethnic social structures.

Obviously, the presence of divergent adaptive outcomes, the survival of ethnic practices and enclaves, and the absorption of certain ethnic elements once excluded into the American mainstream lead social thinkers to condemn assimilation. In order to fill the void left by the declining paradigm, Alba and Nee note that social thinkers developed two alternative pluralist models of intergroup convergence – transnationalism and segmented or downward assimilation (reviewed in chapter 2). Proponents of transnationalism assert that because of advanced technology, market integration, and mass air transportation, ethnic minority group members do not necessarily attempt assimilation because they can maintain significant connections with their ethnic homeland. The segmented or downward assimilationist approach suggests that many
minority ethnics are barred from entry into the mainstream by their social location, and are incorporated into American society as disadvantaged, often racialized minorities.

While these pluralist models possess their own spheres of validity, Alba and Nee find that they too have weaknesses and major limitations. Alba and Nee insist that after further academic inquiry into its significance vis-à-vis alternative pluralist models, the pertinence of assimilation cannot be ruled out. For them, a reformulation of assimilation operates as a vital concept and theory in the analysis of intergroup adaptation. In sum, Alba and Nee assert a rethinking of assimilation does not have to be ethnocentric or unconcerned with the "riotous cultural bloom of the United States" (p. 5), and can accommodate for the possibly of other adaptive or non-adaptive outcomes for immigrants and their descendants.

Alba and Nee attempt to address weaknesses in the old approach and reformulate assimilation into a more viable theoretical model without abandoning the conceptual core. In fact, Alba and Nee ironically rethink the old approach to assimilation in accordance with some of the classic treatments of assimilation, including those of the founders of the Chicago School of sociology, their academic descendants and collaborators. Chicago School sociology came into prominence in the first four decades in the 1900s in part because of the pioneering studies of the dynamics of urban social processes and the incorporation of immigrants. Alba and Nee extend and revise the conceptual foundation of assimilation established by the Chicago School, and then augment their new approach with Shibutani and Kwan's (1965) comparative approach to ethnic stratification and new theories of institutionalism.

Alba and Nee remind us that sociologists in the Chicago School, like Park and Burgess, provide a definition of assimilation that is flexible and open-ended. This definition does not match the stereotypical version harshly criticized by opponents of assimilation. For these
sociologists assimilation does not require the erasure of all signs of ethnicity, but allows for a diverse mainstream society in which the cultural heritages of minority ethnic group members slowly evolve into a common culture that enables them to sustain some cultural practices and maintain a common national existence.

Based on a revision of the Chicago School definition, Alba and Nee define assimilation as "the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences" (p. 11). According to their definition, ethnicity does not disappear but only declines in salience as a reference point on the social landscape. Ethnicity might continue to provide comfort and shelter to ethnic group members, but these individuals do not sense a rupture between civic life and their social life. Accordingly, ethnicity becomes increasingly more symbolic. In Alba and Nee's conceptual framework, the mainstream is likely to evolve with some reciprocity, absorbing minority ethnic groups' institutional structures and elements of their cultural practices. Therefore, their conception of assimilation becomes a two-sided process whereby individuals on both sides of ethnic boundaries increasingly perceive themselves as more alike over time and across more domains.

By adhering to the spirit of the classic Chicago School definition of assimilation, Alba and Nee allow for the evolution of an American composite culture – a culture made up of an interpenetration of many different cultural practices and beliefs. The cultural fusion to which Alba and Nee refer involves a repertoire of ethnic styles and the incremental incorporation of these styles into the American mainstream. According to their reformulation, the composite culture enables individuals in subgroups to forge distinguishable identities out of the materials present in the mainstream in a way that allows them to still remain recognizably American.
Alba and Nee's rethinking of assimilation does not suggest that the mainstream becomes egalitarian. In fact, for them ethnic and racial origins continue as powerful determinants of the life chances of minority group members. Alba and Nee underscore that their new theory of assimilation does not mean that racial and ethnic discrimination will end or that assimilation into the mainstream is inevitable. Divergent outcomes for individual minority ethnic group members will continue to surface according to variables present in their social location and varieties in the workings of the mainstream. According to Alba and Nee, the mainstream is clearly more diverse than in any previous period of American history, and while racial and ethnic stratification will continue to influence the lives of many minorities, the ongoing altering and spanning of social boundaries suggests assimilation will continue to be the master trend among immigrants and their descendants.

As a means to specify causal mechanisms of assimilation, Alba and Nee employ Shibutani and Kwan's (1965) comparative approach to ethnic stratification. Shibutani and Kwan drew upon core conceptual themes found in the Chicago School's treatment of assimilation and Mead's symbolic interactionism. According to Shibutani and Kwan, classification of ethnic and racial groups into a socially constructed hierarchy gives rise to the concept of social distance. Shibutani and Kwan use social distance to explain the existence of social boundaries, which segregate minorities and impede their assimilation. In order to understand the construction and maintenance of social boundaries between groups, Shibutani and Kwan contend that we must look at the processes that determine the relationships of social groups vis-à-vis each other, rather than the looking exclusively at the attributes of the groups themselves.

According to Alba and Nee, Shibutani and Kwan's analysis helps introduce power into their analysis of assimilation. By establishing a linkage between the symbolic construction of
difference and the status interests of corporate actors at the community level, an ethnic
stratification system that relies on both informal arrangements between people and large-scale
institutional processes controlled by the dominant group seeking to maintain its superior group
position, is explicated. For Alba and Nee, Shibutani and Kwan advance a realistic assessment of
assimilation in that it rationalizes how the assimilation of racial and ethnic minorities occurs only
incrementally by a reduction in social distance induced by structural changes that occur primarily
at the macro level. Based on Shibutani and Kwan, Alba and Nee assert that the most immediate
source of the decline of social distance is institutional changes that stimulate challenges to social
values and consequently change subjective states of individuals.

