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Chapter 8

BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE: THE "PRESENT" POLITICS OF U.S. IMMIGRATION

Kevin Keogan

During the 1994 gubernatorial campaign in California, candidate Kathleen Brown journeyed to the US-Mexico border in order to articulate her position on an increasingly salient political issue. A media-opportunistic trip to this geographic site seemed mandatory, as all major candidates for statewide office journeyed there to speak about the "problem" of illegal immigration (*Los Angeles Times*, September 16, 1994). With the border as backdrop, Brown attempted to take an unusually moderate position on the issue, while portraying her main opponent as a hypocrite. Brown brought to light videotape of the incumbent, Pete Wilson, denouncing sanctions against employers of illegal immigrants during the early 1980s. The Wilson campaign replied: "While Kathleen Brown is screening videotape from 12 years ago, illegal immigrants are costing the taxpayers of California billions of dollars this year" (*Los Angeles Times*, October 26, 1994). While Brown attempted to focus attention on past political activities, Wilson's campaign focused on the present and future threat and burden that immigrants signified for many among Southern California's electorate. Although Brown was predicted to win the political contest just a few months before the election, Wilson managed to use the issue of illegal immigration to stage a surprising come-from-behind victory.

Emboldened by his success in California, Wilson campaigned for the Republican presidential nomination, again using illegal immigration as a centerpiece of his political platform. He encountered strong resistance, however, in the New York City context. For instance, a *New York Times* editorial (August 29, 1995) accused Wilson of "real brazenness" when he attempted to "exploit" The Statue of Liberty by using the symbol in his campaign against illegal immigrants: "The Statue of Liberty belongs to the nation, not just New York City, of course. But New Yorkers take particular pride that it is their city that served as the entry point for the great waves of immigration that, in their day, were as reviled as the new immigrants of today."

The editorial adds that Wilson should have a "decent respect for history and local sensitivities."

We start with these news stories because they are indicative of how immigrants are framed through the time and space of different places. Political contests involve the mobilization of collective resources and public sentiment for or against an issue. But issues must be understood within the particular social context that frames them. Not *all* politics are local, but immigrant politics have always had an important local dimension due to the demographic concentration of the foreign-born in key urban areas. While material relations are crucial for understanding local politics, social theory and research has increasingly emphasized the role cultural factors play in the political process. A key insight from this literature is that established cultural constructs such as narratives and identities can significantly influence political debates. Furthermore, popular images of time (e.g., history) and space (e.g., landscape) provide symbolic resources that may be mobilized for or against a political cause.

Any political moment is understood in relation to the past and/or future, and temporal orientations are often guided through prominent elements of the social landscape. Political campaigns often use landmarks as staging ground because they can help convey messages through symbolic associations. Following from this, it is not surprising that the US-Mexico border was an unfavorable site for Kathleen Brown's moderate, past perspective on the issue of immigration. The border is a highly marked social space that lacks a popular history, and its associations with immigration are negatively charged. Conversely, there are positive historical associations between The Statue of Liberty and immigration. Moreover, the current symbolic connection between the Statue of Liberty and immigration are facilitated by its links with Ellis Island—the national shrine for commemoration of the "Nation of Immigrants" origin myth. These landmarks glorify the historic place immigrants hold in the narrative identity of many Americans.

The term "present" has both temporal and spatial connotations; it refers to both a "here" and a "now." As Olick and Levy (1997) have argued, collective memory is an important element of political culture that involves "an ongoing process of negotiation through time." But time is often understood in relation to space, and vice versa. There is a growing literature in the social sciences that demonstrates the close relationship between these two fundamental dimensions of human existence. As Friedland and Boden (1994: 3) have noted, time and space are so closely connected "it is theoretically problematic to think of them separately." While some stress the global aspects of the time-space nexus (e.g., Giddens, 1991), there is an important local dimension to our cultural experience with time and space (Friedland and Boden, 1994; Gieryn, 2000).

This chapter will compare and contrast symbolic representations of immigrants in California and New York, with special emphasis on the southern sections of both states, where immigrants have become concentrated. Specifically, New York City and Los Angeles will be focused upon due to their current position as the two most

important urban magnets for immigrants. Although the United States is often referred to as a "Nation of Immigrants" (Kennedy, 1964), this origin-myth is not firmly rooted throughout the country. While this view of the past is well developed in the civic identity and cultural landscape of New York City, Southern California is lacking a popular history of immigration. These very different historical narratives of immigration are part of much larger differences in the physical and cultural development of these metropolitan areas.

In order for a historical narrative to become a source of collective identity, it must be stored somewhere. Aside from the obvious location in texts, studies have shown the important role that landscape plays in historical preservation and collective memory (Gieryn, 2000; Hayden, 1995; Page, 1999). Furthermore, urban studies have increasingly analyzed the "city as text," reading the landscape for clues regarding both material relations and their ideological expression (King, 1996; Zukin, 1991; 1995).

