Locality and diversity
The city as arena of ethnic expression
and accommodation

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Most scholarly analyses of ethnic politics focus on the national level because the ethnie is juxtaposed to the nation. The national is said to overwhelm and supersede the ethnic; ethnic politics therefore struggles to contain and, if possible, to reverse this process. The modern nation is transethnic and the national government is supraethnic because, in its most advanced form, it has merged ethnic minorities into a larger community.

According to an American maxim, however, “all politics is local.” Life is lived in cities; they are places where the needs of subcommunities have to be addressed. Neighborly relations develop in the city in recognition of differences. Ethnic identity is expressed and mobilized on the local level. This is especially true of large cities; these are often marked by segregation along ethnic lines, and the cultures, languages, and religions of ethnic groups are best maintained there (Lieberson 1971). With its network of ethnic institutions and community services, the city fosters a local pride that goes beyond topophilia and distinguishes it from other places and from the national territory.

The city is the most feasible ethnic site because of its concentrated space: there are no “national” Chinatowns, barrios, Black ghettos, or Little Italies. Large cities have multilingual street signs and store marquees, a profusion of mosques, temples, ethnically specific churches, and networks of ethnic establishments (Heldman 2006). The typical metropolis is a collection of ethnopoles, where ethnic groups are most apt to thrive and resist the melting pot. It applies in particular to immigrants, whose ethnic identity is preserved by a relocalization of their homeland culture (Argun 2003: 20). This process involves what Appadurai (1996) has called the “transnational construction of imaginary landscapes” (ibid.: 31). Such construction needs opportunity structures – demographic density, a welcoming environment, and global communication facilities – which are usually found in large cities.

Nevertheless, the translation of Old-Country patterns is selective. It is easier to reconstitute an experienced and remembered Old-Country community than an imagined one. The place that is remembered most clearly is a homeland city with its particular features, including “iconic sites alongside more personal places of memory” (Blunt et al. 2012: 34). These features are more likely to be reproduced in a hostland urban setting than in a provincial space where pressures to conform to the majority are more intrusive. That explains the existence of Turkish Berlin, Jewish New York, and Greek Toronto (Centner 2010). The city is a testing ground of multiculturalism;
but some ethnic traditions, like honor killings or cliterectomies, cannot be easily maintained in the hostland, because they are impractical or forbidden.

Occasionally, however, minorities may behave in a more ethnic manner in a large hostland city than do their kin in the homeland. Turkish women in Berlin may wear the Islamic veil in public, which in Turkey was, until recently, banned. German culture was maintained more freely in New York than in Nazi Germany, and Iranian culture is pursued with fewer constraints in Los Angeles than in ayatollah-dominated Iran. Tibetan culture and religion are supported more openly in Dharamsala, India, than in Lhasa. At the same time, exile culture incorporates experiences of the hostland and represses the concerns of the homeland. For Armenians and Sikhs in Paris and London, the memory of oppression looms larger than for their kin in the homeland, who are preoccupied with national politics and quotidian problems (Safran 2007: 50).

The creation of ethnic cultural, social, and religious space is easier on a local level than a national one, especially in metropoles, which often escape direct control by national governments. Yet local ethnically specific patterns and policies may serve as prototypes and be adopted nationally. In the USA this has happened in teaching English as a second language and in the accommodation of ethnic and religious needs in schools and hospitals. Cities are training grounds of ethnic minorities for political leadership; for example, African Americans in Chicago, Latinos in Los Angeles, and Beurs1 in French cities often begin their political careers as community organizers.

The local and the global

Large cities engage in transnational interactions. They are the sites of consulates, which provide information about the homeland and facilitate cultural exchanges (Laguerre 2000: 20–4, 53). Hostland city governments use the ethnic community as “an anchor for globalizing processes” such as tourism and trade (Kwok 2008: 469f.). The homeland tries to preserve the ethnic identity of expatriate communities by sending imams and cultural agents. In large cities ethnic diasporas organize for lobbying and paradiplomacy, and hostland governments use them to influence homeland policies. Ethnic elites and entrepreneurs flourish in cities. The former have an ideological stake in defending the ethnic identity of their clientele; the latter instrumentalize it for their own political advancement.