According to Alba and Nee, Shibutani and Kwan's perspective provides a useful bridge to
their application of a new institutionalist theory to assimilation. According to Alba and Nee, new
institutionalism explain changes in the form and functions of institutions by referring to causal
mechanisms embedded in the purposive action of individual and corporate actors – action shaped
by cultural beliefs, relational structures, path dependence, and changing relative costs. According
to institutional analysis, because institutions commission incentives and specify the rules of
legitimate social action for individual and groups, individuals and organizations in turn compete
for influence and control over institutional structures. In other words, the trajectories of
individuals are constrained and enabled by available causal mechanisms, many of which are
embedded in large institutional structures.

Building a new formulation of assimilation that incorporates the new institutionalism,
Alba and Nee argue that agents act according to mental models shaped by the social context of
their lives – e.g., social location, customs, norms, law, ideology – and many of their choices
depend on their perception of the costs and benefits embedded in the institutional environment
that surrounds them. The mainstream encompasses institutional structures that offer powerful incentives to assimilate for many immigrants and their descendants, according to Alba and Nee. Their new institutionalist theory of assimilation identifies causal mechanisms that explain the simultaneous existence of both segregating and blending processes in society. In sum, they assert that assimilation can happen as the result of an individual's purposeful action, or because of the unintended consequences of their everyday decisions – decisions structured by mechanisms operating at the individual, primary-group and institutional levels.

For Alba and Nee, therefore, assimilation happens as a consequence of a repertoire of both proximate (causes that operate at the individual and social network level) and distal (deeper causes which are embedded in large structures) causal mechanisms. They maintain their theory turns on distal causes, which stem from mechanisms associated with the monitoring and enforcement of institutional rules and regulations and governmental laws. A significant determinant in changing, monitoring, and enforcing institutional prerogatives involves the ability and willingness of established dominant groups and actors in the White majority to exclude or include newcomers. In accordance with Shibutani and Kwan, Alba and Nee argue that in order to better understand how assimilation is linked to the lowering of institutional barriers erected to deny entry into the mainstream for minority ethnic group members and their descendants, we must look at power differentials based on race and ethnicity.

In chapter 3 of their book, Alba and Nee look for the emergence of assimilation as a pattern for earlier immigrants – Europeans and East Asians that immigrated around the turn of the 20th century – and their descendants. Alba and Nee conclude that the experiences of people in these groups demonstrate the vitality of assimilation as a concept and a theory. Using the dimensions of assimilation – enabled by Gordon's (1964) synthesis (status attainment, residential
mobility, and social contact) – to measure social incorporation, Alba and Nee find that tremendous changes in the lives of the past White and Asian U.S. immigrants and the subsequent transformation of the American mainstream. Alba and Nee grant that assimilation has not erased ethnicity for a large number of people in this U.S. population, but they insist that ethnicity now retains only a symbolic weight and appears significant in a reduced number of social contexts.

According to Alba and Nee, critics of assimilation might claim that earlier assimilation among European and Asian ancestry groups might be specific to the set of historical circumstances of their time. In chapter 4 they explore the possibility that assimilation does not apply to contemporary immigrant groups facing a different historical environment. Alba and Nee contend that the effects of contrasting historical environments is not clear and overplayed, and that available evidence indicates a pattern of assimilation for newer streams of immigrations cannot be ruled out.

While Alba and Nee grant that the true prospects of assimilation for contemporary immigrant groups is difficult to assess – assimilation is considered to be intergenerational and their descendants are still relatively young – they conclude that assimilation remains a powerful force affecting contemporary immigrant group members and their descendants. While ethnicity persists, and adaptive outcomes are diverse, Alba and Nee find that the opportunities available in the American mainstream continue to motivate minority group members to assimilate. In sum, the authors believe assimilation continues as a pattern of import for immigrants to the U.S. and their descendants and remains a potent force for change to the contours of the American mainstream.

Alba and Nee's new theory of assimilation is neither normative nor prescriptive. For them, assimilation is not inevitable. However, while pluralist alternatives to assimilation possess
spheres of validity, they have limited theoretical and conceptual application. In Alba and Nee's final analysis, mainstream boundaries continue to expand to accommodate cultural alternatives, and the narrowing of social boundaries continues to bring a substantial number of minority group members into the mainstream. While the ongoing changes Alba and Nee envision are likely to affect racial meanings, the softening of the hard-and-fast character of the Black-White divide is not likely to dissolve in the near future. Alba and Nee assert that the U.S. mainstream is obviously more diverse and expanding, but inequalities rooted in the racial and ethnic hierarchy remain potent.

Alba and Nee on Multiculturalism

The aim of Alba and Nee's book is to remold assimilation into a more viable concept and theory. Consequently, Alba and Nee only briefly explicate the meaning and significance of multiculturalism in contemporary America. They define multiculturalism in contrast to assimilation, as an idea that "implies more or less autonomous cultural centers organized around discrete ethnic groups, with much less interpenetration of cultural life" (p. 10). Alba and Nee recognize the growing interest in multiculturalism in late 20th century America as evidence that minority cultures have retained a vitality not seen since the middle decades when the melting pot was the primary metaphor for social convergence. For the most part, however, they pay little heed to the impact of multiculturalism on intergroup relations.