Collective memory emerges out of geographically bounded political contexts that are shaped by ongoing struggles over material resources and collective identity. Moreover, an established collective memory can shape current struggles because "memory is an orienting symbol—a map that gets us through [present] predicaments by relating where we are and where we've been . . . we cannot be oriented by a past in which we fail to see ourselves" (Schwartz, 1996: 909-10). Although a single, highly symbolic site can invoke collective memory, "networks of such places begin to reconnect social memory on an urban scale" (Hayden, 1995: 78). Likewise, collective images of the future shape the political "present". Politicians frequently invoke future imaginaries (either to be avoided or strived for) in their attempts at influencing a targeted audience. The collectively imagined past and future can be thought of as temporal bookends that frame the political present. A comparative analysis of each area's cultural time-space vis-à-vis immigrants will provide important clues regarding these crucial urban political contexts.

IMIGRATION, HISTORY, AND THE POLITICS OF THE PAST

Immigration to the United States has a long tradition of concentration within time and space, and this pattern continues into the present. In other words, levels of immigration are higher during some time periods, and specific national-origin groups tend to concentrate in specific places, and not others. As in the past, immigrant flows are still characterized by certain cities being impacted by very large foreign-born populations (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Rumbaut, 1998). Cities with a disproportional amount of immigrants have been characterized by an intergenerational process of mutual adaptation between the foreign-born, their offspring, and the more established residents of the area. However, the historical experience has varied considerably from region to region within the United States, with individual

states and cities within these regions likewise developing differently in relation to their immigrant populations.

During the 20th century, both the New York metropolitan area and Southern California underwent huge growth spurts. Most of New York's population increase during this century was the result of immigration direct from Europe. Therefore, New York has a long record of dealing with a large immigrant population, and its history is marked by this fact. In the greater Los Angeles area, immigrants were never nearly as large a percentage of the population as they are today. Moreover, the European-origin population that made-up the bulk of Southern California's population growth prior to the last few decades has not strongly identified with its immigrant-ethnic origins (Keogan, 2002; Waldinger and Lichter, 1996).

These local demographic trends have occurred in conjunction with important social trends at the national level. In particular, since the 1960s, there has been an intellectual shift from "elite" histories toward a history with a more inclusive emphasis on previously neglected categories such as the working class, various racial-ethnic minorities, and women (Bonnell and Hunt, 1999; Hunt, 1989). At about this same time, the social history of American immigration started to grow leaps and bounds (Gjerde, 1999; Gleason, 1998). Although elite histories persisted, the new intellectual climate forced historians and social scientists to look at both the winners and losers through time in a new light.

Unlike much of the "new" social history that represented negative tendencies in American society, the relatively rapid upward mobility for various national-origin groups from Europe provided a much needed success story for those who wished to romanticize US history as exceptional. Thus, the "Nation of Immigrants" origin myth became a popular narrative for historical writing. Moreover, this sort of narrative fit well within the meritocratic ideology of American capitalism (Honig, 2001). The "rags-to-riches" myth of upward mobility was both promoted and eagerly adopted by a plurality of European-origin ethnics, providing a common narrative-identity for those moving into the ranks of the middle class and beyond.

As previously excluded groups made their way into academia and the ranks of the upper strata of society, they reinterpreted the past, present, and future to be more in tune with their own narrative-identities. But, at least since the 1960s, the identity politics of the past has not been reserved exclusively for those that have attained economic privilege. Non-European ethnic and racial groups have also been actively promoting a history more in tune with their own collective experiences. As Lowenthal (1996) has argued, by the 1980s the search for collective roots brought about a major increase in interest toward issues of heritage for *all* segments of American society. This plethora of heritage claims was not, however, always convergent, often times creating competitive political debates over the "correct" way of interpreting the past (see also Gathercole and Lowenthal, 1990).

The New York metropolitan area and Southern California were both major sites of ethnic identity-politics during the later half of the 20th century—but with impor-

tant differences. The European-origin population around New York City has celebrated its ethnic heritage, while European ethnicity in the Los Angeles area—with the possible exception of the Jews—seems to have "melted under the California sun" (Waldinger and Bozorgmehr, 1996: 18). Therefore, while New York's European-origin population has long been characterized as having resilient ethnic identities (e.g., Glazer and Moynihan's 1963 "Beyond the Melting Pot"), it has recently been questioned if Los Angeles' Anglo population is "Beyond Ethnicity?" (Waldinger and Lichter, 1996). In contrast to the "Nation of Immigrants" origin myth, "minority" groups' heritage claims tend to rebuke elite narratives of US history and the meritocratic ideology of American capitalism. As a result, some ethnic and racial histories have come to challenge the status quo while promoting alternative visions of the past and future. We want to explore how the various heritage claims have shaped collective images of immigrants in each of these geographic areas.

THE IMMIGRANT PAST

We are interested here in two primary avenues toward the past: 1) historical representations of immigrants through scholarly texts, and 2) spatial representations of immigrant-ethnic groups through the urban landscape. To what extent do immigrants play a positive role in the social history of each city? In order for a category of people to be recognized as significant historical agents there must be an established social history that narrates that group as integral to the city's development. We will start the analysis by comparing each urban area's textual representations of its past, with specific attention to immigrants' place within that history. We then move on to spatial representations of the immigrant-ethnic past within each area's urban landscape.