The city is the port of entry of ethnic replenishments. Many immigrants remain there because it contains elements of a recreated homeland – a fact that underscores the city’s ethnopolitan character.2 The metropolis contains schools providing ethnic-language instruction3 and churches where sermons are given in the homeland language. But the German-language schools in Midwestern cities were not copies of the Swabian Bauernschulen4; and the language taught in schools in India is not always pure Tibetan.

Certain behavior patterns sometimes found among ethnic minorities in large cities that are associated with exclusion and poverty, such as drug dealing and prostitution, become stereotypes of the culture (Body-Gendrot 1993). It is also in large cities that endogamy is more common than in small provincial towns, which lack an adequate pool of ethnic cohorts.

The city constitutes an exception to the national space because it is more self-sufficient and sometimes more narcissistic, and therefore ethnic identity is more robust on the urban level than the national one. This is found above all in cities where special conditions prevail due to their history, location, or ethnolinguistic mixture. The reconstitution of an ethnic community in a hostland metropolis such as New York, London, Paris, and Toronto is not necessarily based on national homeland patterns; the identitarian point of reference may be a particular city. This applies especially to border cities such as Vilnius, Cernauti, and Brussels.4 They contain multiple
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Ethnic groups; they have come under periodically changing jurisdictions due to boundary changes; and they do not have stable national identities because they are located in weak states. For these reasons they have enjoyed relative autonomy vis-à-vis central governments.

Jews settling in North America have been nostalgic for Odessa but not Soviet Russia, and for Vilnius but not Poland (Lipphardt 2010). Immigrants from Hong Kong identify specifically with that city while remaining hostile toward Communist China. Cuban refugees in Miami have pined for Havana but not for Castro’s Cuba. In building their communities in hostland cities, immigrants from the Mezzogiorno did not attempt to recreate Italy but rather a more narrowly focused “agrotown,” in particular certain elements of it – the extended clan, the authority of the paterfamilias, and the church (Gabaccia 1984: 100). The culture of the Dominicans reconstituted in Manhattan is a mixture of Santo Domingo idiom, music, and religion, as well as American Latino culture (Hoffnung-Garskof 2008).

Collaboration, Competition, and Conflict

A relocated community cannot preserve its antecedent character in pure form. Collective identities are modified by local conditions and influences. It is not always clear how the position of one ethnic minority is affected by the presence of others, and how that presence affects their relationship with the urban population at large.

In the nineteenth century, Irish Catholics of New York were hostile to Jews, while Anglo-Saxon Protestants were hostile to both the Irish and the Jews, regarding them equally as foreigners. Subsequently, the Irish were considered more “American” than the Italians or the Jews. After a sustained migration of African Americans from the South to the North and the end of immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe, previously settled whites muted their antagonism to new white immigrants and shifted it toward Blacks (Wilson 1984: 95). In the second half of the twentieth century, Jews were no longer considered a minority. This development contributed to their assimilation and weakened their ethnic identity. A similar situation occurred in France. Before World War II, Jews were often regarded as an alien presence on the Parisian urban landscape. But after the massive influx of Muslims, Jews became more acceptable to the majority of French society, and their culture came to be seen as part of Judeo-Christian civilization (Club de l’Horloge 1985: 205). In Berlin, the image of immigrants from Eastern Europe improved with the arrival of “guest workers” (Gastarbeiter) from Turkey.

Ideally, the existence of several ethnic minority groups generates interethnic solidarity in the face of dominant, and often hostile, majority. In the 1940s and 1950s, Jewish and Catholic groups in large American cities collaborated with the Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in promoting civil rights for African Americans (Glazer 1983: 24f.). But interethnic collaboration collapsed due to disagreements over affirmative action and the administration of the school system. Because the urban power relations between Jews and African Americans were unequal, the African-American image of Jews became a negative one: they were the heartless shopkeepers and slumlords of Black neighborhoods of New York and Detroit. In Los Angeles, Korean shopkeepers projected a similar image.