According to Alba and Nee, the promise of multiculturalism rests on the doctrine's capacity to raise the opportunities of minority group members to parity with those of the dominant group. Alba and Nee assert that Americans are more tolerant of ethnic difference today. However after an examination of 1994 GSS data (some of the same data employed in
research previously review), they conclude that Americans have not fundamentally changed their attitudes toward the maintenance of ethnic cultures and that multiculturalism's promise remains unfulfilled. Alba and Nee believe contemporary Americans harbor the same perspective Glazer called the "American ethnic pattern" in 1975. Glazer maintained that ethnic difference is acceptable with the public as long as it is "voluntary and confined to private spheres of family and community; the public sphere, especially its political sector, requires a common, English-language-based culture" (in Alba and Nee, 2003, p. 143).

For Alba and Nee the survey data do not indicate tolerance for ethnic difference extends to support for "full-blown multiculturalism, in which minority cultures attain something approaching parity with the mainstream one" (p. 143). In fact, Alba and Nee even suggest that if the U.S. adopted full-blown multiculturalist, affirmative action type policy – increasing the state's support to group efforts to maintain difference – that "it is far from clear that this would have much impact on the informal, ground-level pressures to assimilate" (p. 144). According to their analysis, U.S. teachers still expect immigrant kids to acculturate to a White, middle class American standard and most Americans still want second and later generations of immigrants to assimilate.

Reclaiming Alba and Nee's Theory for the Analysis of the LSAF Data

How is it possible to employ a theory, unmistakably antagonistic to multiculturalism, to frame a research project that suggests widespread public support for multiculturalism, in part, signals a willingness to open the gates to the American mainstream? It is in their commitment to reinvigorating the canon that the apparent contradiction between the theory of Alba and Nee and the analysis of the LSAF data originates. I contend that in remaking the canon of assimilation,
Alba and Nee did not rethink multiculturalism. The reconciliation of Alba and Nee's theory of assimilation and my analysis requires a two-fold remedy. For the first, I return to Alba and Nee's adherence to an academic conceptualization of multiculturalism.

Alba and Nee maintain that multiculturalism "implies more or less autonomous cultural centers organized around discrete ethnic groups, with much less interpenetration of cultural life" (p. 10). The definition of multiculturalism they adopt matches the academic standard used in the discipline. Consequently, when they look for changes in the ideological climate regarding ethnic and cultural diversity, similar to other researchers, they find "little evidence that increased tolerance of individual difference extends to the point of endorsing a full-blown multiculturalism" (p. 143). In other words, tied to an academic conceptualization, they failed to see in survey data what emerged in the analysis of the LSAF personal interviews – attitudes favorable to a soft form of assimilation masked by feel-good rhetoric associated with it.

In short, the academy's conceptualization of multiculturalism does not equate with the public's. According to the interview data, the public conflates the meaning of concepts central to the deliberation of multiculturalism. Therefore, when Alba and Nee operationalize and look for the significance of multiculturalism with quantitative data, their analysis is not necessarily reflective of public's operationalization of multiculturalism. While I agree that the academic version of full-blown multiculturalism fails to resonate with the U.S. public, a water-downed, restyled version does. Furthermore, I argue that my analysis validates their notion that certain mechanisms expand the mainstream to accommodate cultural alternatives. Therefore, if we allow for the public's alternative view of multiculturalism/assimilation, a conceptualization of the concept not considered by Alba and Nee, we can reconcile of their theory and the analysis of the interview data.
The second step in paving the way for the use of Alba and Nee's theory for the purposes of this research can be located in their own treatment of the effects of cultural shifts and institutional changes on processes of assimilation. Looking back on the campaign for national solidarity in the 1940s – which Alba and Nee suggest was a symbolic promotion of "the unification of Americans of different backgrounds with festivals to celebrate the contributions of immigrant groups" (p. 115) – they assert cultural shifts opened up increasing educational, economic, and residential opportunities for minority racial and ethnic groups members. Accordingly, the advancement of guaranteed opportunities for participation in civic life led to increasing levels of assimilation.

Alba and Nee do acknowledge a profound change in the attitudes of Americans toward intergroup relations since the 1960s. In fact, they find the growing acceptance of racial and ethnic inclusion has crystallized in the public mind and evolved into a social value – the "valorization of inclusion" (p. 280). Further, they assert that because the boundaries between Whites and non-Whites are now less meaningful, "multiculturalism may already be preparing the way for a redefinition of the nature of the American social majority, one that accepts a majority that is racially diverse" (p. 289).

While they imply that the events surrounding the multiculturalism debates constitute a cultural shift, they do not explicitly characterize it as such. Considering the similarity between the cultural shift associated with events in the 1940s and one attributed to America's late 20th century deliberation on the merits of multiculturalism, I argue the multiculturalism debates mark a sea change in the construction of the American mainstream, and that Alba and Nee's rethinking of assimilation fails only in explicating their analysis far enough to link the "valorization of inclusion" with multiculturalism. If we frame the multiculturalism debates as indicator of the
kind of cultural shift Alba and Nee implicate in the expansion of the mainstream, their theory in fact helps explain how contrasting perspectives like multiculturalism and assimilation continue to be relevant for the LSAF interview participants.

Similarly, Alba and Nee do not extend their consideration of the significance of mainstream altering institutional changes to those linked to the multiculturalism debates. According to Alba and Nee, post World War II changes in meso- and macro-level institutions (e.g., changes in immigration law and civil rights legislation) helped safeguard the civil rights of minorities, lowered the barriers of entry into the mainstream, and enhanced the predictability of success of their assimilation. Thus, the cost of discrimination increased for work places and public organizations, which reduced racism and opened up the American mainstream. Alba and Nee predict that as long as the current set of institutional policies on racial equality remain "in force and are monitored and enforced, we can expect the trend toward inclusion of ethnic and racial minorities in the American mainstream to continue" (p. 284). What they do not suggest is that the multiculturalism debate led to institutional changes that promoted a similar extension of the mainstream.