Textual Representations

New York City has come to embrace certain aspects of its social history, and immigrants figure prominently in its popularly depicted past. According to The Library of Congress catalog (www.loc.gov: January, 2000), historical titles about New York City have steadily increased since a lull during the 1940s, leveling-off at almost forty titles per decade during the 1980s—1990s. More importantly, the history of New York City is marked by a recurrent theme of immigrant-ethnic success. This narrative is evidenced in recent general histories of the city (Burrows and Wallace, 1999; Lankevich, 1998) as well as more specific immigrant and ethnic histories (Bayor and Meagher, 1996; Diner, 2000; Foner, 2000; Maffi, 1995; Pencak, Berrol, and Miller, 1991).

As Bean and Bell-Rose (1999: 3) have noted, the mythic quality of the "Nation of Immigrants" narrative has promoted a view that American history is reducible to the history of immigration. Of course, many Americans do not identify with this

rather naive view of the past. There are many other ways to narrate the successes of immigrant-ethnics (e.g., that their success was at the expense of other groups such as Native- and African-Americans). But New York City's civic culture typifies a positive identification with its immigrant past more than any other American city. For example in their introduction to their edited volume, *Immigration to New York*, Pencak, Berrol, and Miller (1991: xiii) characterized 1986 as a year-long celebration of New York City's immigrant heritage: "More than any great city in modern times, if not world history, New York over the past century and a half has been populated, shaped, and built by successive waves of immigrants." This assessment was recently echoed by Foner (2000: 1), who introduces her comparison of past and present immigrants in New York with the following statement: "In the history, the very personality, of New York City, few events loom larger than the wave of immigration that peaked in the first decade of the twentieth century." This sort of congratulatory look at the immigrant past has encouraged a depiction of New York as an "immigrant city" or "city of immigrants" (Binder and Reimers, 1996; Youssef, 1992: 28).

It is important to note that the term "immigrant" is not usually qualified with "European," "White," or some other adjective that would mark recent immigrants as somehow different from the previous waves. Rather than a label for foreigners, in the New York City context the term "immigrant" refers to a historically generated identity that is firmly rooted in collective memory. What made this narrative so popular was a recurrent cycle of immigrant-ethnic success stories that were embodied in the German, Irish, Jewish, Italian and other European immigrants that settled in the New York metropolitan area. Their historical struggles involved group competition over both material resources and cultural representation. Typically, these groups have narrated their past as one of adversity, struggle, and eventual success (e.g., Bayor and Meagher, 1996; Federal Writers Project, [1938]1969; Maffi, 1995; Soyer, 1997). The fusion of this plurality of success stories over time has resulted in a common celebration of the immigrant experience.

New York City has become increasingly preoccupied with its past. As Burrows and Wallace (1999: xvi) note in the introduction to their mammoth, Pulitzer prize-winning *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*, "This book is only possible because in recent decades a host of scholars has investigated afresh every imaginable aspect of New York's history." As might be expected, immigrants are prominently displayed throughout the work, with one chapter "City of Immigrants" dedicated primarily to the historical ramifications of the first great wave of predominantly German and Irish immigrants. Another chapter entitled "The New Immigrants" documents the arrival and adaptation of the Italians, Jews, and Chinese. They open their look at the Irish and German influx by portraying these immigrants as victims of economic stagnation and political repression (735). They state that the city had never before confronted such an "inundation" of immigrants. Although these immigrants were seen as creating great challenges for the city, their

presence is generally seen as dynamic and vibrant: "The new arrivals would transform every aspect of life in the metropolis . . ." (739). While it is noted that this transformation was "often at the expense of African Americans" (743), the narrative nonetheless celebrates the contributions these newcomers made to the development of the city. They note that although there were some affluent immigrants to the city, and many arrived with a trade or skill (especially the Germans), "the great majority wound up in the manual labor force. Indeed, they *became* the manual labor force" (739). Specifically, Irish labor is credited with providing "the raw manpower needed" to complete the aqueducts, bridges, railroads, etc. of the expanding city (743).

The narrative of major transformation is again taken up with reference to the "new influx" of immigrants coming through Ellis Island around the turn of the twentieth century. With this wave, the re-current nature of the narrative is established. These "new" immigrants (mostly Italians and Jews) are uprooted from their homelands due to economic misery and political persecution, arriving in New York and thereby helping to make the city what it is today. The narrative leaves little doubt that New York needed the immigrants in order to attain its current status as a global metropolis. Immigrants are seen as the necessary labor power and market for the expanding manufacturing and industrial sectors — as the necessary "fuel" for New York's progressive development.