Interethnic relations have national and transnational dimensions. African Americans and Jews in the USA, and Indians and Pakistanis in the UK, may support one another on local socioeconomic issues, but not necessarily on issues beyond the local setting. In New York, African Americans have not shared the Jews’ sympathy for Israel; conversely, Jews and other white ethnics have not shared the collective pride of Blacks in the rise of sovereign states in Africa. In Paris, Jews and Muslims collaborate in fighting racism and xenophobia; but that collaboration tends to break down over disagreements about the Middle East. In some cases, interethnic rivalries are
reenactments of homeland patterns. Polish–Jewish business relations in Chicago were recapitulations of relations in pre-war Poland (Gold 2012: 53); and relations between Turks and Kurds in Western cities echo those prevailing in Turkey.

Relations between ethnic groups may reflect self-perceptions regarding their relative positions within society at large. In the USA many white ethnics have entered the middle class, and their ethnic consciousness is no longer tied to poverty but to a misty cultural nostalgia. They are not particularly interested in improving the lot of Blacks and Latinos lest it destroy their own status advantage, bring Blacks into white neighborhoods, and lower the value of housing and the quality of the public schools. Such attitudes have led to the growth of private schools that are often ethnically specific.

The improvement of the status of an ethnic minority can serve to de-ethnicize it. Thus, urban political machines such as Tammany Hall in New York had a strong preference for the Irish in political appointments. That preference helped to integrate the Irish into the American system, but in the process Irish identity became attenuated and emptied of cultural content, so that most New York Irish relate to the American urban scene rather than to Ireland. There are still many Irish priests, but since most officiate at non-Irish churches they represent the Catholic priesthood rather than the Irish subculture.

Metropoles are particularly exposed to ethnocultural mixing, as in couscous-pommes frites in Paris, Creole cooking in New Orleans, and Chinese–Cuban cuisine in New York. Ethnic interchange is also attested by the African American clad in green who marches in the annual Saint Patrick’s Day parade in New York, and by the Cinco de Mayo parade in Los Angeles, which has been influenced by African-American cultural styles (Rogers 1995). Such interchanges give rise to these questions: Do they suggest genuine cultural sharing and interethnic comity, or do they dilute ethnic culture and reduce it to kitsch? If they are associated with ethnic rivalries, do they generate hostility toward multiculturalism? In many cases, laws affecting immigration, multiculturalism, and religious ritual have been responses to negative perceptions of ethnically mixed cities, such as “Londonistan,” “Judapest,” and “Havana in Florida.”

Identitarian Aggregations and reconfigurations

The differentiations within ethnic groups in their ancestral homeland are not necessarily replicated abroad, where they are often treated as single categoric groups for statistical or public-policy purposes. In the USA, one sees more references to Hispanics than to Puerto Ricans, to Chicanos than Cubans, and to Indians rather than Bengalis, Punjabis, or Sikhs. In London, Indians, Pakistanis, and Chinese are often collectively labeled as Asians.

Members of minority ethnic groups may reconfigure or relabel their identities in response to social pressure or influences by other minorities. This occurs often in large cities, where ethnic groups can live “under the radar” of census-takers. Black immigrants from the West Indies to New York undergo a process of “Haitization” – inter alia, by introducing Creole elements into their language – in order to fit in with a well-established Haitian community (Morin 1990). Moroccan Jews who immigrated to Montreal before the 1980s tended to reshape their Sephardic culture toward the Ashkenazic one because it was dominant (Elbaz 1990). In principle, there are no race distinctions in France; but Black neighborhoods in Paris have produced a Black identity called “Parisianism.” Based on feelings of exclusion and exile, it emphasizes racial bonds, negates attachment to France, and minimizes distinctions between Blacks from Africa and the Antilles (Jules-Rosette 2000). Most residents of the casbah in Marseilles are Francophone and secularized, but perceptions of socioeconomic disprivilege have re-Arabized and re-Islamized them. In the Parisian and other French conurbations, poor housing conditions of immigrants have
exacerbated feelings of relative deprivation and sharpened ethnic identity. In the USA, residents of impoverished and densely populated Black neighborhoods have developed a distinctive ghetto consciousness.