A review of the literature on multiculturalism reveals that the rise of multiculturalism happened as a consequence of the very same mid-century institutional changes Alba and Nee recognize as factors in pervious assimilation processes. I argue that similar institutional changes, induced by the multiculturalism debates (like changes in public school curriculum and the concomitant adoption of texts more favorable to multiculturalism, the dramatic increased in number of university and college departments devoted to the study of groups once excluded from the Euro-centric canon, and the application of policies and practices favorable to multiculturalism's message of equal respect by business and governmental interests), are an
extension of and akin to the institutional changes Alba and Nee identify as mechanisms of assimilation in the 1960s. Consequently, Alba and Nee hinted at, but stopped short of discussing multiculturalism's effect on altering America's institutions. Again, this augmentation aligns with their theory and furthers an explanation of LSAF data that reveal the paradox of multiculturalism. Institutional changes linked to multiculturalism extended the boundaries of the American mainstream, increased the probability of the social inclusion of many minority group members, and therefore, enhanced the perception that somehow multiculturalism and assimilation are not mutually exclusive endeavors.

In sum, I contend that Alba and Nee's disregard for multiculturalism's impact on institutional and cultural changes, and the concept of multiculturalism in general, stems from their unwavering devotion to the objective of the book – to rethink the assimilation canon in such a way as to revitalize the concept and the theory's applicability. Because they conceptualize multiculturalism in contrast to assimilation, their primary focus falls on assimilation and attendant processes. Consequently, as assimilation's antithesis, the subsidiary elaboration of multiculturalism, a discussion Alba and Nee do not explicate, involves establishing the concept's counter-assimilationist inclination and the doctrine's ineffectual tendencies. I seek to adapt their new approach to assimilation, in a way that resonates with their analysis, by recognizing the public's alternative conception of assimilation, the popularity of multiculturalism, and the expansion of the mainstream created by institutional and cultural changes traceable to the multiculturalism debates.

Application of Alba and Nee's Theory of Assimilation to the Data Analysis
While much of this section is devoted to theorizing the interview data with Alba and Nee's reformulation of assimilation, let's first consider the application of Alba and Nee's theory to the analysis of the LSAF telephone survey. The most telling finding reported in the empirical analysis of chapter 5 is that Gordon's (1964) marital assimilation is an important predictor of support for the creation of a common culture. If we think back on the LSAF quantitative data after a consideration of the qualitative data analysis (analysis that revealed correlations between variables masked in the subtleties of racial discussions), the impact of marital assimilation becomes even more noteworthy. While the correlation of other indicators with multiculturalism eluded detection in the empirical analysis, attitudinal support for intermarriage did not. Unequivocally, as Gordon (1964) suggested and the quantitative analysis of chapter 5 indicates, increased attitudinal support of intergroup unions correlates with support for assimilation.

Alba and Nee assert that Gordon's multidimensional synthesis of assimilation theory – an essential contribution to the new assimilation canon – significantly advanced research in this literature by allowing for the development of quantitative indicators of assimilation (e.g., language assimilation, socioeconomic mobility, residential mobility, and intermarriage). In their evaluation of contemporary assimilation, Alba and Nee employ intermarriage as a measure of a group's incorporation into the mainstream and conclude that intermarriage promotes boundary blurring and the incremental transformation of minority outsiders into insiders. Therefore, congruent with Gordon's martial assimilation and Alba and Nee's rethinking of assimilation, the LSAF telephone survey data confirm that the increasing presence of intermarriage plays an instrumental role in assimilation processes and the expansion of the American mainstream. Whether intermarriage unions are an engine for social change or only an indicator of
incorporation, intermarriage is a significant part of an assimilation process whereby the ethnicity declines and the creation of a common culture prevails.

As far as the analysis of the interview data goes, an overwhelming affirmation of multiculturalism's doctrine of equal respect reverberated among a majority of the participants, across all social categories. Yet paradoxically, participants conspicuously refrained from rhetoric that might be construed as supportive of Americanization and Anglo-conformity. In sum, despite openness to the presence of cultural alternatives in the American mainstream, most participants generally were unwilling to discount some form of assimilation in their aspirations for the creation and maintenance an American culture. How do these findings conform to Alba and Nee's theory?

As discussed above, Alba and Nee contend that support for the maintenance of minority ethnic cultures in the American public has increased dramatically since middle decades of the 20th century. Moreover, they note that since the 1960s assimilation has lost pertinence for both the public and sociologist in the academy. "For many, it [assimilation] smacks of the era when functionalism reigned supreme" and minority groups could be rated according to a standard cultural profile (p. 1).

In accordance with Alba and Nee, fatal flaws in the old formulation of assimilation indeed caused its demise in the consciousness of the U.S. public. For the most part, only the LSAF White participants, and a minority of those, voiced an aspiration for the creation of a common culture that mimicked the old assimilation canon. As Alba and Nee assert, the "strong momentum" (p. 6) to reject assimilation can be found in the American public and its absence is conspicuous in the discussion of the interview participants.
Alternative models that describe contemporary social convergence in the U.S. flourish, including multiculturalism. The intense interest in multiculturalism's doctrine of equal recognition, mentioned in Alba and Nee, in fact permeates the discussions of the participants. However, in accordance with the Alba and Nee and according to the interview data, while the alternative models have an allure and their own spheres of validity, assimilation into the mainstream plays a major role in the public's conception of the proper method of social incorporation.