Lankevich (1998: ix) introduces his history of New York City as "yet another volume about New York [the city] that rose from a trading post to become a national capital and then a world metropolis." Immigrants—as a broad social category—are clearly depicted in a heroic role through this narrative: "Ever renewed by influxes of population, New York is continually transformed" (p. x). In the chapter entitled "Building a Modern City" Manhattan's growth is largely attributed to European immigration. Lankevich sums-up the effects of immigration on the city: "Despite the many problems created by the inrush of newcomers, a richer, more productive, and culturally diverse city had been created" (70). Again, the immigrants are seen as "economic or political refugees" and the narrative focuses on the hardships they endured upon arrival in the city. In particular, the tenements are focused on as sites of "an endless struggle merely to survive" (70, 128). Despite all the adversity, the immigrants overcame these hardships and became a symbol of "the spirit of New York" (253-54).

In contrast to New York City, many scholars depict Los Angeles as a city with a relatively undeveloped sense of its past (e.g., Davis, 1990; Davis, 1998; Dear, 1996; Dear, 2000; Hayden, 1995; Klein, 1997; Reid, 1992; Starr, 1990: 231; Zukin 1991). For example, Davis (1990: 36) argues, "fewer serious monographs, let alone synoptic studies, were annually produced about the region than any other metropolitan area. Virtually alone among big American cities, Los Angeles still lacks a scholarly municipal history." Likewise, Dear (1996: 76) claims that Los Angeles "is a city without a past. It has constantly erased the physical traces of previous urbanisms

and failed to produce a flow of historical studies that match and typify other national metropolises (e.g., Chicago and New York City). New York and other "older" (or "modern") cities are seen as a different type of urbanism, more focused on their past than Los Angeles, the postmodern city of the future (Dear, 2000; Soja, 1996).

Of course, this sort of comparative depiction of Los Angeles is not new. Over a half century ago Nadeau (1948: vii) noted the popular perception of Los Angeles as a city without a past, and dedicated her book *City Makers: The Men Who Transformed Los Angeles from Village to Metropolis During the First Great Boom, 1868-76* to dispelling such conceptions. Nadeau's work is an early example of a more general tendency to privilege a history of male, Anglo elites and their use of technology to materialize their image of the good life in sunny Southern California (Davis, 1990; Hayden, 1995: Ch. 4.; for recent examples of this type of historical narrative see Starr, 1990; Mulholland, 2000). However, socially inclusive and critical histories (e.g., McWilliams, 1946; Fogelson, 1967) have been few and far between, with the contemporary period particularly lacking.

The Library of Congress (www.loc.gov: January, 2000) catalogs a total of 94 titles under the subject heading of "Los Angeles (Calif.) History" as compared to 207 titles for "New York (N.Y.) History." In fact, since a peak of 22 historical titles on LA during the 1960s—much of which was a reaction to the 1965 Watts Riot, with a customary look at the history of Blacks in LA—there has been a general decline in the quantity of book length histories. Furthermore, since the early 1980s there has been little scholarly effort toward a general, social history of Los Angeles. Therefore, recent histories of LA have consisted primarily of rather narrow historical subjects or extremely limited overviews presented in books that are concerned more with the city's current and future condition than its past.

Much of the writing on Los Angeles can be placed into two main categories: boosters and debunkers (Davis, 1990). Davis's highly influential and insightful work can itself be seen as a recent attempt at debunking booster-ish accounts that fail to re-present Los Angeles' past and present in a critical manner, warts and all. Starr's (1990) *Material Dreams*, what appeared to be the first book to attempt a general history of Southern California in nearly twenty years, is criticized by Davis (1990: 83) as having a total lack of social consciousness: "[there is] no hint of class or racial violence, nor, for that matter, of any historical causality other than seminal individuals attempting to materialize their dreams." Although Davis's own work is thoroughly historical, it is too busy debunking other accounts of LA to provide anything that could be considered a comprehensive social history of the region. Davis (1990: 86) goes on to critique the so-called "LA School" (e.g., Scott and Soja, 1996; Dear, 2000) for its lack of historical vision: "by hyping Los Angeles as the paradigm of the future (even in a dystopian vein) they tend to collapse history into teleology and glamorize the very reality they would deconstruct."

Postmodernists like Dear claim that "it is no longer possible to identify *the* people of Los Angeles . . . There is no longer a single civic will nor a clear collective intentionality behind LA's urbanism" (2000: 111). LA is seen as a "polycentric, polarized, polyglot metropolis" without a social contract that is unable to "influence the city's burgeoning social heterodoxy" (*Ibid.*). Social heterodoxy can also be evidenced in historical accounts of LA. It seems that a common, popular history of LA is not in the making. While Starr recognizes that "the masses" influence history, he is more concerned with "the parallel truth that individuals also make history" (1990: ix). Therefore, it is not surprising that he dwells on the virtues and accomplishments of LA's "great individuals" (mainly WASP men). Starr does dedicate one chapter to "The People of the City" (120-150), but again focuses mainly on Protestant LA, dedicating roughly six pages (144-150) to the history of LA's Jewish, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, and Black communities.