The constitutional–institutional context

The local viability, legitimacy, and articulation of ethnic identity depend heavily on the overall national political context, because that is where conditions of categoric belonging are determined, including the legal relationship of the ethnic community to the city, and of the city to the state. These relationships vary according to the division of jurisdictions between the central government and subnational units. Federal systems grant the greatest decision-making authority to regional and local authorities, and especially to large cities, which have greater resources than small towns and villages. In the USA, institutional pluralism, marked by territorial and functional distribution of power, is paralleled by cultural pluralism, a multidimensional approach to being American. This is reflected in a distinction between citizenship and nationality, and has accommodated itself easily to the retention of ethnic identities and institutions.

In the unitary system of France, subnational units have no a priori decision-making authority; its Jacobin ideology conceives of the republic as a nation-state relating directly to the amorphous citizen. France frowns upon ethnic cultural expression, which is regarded as reactionary or (in the case of non-territorial minorities) denounced as communautarisme, an orientation marked by the turning inward of an ethnie. The culture of indigenous minorities, expressed in regional costumes, Breton bagpipes, and Occitan harvest festivals, is viewed as harmless folklore. But regional languages cannot be used publicly in a country whose constitution stipulates that “the language of the republic is French.” France has refused to ratify the European charter on minority languages.

Jacobin ideology, however, is competing with “the right to be different” (Giordan 1982). This right is increasingly accepted; it is expressed in the teaching of regional languages that are considered part of the national patrimony and in the official support of cultural centers and programs of regional and non-territorial ethnic minorities (Safran 1989: 138–44, 2003: 443f.). The authorities in Paris and other large cities sponsor Armenian, Chinese, Jewish, Russian, and Vietnamese cultural festivals.

Several categoric groups that had not been recognized since the Revolution of 1789, but whose members were seen only as individual adherents of religious cults, are gradually being acknowledged as ethnic communities. Jews in France, who had been de-ethnified two centuries ago, have become re-ethnified; this development is manifested in networks of ethnic educational and philanthropic organizations, mostly concentrated in the Paris metropolitan area. Armenians, Greeks, Muslims, and Blacks have followed the Jewish model by forming umbrella organizations based on ethnicity.

The ethnic identity of Armenians in Paris is expressed in social and cultural clubs, mutual-aid societies, and churches; but since most of them do not speak Armenian and many no longer attend church, their ethnic identity is increasingly confined to keeping alive their national narrative, including the memory of genocide, and to economic support of the homeland. Transnational solidarity becomes particularly important during special events, such as an earthquake in the homeland (Hovanessian 1992: 95f).

These activities have been selectively supported by politicians, especially in cities with large ethnic minority populations. Politicians have appeared before Jewish and Maghrebi audiences in Paris, Marseilles, and Lyons, especially before elections. In 2012 French political leaders lent their
support to a mass demonstration by Armenians in favor of a government bill to criminalize the
denial of the genocide of Armenians committed by Turkey a century ago.

In Germany, the maintenance of ethnic identity has been difficult. Traditionally, membership
in the German nation was based on ancestry (*jus sanguinis*), and those who did not share it would
seldom become part of the German political community. Non-German residents were regarded
as “guest workers” – for the most part Turks – who would eventually be returned to their
countries of origin. This situation encouraged them to maintain their ethnic culture. But
immigrants can now become naturalized; as a result, Germany has become much more ethnically
mixed. While increasingly open to non-German cultural influences, some German authorities
have been wary of multiculturalism and insisted that its ethnic minorities adhere to the country’s
majority culture (*Leitkultur*). Although formally accepted as citizens, ethnic Turks are not quite
regarded as Germans; they continue to organize along ethnic lines, especially where their
numbers are large enough (Laguerre 2006). This condition usually obtains only in big cities. A
prime example is the Kreuzberg section of Berlin, which is often referred to as “Little Turkey.”