By and large, the aspirations of a significant number of participants in the LSAF study included preferences for the construction of a composite culture – a concept central to Alba and Nee's reformulation of assimilation. The interview participants believe that a composite culture can be constructed, and consequently, their preferences for both multiculturalism and assimilation do not seem to be mutually exclusive categories. Like Alba and Nee, they assume, historically, the American mainstream has evolved through the incremental inclusion of minority groups and the "accretion of parts of their cultures" (p. 12). Unlike Alba and Nee, the public's preference for building a composite culture – a concept labeled within Melting Pot Theory for the purposes of my analysis – in part emerges as a soft advocacy of assimilation, concocted in the mind of many in the public through the conflation of the academic conception of multiculturalism, melting pot theory, and assimilation.

Alba and Nee insist the melting pot is not an accurate metaphor because, in their formulation of cultural change, the mainstream expands to accommodate Americanized, less exotic cultural alternatives. Granted, according to the academy's interpretation of intergroup adaptations, the American melting pot did not happen. Diverse cultural practices, brought together within the American framework of nation building via immigration, did not meld
together into an entirely new, hybrid society. However, strict adherence to an academic
definition of melting pot ignores the power of this ideal in the mind of the American public.

The melting pot ideal has lingered in the American ethos since the inception of the
United States and continues to be one of the most popular explanations of the construction of the
American identity (Levine, 1996). More than one in ten interview participants referred to the
American melting pot without direct prompts, and many seem willing to accommodate racial and
ethnic difference and simultaneously advocate American universalism. Plausibly, the American
public has a tendency to conflate the melting pot concept with a non-coercive form of
incremental assimilation and an ethos built on *e pluribus unum* becomes a self-fulfilling
prophecy. Despite apparent contradiction, the participants’ construction of a compromise
position on racial and ethnic convergence corresponds to Alba and Nee's conceptualization of the
reciprocal processes required to remake the American mainstream.

Therefore, by allowing for the conflation of the meaning of concepts central to the
multiculturalism debate, like melting pot, we do not detract from Alba and Nee's theory, but in
fact, expand it. By acknowledging the public's redaction of assimilation, we acknowledge an
alternative model that "allows for the possibility that the nature of the mainstream into which
minority individuals and groups are assimilating is changed in the process; assimilation is eased
insofar as members of minority groups do not sense a rupture between participation in
mainstream institutions and familiar social and cultural practice" (p. 11). Ironically, advocating
the melting pot, or plausibly even a soft advocacy of cultural pluralism, might help blur racial
boundaries, incite assimilation, and expand the American mainstream.

Alba and Nee's theory also aligns with trends in the interview data associated with race
and ethnicity. A notable proportion of Asian and Hispanic participants express assimilationist
aspirations. While a similar number of participants in all racial and ethnic categories voiced their preferences in terms of Melting Pot themes, Asian and Hispanic participants eschewed Conventional Assimilation themes, and were more likely to advocate the expansion of a composite culture not antagonist to their opportunities to join the mainstream and embrace their ethnic heritage (Keep cultural heritage, but . . . Melting Pot theme). More than the other two groups, Hispanic and Asian participants adopt a perspective that allows for incremental cultural adaptations of the common culture. While the data limit operationalizing newer immigrant status, it is a plausible factor in the analysis.

Alba and Nee assert that movements promoting the guarantee of both cultural maintenance and civil rights might cause descendants of contemporary immigrants to resist the pressure to assimilation. However, Alba and Nee also say the racial social climate has not changed, nor has the attraction and motivation for contemporary immigrant streams to assimilate into the mainstream diminished. If Alba and Nee are right, these ethnic minorities appreciate the comfort and security of their own ethnic community and yet are moved by the prospects of inclusion into the American mainstream.

The Asian and Hispanic participants of this study often emphasized the importance of ethnic practices and ancestry in the development of their identity and expressed a reticence to let these traditions go. However, more than the Blacks and White participants, they were more likely to acquiesce to cultural fusion. Congruent with Alba and Nee's analysis and theory, therefore, they offered a compromise ideology of assimilation that signifies the potential for divergent adaptive outcomes and a perception that inclusion in the American mainstream is available to them.
In fact, Alba and Nee say that while some forms of assimilation appear to be widespread, prognosis for assimilation is contingent on micro and macro level mechanisms that promote entrance into the mainstream available to ethnic minorities (e.g. forms of capital, social and economic ethnic-based networks, and the degree to which certain minority groups are racialized). They argue that the importance of the process of assimilation for minorities is not inevitable and ethnic group members will acculturate at different rates, shedding some aspects of their culture while retaining others. Accordingly, many immigration streams from Mexico, Caribbean, and Central American face different socioeconomic conditions, making assimilation less relevant. If we accept Alba and Nee's analysis, then we gain insight into why over 60% of the Hispanic interview participants adopt the Celebrate diversity Multiculturalism theme (see Table 8). Historically, because assimilation into the mainstream of Hispanic immigrants and their descendants has proven to be difficult, it might appear less attractive. In sum, allowing for this study's compromise form of assimilation – the melting pot theory – the findings emanating from the interview data correspond to, and bolster Alba and Nee's assertions about the inclusion of newer immigrants and assimilation processes.

Besides ethnic status, another significant contingency in the prospects for the expansion the mainstream mentioned by Alba and Nee is the ability and willingness of established members in White majority to exclude or include newcomers. For them, forces that promote assimilation are embedded in the American social order. Their theory specifies that the key to assimilation is boundary altering, and that blending processes occur to the extent that competition for resources, based on ethnic and racial identity, attenuate and social distance narrows. Boundary spanning mechanisms are associated with a repertoire of mechanisms structured by institutions dominated by the majority. Therefore, according to Alba and Nee, equal-status contact, supported by
institutional mechanisms enforcing equal rights, is required to alter the racial and ethnic hierarchy.