This is *not* to say that LA has no social history. What LA does lack is a popular history that appeals to a plurality of the city's various social groups. What historical scholarship on LA tends to produce are, at best, parallel histories of the city. On the one hand, you have elite versions of LA's development, which many social groups feel exclude their contributions to the city's development. On the other hand, there are the debunkers who attempt to de-legitimize such versions of LA's past, while also producing a history more in tune with particular class, ethnic or racial interpretations of history.

Contributing to LA's lack of popular history is a relative deficiency in immigrant-ethnic identification among its Anglo population. The European-origin population that moved to Southern California identified primarily as migrants, not immigrants (Keogan, 2002). Thus, the term "immigrant" is understood in the Southern California context through its associations with non-Europeans in general, and Mexicans in particular. The dual influence of an elite Anglo history of LA's development and a general lack of European immigrant-ethnic identity has significantly discounted the contributions of immigrants to the development of Los Angeles. There are not many group success stories in LA's past because the European-origin population quickly assimilated into the mainstream, while non-European immigrant-ethnics were effectively marginalized.

Spatial Representations

Los Angeles, like every major city, does have an origin myth, a narrative of its pre-urban beginnings. Moreover, LA's origin myth is officially recognized and celebrated through *El Pueblo Historic Monument* in downtown LA. But, as we shall see, this origin myth has not become central to the collective identity of area residents. Moreover, the "historic" downtown area is not a significant site for a plurality of Los Angeles' social groups.

For example, Dear claims that in LA "there is no need to go 'downtown' to enjoy entertainment and cultural events in the postmodern city . . . Indeed, downtown

LA is not the downtown for the vast majority of the region's population; many Angelenos have never even been there" (2000:16). The city has long been characterized as (sub)urban sprawl, and contemporary authors continue to characterize LA as the city "that radiates from nothing at all" (Reid, 1992 :xxii), or "sixty suburbs in search of a city" (Soja, 1996: 428). In Klein's (1997) *History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory*, the area in and around downtown LA is characterized as a mnemonic wasteland. Finally, Davis argues that the "fortress effect" of recent development in the downtown area is part of a "deliberate socio-spatial strategy . . . to raze all associations with Downtown's past and to prevent any articulation with the non-Anglo urbanity of its future" (1990: 229-30).

The lack of identification with LA's downtown is further evidenced by tourist patterns in the area. For instance, *El Pueblo* historic district is not included in the top twenty attractions compiled by The Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau (www.lacvb.com, Quick Tourism Facts: 4). In fact, none of downtown's ethnic neighborhoods in its "historic core," including *El Pueblo*, Chinatown and Little Tokyo, make the list. The only seemingly "ethnic" site on the list is "Chinese Theatre," presumably a reference to the Hollywood area landmark made famous through its association with movie stars. Overall, theme parks and sites associated with the lifestyles of the rich and famous dominate LA's top-twenty list.

However, *El Pueblo* historic district is not an insignificant site for LA's most numerous ethnic group. Many contemporary Mexican-American and Chicano authors center their narratives on this historical site (e.g., Acuña, 1996; Griswold del Castillo, 1979; Martinez, 1992; Monroy, 1999; Sánchez, 1993). These authors emphasize the importance of the downtown landscape to LA's Mexican heritage. Likewise, *El Pueblo's* Calendar of Events is heavily weighted toward the celebration of specifically Mexican ethnic celebrations (www.cityofla.org). The origin myth centered on *El Pueblo* was amenable to the local elite as long as it promoted a quaint view of the city's distant and "primitive" past. Because Anglos have long perceived a lack of continuity between the Mexican past and the "modern" city, the origin myth presented little, if any, threat to elite civic identity.

Mexicans appear to be the only group to heartily embrace the historical narrative centered on *El Pueblo*. This is not surprising since *El Pueblo* embodies the Spanish-Mexican origins of Los Angeles. As such, it has become an important symbol of Mexican heritage. For example, Martinez sees *La Placita*—the historic Our Lady Queen of the Angels Church in *El Pueblo*—as the sacred center of the city: "LA history begins at La Placita, and end at La Placita. I cross the city dozens of times in a single week, but I must always return there—I must always go home" (1992: 232). Compare this account with Skerry's: "Mexican heritage exists on the margins of LA's civic life. Officially acknowledged and even preserved, as with the old pueblo at Olvera Street, Mexican culture and institutions are encapsulated and overwhelmed by the dominant Anglo culture" (1993:73).

Both visions of *El Pueblo* are valid. These divergent interpretations again demonstrate that there is little space to construct a common, socially inclusive history of the city. This is because there are alternative social memories of Los Angeles. One version celebrates the victory of progressive, Anglo-American individualism and modern technology over a "backward" and distant past, while another sees a more continuous evolution of LA from its origins as a Mexican pueblo and its present situation. More importantly, since *El Pueblo* symbolizes Mexican origins in the area prior to Anglo-Americans, it is not an immigrant landmark, per se. Because Mexicans can trace their beginnings to the pre-American period, they can claim native or indigenous roots as opposed to an "immigrant" heritage.