Other countries have more specific approaches to ethnicity, which often reflect the multiethnic
reality at the founding of their polities. Owing to the settlement of Canada by two major
ethnolinguistic groups, the concept of citizen coexists with a pluralistic approach to national
identity: a Canadian may belong to some minority community and also attend a municipally
supported ethnic school. This bicultural approach was extended to ethnics of more recent
immigrant origin, particularly in cities where they constitute a critical mass. A similar situation
obtains in Belgium, where the various constitutional and institutional changes keep pace with
the evolving position of two dominant ethnonational communities. It is manifested in a
parallel system of education, civil-service recruitment, and the media on both national and
municipal levels.

Although the United Kingdom is a unitary country, it is composed of several ethnoregions
that enjoy considerable autonomy. Furthermore, local governments are responsible for education
and social services; in Greater London, this has been reflected in an array of institutions run by
ethnic communities.

In several other countries, political authority has been delegated to subnational units, for the
most part urban, both to maintain closer ties between citizens and their representatives and to
relieve national governments of financial burdens. In countries whose citizens are divided along
linguistic lines, as in Belgium, Spain, and South Africa, subnational units are in charge of
education, and they pay particular attention to the cultural claims of ethnic minorities. There are
cities where special regimes exist for language use in public offices, social services, and education
due to the polyglot character of their inhabitants, such as bilingual Brussels and trilingual Vilnius.

The presence of concentrated ethnic communities is inevitably reflected in the political arena.
In London, New York, Paris, and Toronto these communities make up a significant electoral
element. They use their demographic weight to make demands through bloc voting; and
politicians instrumentalize this weight to further their own political ambitions by securing
financial support for schools, community centers, and other municipal projects, and distributing
public-service jobs on an ethnic basis.

It may be true that the lack of formal participation in urban politics sharpens the feeling of
ethnic exclusion. It is not certain, however, whether ethnically based recruitment institutionalizes
the participation of minorities and thereby strengthens their ethnic identity or weakens it by
cooptation. Urban ethnic patterns do not automatically translate into “mesogovernments”
(Moreno 2000: 69), but they contribute to functional autonomy in selective areas. In cities with
large ethnic concentrations, this autonomy has a political dimension, involving lobbying, rainbow
coalitions, and balanced tickets.\(^5\) Ethnic minorities are a most concrete political force on a
municipal level because it is only in cities where they are numerous enough to constitute a significant electorate (Laguerre 2006: 37). In Sydney and other Australian cities, political parties have formed “contribution networks” with Chinese communities, in which the latter become clients and their official participation legitimizes them as political actors (Kwok 2008). This is often accomplished by means of fundraising banquets.

Yet it is unclear what political consequences result from a concentration of ethnics in urban communities that are strong enough to elect ethnic representatives to national and regional legislatures. Minority candidates for public office have a vested interest in emphasizing their own ethnicity and in maintaining the ethnic identity of their electorate; but the success of that electorate helps to identify it with the political system as a whole and instill in its members the values of that system, and serves as an incentive to assimilation. As a result, the political position of ethnic politicians may be undermined. The very success of Irish politicians in New York – a success originally due to ethnic electoral solidarity – blunted Irish-American distinctiveness, in terms of culture, language, and sociopolitical aspirations, from the “generic” urban American so that, in the end, the Irish influence on urban political machines weakened.

One of the instruments of modernizing nation-builders has been the claim of superiority of the national over the ethnic culture, which has been regarded as parochial. This claim has been made with respect to the immigrants who came to North America from Southern Italy, many of whom were semi-illiterate members of extended peasant families, and whose first important opportunity to obtain education, and hence to gain upward mobility, was provided in the hostland city. Immigrants were also attracted by the political environment of the hostland, which compared favorably to the oppressions they had suffered in their countries of origin. Another magnet was the range of socioeconomic benefits provided by the hostland national government.