For Alba and Nee, members of the majority must find the entry of the minority group into the mainstream acceptable in order for social distance to diminish. The dominant group's ideology of superiority over minority ethnic groups, therefore, becomes significance in the study the processes associated with assimilation. According to my analysis of the LSAF interviews, nearly one fourth of all White participants expressed a form of White false empathy (Delgado, 1996) – that is they paid lip service to multiculturalism in a manner that masked their preferences for assimilation and/or Anglo-conformity, a strong nationality identity, an aversion to affirmative action, and obvious distress over divisiveness caused by race and ethnicity (also defined in chapter 6). While most of these participants did not make overt statements representative of modern racism (e.g., out-group stereotyping, denial of racism, blaming the victim, force of facts support ethnic and racial stereotypes, or justification of racialized action as good for minority group members) (Bonilla-Silva and Forman, 2000; van Dijk, 1993), they could not hide their desire for American universalism.

This finding coincides with Alba and Nee's assertion that while Americans today are more tolerant of ethnic difference than they were in the past, they have not surrendered their expectations of assimilation. Symbolic White resistance to multiculturalism, such as that found in false empathy, must work to reinforce the maintenance of the racial and ethnic boundaries and slow boundary spanning mechanisms. In this way, White Americans can appear, and to some extent, be more tolerant and still maintain what Alba and Nee refer to as a laissez-faire attitude—"accepting cultural practices and beliefs that depart from mainstream norms so long as they do not infringe on the paramount status of the mainstream" (p. 143).
Alba and Nee remind us that coercive assimilation, which presses for "pressure-cooker acculturation," is not usually very effective because it stimulates active resistance within minority communities. I argue that the modicum of support for Americanization and Anglo-conformity, and alternatively, the significant presence of false empathy among many White participants of the LSAF interviews correspond to Alba and Nee's anti-"pressure-cooker acculturation," laissez-faire hypothesis. White false empathy, as a benevolent form of White resistance to alternative modes of incorporation, conforms to the notion that by upholding informal customs and blocking assimilationist mechanisms, the majority group understands it can subvert social spanning in a way that allows for incremental, yet non-threatening challenges to the transformation of the American mainstream.

Finally, what about the effect of the LSAF racial attitudes and Alba and Nee's remaking of the mainstream? Alba and Nee say that racism is a complicating factor in rethinking assimilation, but continues to play a powerful role in shaping the American society. According to their analysis, racial and ethnic groups will continue to exist and racial meanings will continue cause disparities in life chances. However, they also maintain that racial boundary blurring has occurred through intermarriage and social mixing. Accordingly, for Alba and Nee, assimilation has altered racial and ethnic meanings, and race appears to be losing some of its clear-cut, categorical characteristics.

While the changes Alba and Nee envision have affected the significance of the "most salient and hitherto indestructible racial divide" (p. 290) – the Black-White divide, they conclude strenuous efforts made by immigrants and their descendents to distinguish themselves from Blacks, along with the majority group's opposition to change, aid in the continuity and potency of the current racial stratification hierarchy. There will be a Black group "for the foreseeable
future, and membership in it will continue to be associated with disadvantages and
discrimination" (p. 291). Nevertheless, as in the past, Alba and Nee state that the more Blacks
appear in the mainstream and intermarry Whites, the more racial meanings will erode and social
distance narrow.

As Alba and Nee infer, America's intractable Black-White divide seems to structure the
aspirations of many of the LSAF participants. The Black and White participants of the LSAF
interviews expressed less support for multiculturalism and spoke more favorably of conventional
assimilation than the Hispanic and Asian participants. However, while the attitudes of Black and
White participants were significantly different than the ethnic minority participants, Black
participants were much more likely to articulate their aspirations for intergroup adaptation in a
manner that called for color- and ethnic-blind assimilation and social solidarity than all groups,
including Whites. Unlike the White participants, Blacks expressed a desire for assimilation that
did not include the adaptive pathway least available to them – Anglo-conformity.

While the Hispanic and Asian members also emphasized cultural fusion, unlike them,
Blacks were more likely to express their desire to for the creation of a composite culture in terms
of racial equity. It appears that the Blacks were not as convinced as others that a shift in cultural
values, like support for multiculturalism, might increased the probability of their increased
inclusion into the American mainstream. As Alba and Nee assert and the interview data suggest,
because the guarantee of inclusion has always been less predictable for Blacks, Blacks must
sense that "Celebrating Diversity" and a superficial support of equal respect cannot produce the
institutional and social transformation of the mainstream required to ensure their equal
participation. Therefore, the motivations of many of the Black participants are in tune with Alba
and Nee's assertion that institutional changes, like those brought on by civil rights legislation, are
more likely to contribute to incorporation of African Americans in the American mainstream than more informal, micro level processes.

Overall and in sum, Alba and Nee's a new approach to assimilation – one that identifies causal mechanisms that explain the simultaneous existence of preferences for both segregating and blending processes – can be found in the attitudes of the LSAF interview participants. According to the qualitative data analysis, even though assimilation now wallows in public disrepute, ideologies of cultural pluralism like multiculturalism continue to attract popular support. However, the notion of equal respect (inherent in the multiculturalism debate) intersects with American core value of egalitarianism and America's affinity for cultural fusion, to nurture attitudes favorable to the expansion of the American mainstream.