In the New York City context, many prominent historic landmarks and ethnic neighborhoods have been incorporated into an elaborate theme of immigrant-ethnic heritage. Furthermore, this civic identity has become a central theme for New York City's increasingly lucrative tourist industry. For instance, in 1990 Ellis Island was officially re-opened to the public after a twenty-five year program of fund-raising that led to what the National Parks Service described as "the largest historic restoration in US history" (www.nps.gov/stli/serv02.htm: 5). The Statue of Liberty has long been associated with immigration through its own immigrant museum, Emma Lazarus' *Colossus*, and popular images of immigrants' first sight of the statue as they entered New York harbor. Now the symbolic association has been officially and firmly linked through The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation: "The Immigrant Experience Comes Alive" at the Ellis Island museum where visitors can listen to a "dramatic reenactment" based on "actual oral histories," view the film *Island of Hope, Island of Tears* or gaze at *The American Immigrant Wall of Honor* which overlooks the Statue of Liberty and the New York Skyline—engraved with over 600,000 names of "brave men and women who . . . risked everything to come to America."

The present-day celebration of New York City's immigrant heritage does not stop at the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island monument. The image of New York as the quintessential city of immigrants is further developed through various immigrant-ethnic neighborhoods, parades and festivals. For instance, New York City's collective calendar is marked by a multitude of ethnic parades and festivals that attest to the diverse immigrant origins of the metropolitan area's population. McNamara (1997: xix, 9) conceptualizes parades as "carefully planned urban performances" that often use "the entire city as stage and auditorium." Traditional immigrant-ethnic parades such as St. Patrick's Day demand New Yorkers' attention because they appropriate central chunks of time and space. As McNamara (1997:45) points out, the St. Patrick's Day Parade has provided a model for other emerging ethnic groups in the city.

Although annual parades up Fifth Avenue—what Page (1999) has referred to as the "spine" of Manhattan—are an effective mechanism for marking the time and space of the city, ethnic festivals also attest to the vibrancy of New York's immi-

grant heritage. Traditional festivals such as San Gennaro in Little Italy and Chinatown's New Year celebration continue to mark the geography of Lower Manhattan as inherently immigrant-ethnic. Moreover, the most famous neighborhood setting for New York City's "rags to riches" success story, the Lower East Side, is itself in the process of a social resurrection. Few city neighborhoods have received more recent scholarly attention than the legendary Lower East Side (Diner, 2000; Diner, Shandler, and Wenger, 2000; Maffi, 1995; Shenton and O'Donnell, 1992). The Jews of New York have a particularly close identification with the Lower East Side as a source of both nostalgia and collective identity. According to Hayes, the Lower East Side Conservancy's mission is "dedicated to the preservation, stewardship and promotion of the Lower East Side as the cradle of Jewish cultural life in the city" (1999: 38).

Although the Lower East Side has a special place in the social memory of New York's Jewish community, the area is often seen as the site of immigrant-ethnic succession. For example, the recently opened Lower East Side Tenement Museum (www.tenement.org; Hayes, 1999: 36) has converted a previously abandoned 1863 dwelling into a spatial commemoration of New York City's immigrant-ethnic past. The tenement "was the first address for thousands of Irish, German, Eastern European Jews, Italians and others who were part of the great immigrations of the 19th and early 20th centuries" (*Ibid.*). Furthermore, the increasingly popular walking tours of Manhattan neighborhoods have made the Lower East Side a popular destination for historically oriented jaunts.

For example, Cooke (1995: Ch. 5) entitles her journey through the neighborhood "The Lower East Side: Immigration from Past to Present." The chapter celebrates the immigrant-ethnic heritage of the neighborhood through attention to old buildings and other remnants of a glorified past. But the narrative doesn't simply wax nostalgic; rather there is a concerted effort to link the immigrant past with the immigrant present (hence the title of the chapter). This is done by lumping and linking together what were once seen as distinct ethnic enclaves, such as Little Italy, The Bowery, and Chinatown into a comprehensive geographic construction, The Lower East Side, broadly defined. Speaking of the "hard life" for the immigrants in today's Chinatown, Cooke claims,

the Lower East Side retains a vitality that has characterized it over centuries. Or, on second thought, a more correct assessment might be that the vitality of the *immigrants* down here continues unabated . . . one day soon, even the name [Chinatown] may vanish . . . and it will simply be called the Lower East Side (1995: 93).

Because New York City has developed into the symbolic center for the promotion and reproduction of the "Nation of Immigrants" origin myth, this narrative has become an important cultural construct for the local, discursive framing of the foreign-born population. Because the Irish, Italians, Jews and other immigrant-ethnic groups have come to understand "their" history in terms of a more inclusive "immi-

grant as us" identity, current pro-immigrant organizations in the New York City area have an established and effective way of promoting their own cultural and economic agendas within the urban civic arena. New York City's cultural time-space furnishes adequate and sufficiently transposable resources for the framing of immigrants in a consistently sympathetic manner. In contrast, Los Angeles is relatively devoid of positive historical associations with immigrants. Thus, the contemporary surge of immigrant-ethnics into Los Angeles is often represented as an unprecedented predicament. For example, Waldinger and Bozorgmehr (1996: 8) describe the Los Angeles area as predominantly "White" and native — born, until recently when "it all changed." Along with the sharp rise in the non-white population of Los Angeles, there has been an increase in Anglo panic regarding the city's future.