Public policy

The multiple offerings of national governments of the host society have been effective in “nationalizing” the orientation of minorities and persuading them to relinquish their ethnic identities. Under the New Deal legislation of the 1930s, the federal government of the USA assumed responsibility for numerous social and economic services that had once been provided by voluntary associations, including ethnic organizations, thereby powerfully stirring the melting pot.

Selected local policies sustain subcommunities and the ethnic consciousness on which they are based. In New York City, municipal governments have financed welfare programs that benefited the Puerto Rican community, and facilitated the maintenance of Latino culture by issuing public announcements in Spanish and encouraging public employees to learn that language (Glazer and Moynihan 1970: 101). This official benevolence reduced the pressure on ethnic community organizations; and it also benefited middle-class Latinos who could afford to maintain them. In France, social, cultural, and educational organizations of both immigrant and indigenous ethnics have been encouraged by national government subsidies (especially since 1981) as well as by municipal governments, which have made agreements with ethnic neighborhood associations (Safran 1989: 127, 142).

The retrenchments in the federal safety net and other redistributive measures that began in the USA several years ago have forced educational and welfare services to rely increasingly on local resources, which are often private. The services they offer tend to be more community oriented, i.e. more “ethnic.” A current example is provided by many cities in the USA, where, due to steadily declining budgets for education, public schools have begun to deteriorate. In consequence, the number of private schools, many run by ethnic and
religious minority communities, has mushroomed. This development has reinforced ethnic identity.

Yet it has not made the ethnicities more cooperative; rather, it has sharpened interethnic rivalries and hostilities. In Brooklyn, New York, in the 1980s, members of certain orthodox Jewish sects organized the Jewish Defense League in response to increasing violence on the part of members of the Black community and in the conviction that the municipal police was unable or unwilling to halt that violence. The riots of Latinos in a Washington, D.C. neighborhood in 1991 stemmed from their belief that they were victimized by other minority groups: Black police officers who harassed them and Asian merchants who overcharged them. Similar riots by African Americans in Los Angeles were aimed at Koreans.

The relationship between class and economic condition on the one hand, and ethnicity on the other, is a matter of controversy; meanwhile, the city is where particular occupations have been identified with particular ethnic groups: Irish policemen in New York and Boston; Jewish garment workers and Black porters in New York; and sanitation workers in the Paris metro system hailing from Central Africa. In many cases, the *locus operandi* of these occupations is viewed as the “turf” of the ethnic group in question.

Urban public policies may be more advanced than national ones. This applies in particular to New York, Boston, and other American cities where public policies have reflected the cultural influences and political pressures of ethnic minorities. But there has been an unanticipated consequence: the very existence of such policies has weakened the ethnic identity and cohesion of these minorities by reducing the relevance of ethnic social and charitable organizations on which such identity depends. To many Chinese, Greeks, and Jews such dependence justifies the retention of the institutions of the ethnic sub-community and the culture they express. For many Black leaders, however, such institutions are reactionary because they allow the government to shirk its responsibilities and help to maintain ethnic inequalities (Glazer 1983: 41–2; Patterson 1977).

**Conclusion: bones of contention**

This study suggests an ambiguous causal relationship. On the one hand, large cities *weaken* ethnic ties because they provide networks of social services that are available to all residents – *so long as these services last*; on the other hand, large cities *strengthen* ethnic ties because of (a) the existence of ethnic enclaves and organizations that maintain ethnic culture and attract newcomers; (b) the adequate size and density of the ethnic population; (c) the depersonalized nature of urban relationships, which impels minorities to seek *Gemeinschaft*-based relations. This applies especially to ethnic groups that come from rural backgrounds, such as Vietnamese and Hmong; or that are subject to discrimination, such as Blacks and Latinos in the USA, Beurs in France, and Turks in Germany. Black and Latino leaders defend the existence of ethnic institutions on local levels – but not necessarily for the sake of maintaining ethnic culture as an end in itself. In the 1820s, Blacks in Cincinnati, Ohio, were forced to create their own protective organization because the municipal police refused to protect them adequately (Wade 1990). In this case ethnic identity maintenance was a by-product of communal self-help efforts.