While racial and ethnic barriers to the mainstream have not disappeared, individuals apparently recognize and are granting more validity to the other side. Boundary blurring, institutional changes, and improved opportunities to contribute to civil society, enabled by the multiculturalism debates, increased the incentives and attempts by minority groups to assimilate into the mainstream. Correspondingly, favorable attitudes to these effects, while couched in different styles of rhetoric, emerged in a study of LSAF interview participants. If these homogenizing processes led to the expansion of the mainstream, plausibly future moments in the assimilation-pluralism dialectic will continue to fall into place, each impasse in the dynamics of intergroup relations will be addressed, and the social hierarchy slowly and surely transformed. Optimistically, the LSAF interview participants' approval of the construction of a composite culture represents an incremental stage in the process whereby social values are changed, and the American mainstream is expanded.
I end with a statement from Vivian, who when asked about her race, said she was of Irish, English, Scottish, Cherokee, and African decent. Her comment captures the central theme in the analysis and exemplifies how many in the public continue to struggle with the paradox of cultural pluralism and allure of a strong national community.

Vivian: I pretty much just let people be people. I love culture. I love different cultures, different societies. I love different ideas, different mindsets, different ways that people think, different beliefs. I love diversity. I love learning about people. And even if I disagree, I still love learning about it. And I love debating things. And I don’t debate for the purpose of changing your mind necessarily, but just because I love the interaction of, okay you have this idea and I have this idea. And they’re conflicting and we can talk this out, and try and find the holes in one another’s reasoning and still come out being friends. So for me, I see the beauty of separate cultures and societies being very distinct and being very different. But I also see the beauty of merging cultures. So, even in that regard I couldn’t say, oh I think it should be this way because I think that there’s a beauty in just letting people live their lives.
ENDNOTES

1. Some controversy surrounds the concepts scholars use to characterize processes associated with intergroup cultural adaptations. Early in the sociological literature Robert E. Park (1950) referred to this "cosmic process" as the "interpenetration of peoples" (p. 149). As a sociological paradigm, however, he (Park, 1930), Park and Earnest W. Burgess (1921/1969), and others (Gordon, 1964; Warner and Srole, 1945) came to situate these processes under the rubric of assimilation. More recently, assimilation has become a contested idea, condemned as "ethnocentric and patronizing" (Alba and Nee, 2003, p. 1). In his discussion of assimilation, hyphenation, and multiculturalism, Jeffrey C. Alexander (2001) makes a point of choosing "incorporation" (p. 242) as a more value-neutral term. I use social incorporation at times, but prefer intergroup cultural adaptation or racial/ethnic convergence. These terms are not value laden and allow for cultural and structural reciprocity without insinuating total gate keeping control by the dominant group. Moreover, while I understand that theories of intergroup adaptation focus on the experience of immigrants and their descendants, I do not delimit the conceptual label to *ethnic* relations. By employing the concept of "ethnic" in terms of intergroup convergence, the non-immigrant experience of most African-Americans tends to be de-emphasized, and the significance of race in a U.S. system of racial and ethnic stratification dominated by Black-White divide understated. Even though some sociologists remind us that race is only a special case of ethnicity (Alba and Nee, 2003; Blauner, 2001), I refer to patterns of interethnic relations as racial/ethnic or intergroup convergence most often to remind the reader of the importance of race in my analysis.
2. Alba and Nee (2003) establish conceptual definitions of ethnicity and race, which I adopt for the purposes of this paper and summarize below. In sum, the conception of ethnicity is rooted in Weber's emphasis on the subjective perception of ethnic ancestry and common roots. Therefore, in order to define ethnicity, all we need to do is recognize and isolate the existence of social group boundaries. Alba and Nee suggest this conceptualization improves on the textbook approach – treating ethnicity as a cultural concept and race as a physical one – because the distinction in this approach is not as clear-cut as it seems. Many ethnic and racial groups are distinguishable by both criteria. In fact, some scholars (cited in Alba and Nee) assert that race is only a special case of the more inclusion ethnic phenomenon. For this book then, race and ethnicity are treated as synonymous. Therefore, when I refer to ethnicity, the comments can be applied to race and vice versa, although many times I mention both in order to remind the reader of the ongoing significance of both terms. When I limit remarks to race, I narrow the scope of the discussion in order to refer to a particular group, identifiable primarily by a common physical feature.

3. A more complete discussion of the literature on the enduring presence of ethnic communities in the U.S. appears in the chapter 2.


5. Because of the low percentage of Asian-Americans in the U.S. the random technique was augmented with a listed sample of Asian-surnames. About half of the Asian sample came from each technique. The weighted sub-sample was compared with the random sample with all of the attitude variables in our survey. Of the more than 60 variables examined only one
measure, whether or not the respondent would like to meet new people, where the random sample significantly differed from our listed sample.

6. Winship and Radbill (1994) argue that weighted data create larger standard errors than unweighted data, resulting in regression models with a larger number of false negatives. Therefore all models were constructed with using unweighted data.

7. Those respondents who could not choose between the two statements were dropped from the analysis.

8. A racial or ethnic group other than the respondent’s was randomly chosen from a list of four – White, Black, Hispanic or Asian – to fill in the blank, allowing for a clear test of the respondent’s attitude towards racial exogamy. For example, a Latino respondent might be asked "I would be upset if I had a child who wanted to marry a Black." Alternatively, a Latino respondent might have been asked about his/her attitudes towards his/her child marrying a European or Asian-American, but a Latino-Americans was never asked about the possibility of their child marrying a Hispanic-American.

9. The Integrated neighborhood and Integrated school variables were based on two questions: "Not including your current neighborhood [school], have you ever lived in [attended a school] that was 20% or more non-[respondent’s race]."