CONCLUSION: TOWARD THE URBAN IMMIGRANT FUTURE

Political culture is thoroughly oriented toward the future (Luhmann 1976; Mische and Pattison, 2000). People are drawn to a cause not only due to their historically generated identities, but also in the hope and desire of influencing an indeterminate tomorrow. Referring to George Herbert Mead's work on temporality, Luhmann (1976) argues that because we have a plurality of historical time, there is also a symmetrically "open" future. Although the future never actually begins, social action is always oriented toward this "horizon," and future-oriented political activity may be intensified during periods of instability or rapid social change (*Ibid.*: 134). However, the future is always extrapolated from a present, a present that is likewise conditioned by a past that is both real and imagined. The present is an ephemeral, in-between position within time-space. Collective struggles over representation always involve both future- and past-oriented narratives that are influenced by local contexts of co-presence (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Mische and Pattison, 2000: 167). As Maines *et al.* argue (1983: 167): "Successful community groups contextualize their power in acts of systematically linking the past and future together in order to influence the construction of relations in the present." Although the political future is an attractive rhetorical space to occupy due to its indeterminacy, in order for a future-oriented discourse to resonate with a public, the projection must have some resemblance to collective past-present experiences.

During the 1990s, New York City and Southern California came to occupy polar opposite positions on the controversial issue of illegal immigration (Keogan, 2002). For instance, *The Los Angeles Times* dedicated a disproportional amount of attention to the issue of illegal immigration, framing this category of immigrants primarily as a threat or burden to the mainstream. The focus on illegal immigration in California peaked in 1994 as the "Save Our State" initiative (Proposition 187) made it on to the electoral ballot there. This legislation called for the exclusion of illegal immigrants, including children, from basic social services such as education

and health care. The proposition was passed by a majority of California voters, including those in Los Angeles County.

In contrast, prominent New York politicians took a welcoming position toward all immigrants. For instance, one of the few front page *New York Times* headline during 1994 that dealt directly with illegal immigrants as a local issue reads: "New York Officials Welcome Immigrants, Legal or Illegal" (*New York Times*, June 6, 1994). The following year, Mayor Giuliani again grabs front-page headlines when he criticizes federal policies against illegal immigrants (*New York Times*, August 23, 1995). While local politicians took a defensive position toward illegal immigrants, *The New York Times* promoted a decidedly sympathetic narrative in relation to this group of immigrants. For instance, when attention to the issue did peak during the 1990s, illegal immigrants were most often portrayed as "victims" rather than a present-future threat to the city (Keogan, 2002).

Because of the pejorative label and the structure of immigration policies, illegal immigrants have become the most excludable segment of the foreign-born population. Thus, they are an obvious target for anti-immigrant politics, provided their deviant label is reinforced through public discourse. Illegal immigrants were primarily framed as a present-future threat to California through the political rhetoric of the "Save Our State" initiative. Furthermore, a consistent media focus on the US-Mexico border during the early 1990s clearly marked Mexicans as the main source of the illegal immigrant problem. But it was not only respected sources of the print media that projected the immigrant threat into California's future imagination. Scholarly texts published during the late 1990s also focused on the increasing Mexican population as a menace on California's social horizon.

For instance, the first chapter of Maharidge's ([1996] 1999) *The Coming White Minority: California, Multiculturalism, and America's Future* is entitled "The Brink." Maharidge views white voter backlash against the rising minority-majority as based on "ill-founded" white fear (11). The past the author turns to in relation to current events is not a pleasant one: California is described as having a long history of "racial eruptions" (12). Although he tries to mix good news with bad, toward the end of the chapter he states "recent events suggest that California is not on course to a smooth cultural changeover after 1998 . . . The next few decades could continue to be filled with turmoil, riots, race baiting, and hate" (20). If this sort of future scenario is to be avoided, it is up to, "whites" to share power with the new ethnic groups. If no accommodation is brokered between the extremes on both sides of the issue there "is the risk of an explosion" (21).

Maharidge states that Proposition 187 has a "historic ring" (156). He cites the West Coast anti-Asian agitation of the 1870s and other anti-immigrant bias that belongs to an ugly past. However, he goes on to observe: "some unique factors make contemporary California nativism different." As Maharidge explains it, even a small number of Latino "activists" espousing the belief that part of the U.S. "belongs" to them is what distinguishes the ethnic identity-politics of Mexicans from

earlier waves from Europe. As he explains, European immigrants "did not have any cultural claim to New York or New Jersey that predated the arrival of whites" (157). Again, Maharidge claims that such "white" fears are not based in reality, but he does make the case that Mexicans are different from European immigrants because of their contentious identity-politics and ethnic resiliency.