The mere existence of a network of organizations in a city densely inhabited by ethnic minorities does not mean that members of these minorities will join in large numbers. Many upwardly mobile African Americans focus on their personal ambitions and are uninvolved in specifically Black concerns, although their racial identity is a permanent reality. The proportion of Jews joining synagogues is much greater in small towns or suburbs than in urban areas. In New York City, it is not necessary for a Jew to join a synagogue in order to feel Jewish. The large
number of Jews in that city makes it possible for Jews to be “free riders” – to remain Jewish by osmosis, as it were – because Jewishness is present in sufficient measure to nourish Jewish identity for individuals.

A note of caution: demographic density is necessary but not sufficient for the retention of diaspora identity; the fact that Chicago has more stores in which kielbasa is sold than in other American cities is not an indicator of Polish cultural reproduction. This is even truer of expressive ethnicity, such as Columbus Day parades and celebrations of Cinco de Mayo, which are exercises in demonstrative or “performance” ethnicity. These require a participating audience that only cities can provide.

A recent example of demonstrative ethnicity was a two-day celebration of the investiture of the regional chief of the Ashanti tribe of Ghana for the New York metropolitan area. The event, held in the Bronx, brought together scores of participants representing more than 20,000 members of the Ghanaian diaspora. The responsibilities of the chief include mediation in family disputes and efforts at finding jobs, housing, and medical care for members of the community as well as maintaining links with the homeland. His appeal, however, has been limited, especially among younger members of the Ghanaian diaspora, many of whom are American born (Semple 2012).

The maintenance of community networks may be impeded by family structure and other factors. Mexican Americans, for example, have smaller social networks and less contact with network members than non-Hispanic whites; they are more likely to have relatives, but not friends (Golding and Baezconde-Garbanati 1990).

The metropolis is the arena in which all sorts of ethnic identities, attitudes, and behavior can be found in addition to the “natural” ethnicity of the homeland, where it developed in a majoritarian context subject to little outside influence. Among these are the following:

(1) Adaptive ethnicity – ethnic culture heavily modified by conditions of the host environment. This applies to the religious culture of Greeks, Armenians, and Indians in the USA, Britain, and France. The culture of the Polish shtetl survived for many years in the form of Yiddish-language schools and theater in New York and other large American cities; but it was a deracinated culture expressed in an Americanized Yiddish. Similarly, Chinese customs are kept, but in English.

(2) Vestigial ethnicity – an indistinct ethnic identity marked by nostalgia, a receding collective memory, and a legacy largely confined to ethnic foods and family customs, as in the case of Italian-American or Irish-American culture. The Irish (Gaelic) language was not imported into New York City because it had ceased long ago to be a crucial element of Irish identity. In the nineteenth century, Irish Americans, like their ethnic kin in Dublin, had been intensely concerned with the Irish fight against the British; but the Irish-American distinction was progressively detached from concern with the ancestral homeland; what remained were residual cultural patterns that fitted easily into New York, such as wakes, church-sponsored social events, and a more or less distinct pronunciation (Glazer and Moynihan 1970: 245).