10. A correlation matrix of the independent variables revealed little correlation between the variables in the models, suggesting the lack of multicolinearity. Other than the correlation between the propinquity variables (.412), all correlations remained below |.285| with the vast majority below |.2|. Each independent variable in Model 3 was regressed on all the other independent variables. All $R^2$s (ranging from .021 to .232) of these regressions exist well below the at risk level of .60 suggested by Allison (1999).
11. Since the name of racial group selected for use in this question was randomly selected (endnote 8), the LSAF team tested for the possibility that the different racial groups used in the question might be correlated with the dependent variable. The team created four dummy variables based on the four racial groups employed in the analysis. None of the dummy variables were significant and the LSAF researchers conclude that the rotation of the racial group used in this question had no effect on the final results of this paper.

12. In Model 1 the significance level of Dated Interracially equals .066.

13. The statements of the participants appearing in this paper are often abridged to remove extraneous words and expressions to improve the readability of the quotation. However, while not direct quotations, they are not deprived of their main contents nor are any words added or altered unless identified as such within the quotation. In addition, I randomly assigned pseudonyms to identify the statements of the LSAF interview participants. I did this to avoid the use of numbers or other indefinite forms of identification, and to personalize the quotations. The names convey the gender of the participant and nothing else.

14. I use the Melting Pot Theory label for this group for two reasons. First, because many of the interview participants mentioned the melting pot by name, I assume the ideology continues to be relevant for many in the U.S. public (over 11% of the interview sample actually used the concept melting pot in their answer). I contend that the popularity of melting pot ideal lingers in the American ethos, and thus, significantly affects the U.S. public's attitudes on the proper means of social convergence. While scholars like Glazer and Moynihan (1963) and Gordon (1964) cogently remind us that the melting pot never happened, the ideal obviously still attracts public sentiment and I use it in this study to capture aspirations reminiscent of this popular sentiment.
More specifically, I employ the Melting Pot Theory label because for many it symbolizes a benevolent form of assimilation – a homogenizing process that creates a new social environment without a clearly identifiable dominant ethnic culture (Marger, 2003). The discussion themes that I label Melting Pot Theory often involve this kind of elaboration – one that initially pays lip service to multiculturalism, but evolves into an ideology of convergence more like assimilation than multiculturalism. I assert, therefore, the aspirations of these participants are reflective of the idealized American melting pot, *e pluribus unum*, even though they are not necessarily suggesting the creation of a hybrid cultural or amalgamation.

15. Later in the analysis of this chapter I argue that the last two themes listed in the Multiculturalism group are different than the other two Multiculturalism themes. The White participants in the two bottom themes in the Multiculturalism group – Can't we all get along and A common culture is boring – speak to the issue that belies a perspective similar to false empathy. Delgado (1996) refers false empathy as an ethno-racialized perspective with which a White person claims to have an understanding of the plight minority group members, but in reality uses this perspective to conceal a superficial understanding and a shallow empathy. The White participants situated in these two themes, along with the other Can't we get along minority participants, unequivocally say they favor multiculturalism, but other parts of their interview discussions, leads me to believe their aspirations do not align with cultural pluralism. Therefore, they remain part of the multiculturalism group in the analysis because of their response to the multiculturalism question but, because of other considerations, I maintain their commitment to cultural pluralism is soft, and support for assimilation more likely. If I developed the assimilation-cultural pluralism continuum, I would reclassify the ideology of these participants into one of the other themes based on the entirety of their interview.
16. Later in the chapter I argue that the White participants in A common culture is boring and Can't we all get along were expressing false empathy, and if we accept this argument, then the claim that Black and White participants expressed less support for multiculturalism is further substantiated.

17. Because one of the major findings in the quantitative data analysis involved the relationship between intermarriage and the public's attitudes on assimilation, I examined marital status (intermarried and not intermarried) as a potentially important variable in the qualitative analysis. As it turns out, the preferences of those who are intermarried do not significantly differ from those who are not intermarried on this issue. Actually, this does not contradict what I discovered in the empirical analysis. I did not use an intermarried variable in the empirical analysis in terms of the respondent's marital status. I was more concerned with the effects of the presence of intermarriage on attitudes toward assimilation (Gordon's, 1964, marital assimilation), than attitudes associated with marital status. I do not have a marital assimilation variable in the qualitative analysis and consequently do not include a discussion of it in the qualitative data analysis.
APPENDIX

LSAF PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Pre-interview questionnaire:

1) How long have you been attending your current church?
2) Gender
3) Age (in increments of 5 starting at 15)
4) What is your occupation?
5) What is your race or ethnicity?
6) Marital Status
7) Race or ethnicity of spouse
8) Where did you grow up?
9) Are either of your parents immigrants?
10) Did you attend a public or private high school?
11) What percentage of the people in your high school were of your race?

Selected set of semi-structured interview questions:

Tell me about your background; where you grew up; your family and friends; your neighborhood and high school.

Is there anything that you think unites all Americans; divides all Americans?

Tell me about your circle of friends and social networks; what percentage are of your race?

Tell me about your church and church life; your participation in church activities; what you like or would change about your church; the purpose of the church; what Christians should or should not be doing; your social contacts at church and church related activities.

Do you think there is too much talk about racial issues in America today?

Some people say that we're better off if the races maintain their cultural uniqueness. Others say that we should create a common culture. Which do you prefer or do you prefer a combination of the two?

Do you have any children? What type of school did they attend; the racial make-up of the school? What sort of thing do/did you most want your children to learn from you?

If any, what kinds of political issues are important to you?

Have there ever been any years where your income has dramatically increased?

What would you like people to say about you at your funeral? How would you like to be remembered?
REFERENCES