(3) Vicarious ethnicity – an ethnic identification displayed in support of ethnic institutions by those who do not use them. This applies to urbanized Native Americans who have adopted Anglo lifestyles. They prefer to live in the city, but they have a highly developed ethnocultural cognition: they care about preserving native arts and crafts and tribal traditions, and they keep their ethnic consciousness alive by making frequent trips to their reservations and participating in powwows (Deloria 1981). It also applies to secular Jews who support orthodox religious seminaries because they are regarded as most effective in helping to preserve
To be sure, minority cultures adapt to the surrounding community. However, living together in a locality even for generations has not always been sufficient to foster a cultural identity in common with the majority. The identity of ethnic minorities tends to persist in part because the majority is less modern than they are (as, in the past, in the case of the Greek minority in the Ottoman Empire, the Jewish minority in Poland, and the Chinese minority throughout Southeast Asia); because, conversely, the majority is too modern and its values are so different from those of the ethnic minority that the two cannot be easily reconciled; or because the minority culture is reinforced by external linkages. During the period between the two world wars, Lithuanians, Poles, and Jews shared municipal space and services in Vilnius; yet these communities remained distinct because they had different external points of reference: the Lithuanians had the newly independent republic next door; the Poles had the reborn Polish state to which they were annexed and which shared a Polish cultural tradition identified with that city for several centuries; and the Jews had a sizable transnational Yiddish-speaking region. During the same period, Christian residents of Warsaw defined their identity in terms of Catholic saints and a collective memory of Polish national independence, while to most of that city’s Jewish proletariat “the Vistula spoke in Yiddish,” as the writer I.B. Singer put it. Living together has not led to a common political identity for the Protestants and Catholics in Belfast; they share a language, yet each community has a separate identity; there are separate residential neighborhoods, social and political organizations, schools, and churches, and there is little intermarriage (Schmitt 1988: 34f.).

New York has been the place where Jews from selected cities of the Russian Empire could “rebuild the homeland in the Promised Land” – by means of community centers, synagogues, benevolent associations, and burial societies (Kobrin 2010: 69f.). One example is the Bukharan Jewish diaspora in the USA, almost all of whose members live in Queens, New York. They rebuilt a semblance of their former community, once centered in Uzbekistan, by establishing Bukharan synagogues, cultural centers, and specialized shops and performing traditional rites of passage. Such a phenomenon may apply to entire towns. The residents of Kiryas Joel and New Square, “ethnoburbs” outside New York City, identify more with defunct Jewish communities in Hungary and Ukraine than with the USA (Logan et al. 2002).

These examples suggest a successful ethnic identity maintenance through mimetic reproductions of Old-Country patterns in hostland metropoles. But the realism and durability of these reproductions vary: some fit into the context of the dominant culture, while others are untenable in the long run. In New York, the ethnic identity of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe was expressed importantly in terms of socialism (which clashed with American ideology) but survived in the form of trade unionism (which gradually lost its ethnic flavor) and secular Yiddish culture (whose societal basis had been destroyed). As indicated earlier, the rural foundation of the Italian immigrant community could not be replicated in the American metropole, and its extended family structure could not easily maintain itself in the face of the Gesellschaft-oriented pressures of the hostland society. The ethnic identity of the Italian immigrant community, which lacked a cultural elite, expressed itself largely in Catholic religious terms. But since Catholicism in the typical American city has been tranethnic, the Italian specificity has been progressively diluted.6

It is an open question how the identity of ethnic communities will maintain itself faced with the abandonment of urban neighborhoods for the suburbs, a development that already covers a
quarter of ethnic minorities (Scheffer 2011). The ethnic identity of members of this category, most of whom have entered the middle class, will be attenuated. The ethnic identity of those left behind—the “core” ethnics—may remain strong, but, since they are likely to be poorer than the ethnic kin who abandoned them, their financial and organizational means of community cohesion will have been curtailed.

Notes
1 French-born descendants of Arab immigrants from North Africa.
2 Ethnic minorities living in villages seldom have the facilities for such re-creation; their social relations are mostly with their neighbors, and, since these are often warmer compared with the functional relations in large cities, ethnic community support is needed less and ethnic identity weakens.
3 In the thirteenth arrondissement of Paris, most public collèges provide bilingual classes in Chinese, English, German, and/or Spanish; several arrondissements stage ethnic folk festivals annually.
4 Brussels is not a border city in the “national” sense, but it straddles a linguistic border.
5 In New York City, a typical distribution of candidacies for political office has included an Irish person, an Italian, a Jew and, more recently, a Latino and an African American.
6 One Italian feature that was successfully transplanted to American metropoles is the mafia, but it is no longer purely Italian.

References
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