Clark's *The California Cauldron: Immigration and the Fortunes of Local Communities* is prefaced with the following historical narrative:

In the first half of the 20th century, California was the 'promised land,' and the state grew and prospered with expanding economic opportunities and burgeoning migration. The newcomers . . . were largely white and Protestant, and although Hispanics and Asians lived in California, in the years after World War II it was still an "anglo" state (1998: xiii).

Clark goes on to note that changes in immigration law transformed the nation and "especially California." Obviously, there is a major disjunction between the past and the present-future vision of California in this narrative. Although the author points to some success stories in the making (e.g., Middle Eastern and Asian immigrants), he adopts a crisis narrative in relation to California's future: "The tentative conclusion is that time is the critical factor; without time to absorb the new immigrants, to educate and train these new citizens, we risk increasing fragmentation and separation" (*Ibid.*: 16).

Latino immigrants (i.e., predominantly Mexicans but also Central Americans) are seen as the main problem group, straining the "social fabric" and causing the "cauldron" to heat-up to a dangerous degree (*Ibid.*: 189-192). Again the proximity to Mexico is seen as problematic because immigrants from that country have "less incentive to assimilate" (*Ibid.*: 191). Asian immigrants are seen as a rather stark contrast to Latinos. The differences among immigrant groups are then mapped on to the geography of California: "The south is dominated by Latino immigrants, the north by Asian immigrants." There is an inherent danger in this scenario, according to Clark, because although "white" immigrants eventually assimilated, some of today's immigrant groups "choose to emphasize their differences" raising the "possibility of conflict rather than cooperation." He gives the example of waving a Mexican flag to celebrate that country's Independence as symbolic of "a nation within a nation, and hence of balkanization" (*Ibid.*: 142). He concludes with a call for a "skill-based" immigration policy (*Ibid.*: 196) that would effectively exclude most of the immigrants he characterizes as problematic. In these textual representations of California's future, prospects appear rather bleak, especially in Southern California. Mexicans are clearly seen as the most dangerous group, as the main antagonists within a present-future crisis narrative.

The cyclical "waves" of immigration to New York City makes the present era seem "normal" because "we" have been through this before. Thus, although New Yorkers recognize that there are many challenges and potential problems ahead, the

established narrative is that, at least in the long run, the city will benefit. This is the clear gist of the two books published in the late 1990s that deal with the immigrant present-future in New York.

For example, Sanjek's (1998) *The Future of Us All: Race and Neighborhood Politics in New York City* claims that the extremely diverse Elmhurst-Corona section is a window on the New York City's, and America's, future. Enconced within this ethnographic study are many references to overt and covert conflicts among the area's white, black and immigrant (predominantly Latino and Asian) groups. Although the book claims few neighborhoods have experienced such "heavy immigration and white-black encounter simultaneously. Elmhurst-Corona has, and with relatively little overt conflict" (1998: 2). After initial native reactions to the sharp demographic changes in the 1970s—including "the great illegal alien panic of 1974" (*Ibid.*: 70-75), Sanjek argues that the area's civic arena has become more inclusive, and broadened its channels of communication among the diverse residents.

The book starts with an historical overview of the area (1652-1960), looking at the arrival of various European immigrant-ethnics as well as blacks. The chapter concludes "the working- and lower- middle-class Elmhurst Corona of the 1950s was the culmination of its immigrant history begun a century earlier. . . . While still amounting to 98 percent of the 1960 census count, the neighborhood's white population numbers were beginning to contract" (*Ibid.*: 27). In the conclusion, Sanjek attempts to dispel the view that the country is "saturated" with foreign-born people, citing statistics that the nation, and New York City's percent foreign-born was considerably higher in 1910 than in the "present" (i.e., 1990). Although there is ample evidence in the account for a dim picture of the future, the author instead focuses on the sort of "local political action [that] brings participants together across racial lines and can be expected to do so even more in coming decades" (*Ibid.*: 370). Sanjek claims that "quality of life" issues are a unifying theme for all residents, and that they can "promote racial and ethnic comity and accord" (*Ibid.*: 370).

The City and the World: New York's Global Future (1997) is an edited volume that takes a variety of angles in its pursuit of the present-future of New York City. But the foreword sets the tone for the rest of the book when it claims that New York City's "high energy" culture "has long been associated with its openness to immigrants and the fresh ideas and entrepreneurial spirit they bring. Sitting in my office. . . I can look out over New York harbor, where my grandparents arrived at the turn of the century after an arduous transatlantic voyage" (Hormats 1997: ix-xi). Although there is recognition that much has changed since then, New York's "openness to new people, new ideas, and new cultures has remained a vital feature" (*Ibid.*: x).

In the introduction, the editors (Crahan and Vourvoulias-Bush, 1997: 15) argue that the recent large influx of immigrants in New York City has helped fill service sector jobs, "stabilize a number of neighborhoods and renew a good portion of the

city's housing stock." While "others" claim that many immigrants can be a burden, the editors make a point of not associating New York, or themselves, with such a narrative.

Although the negative effects associated with a swift global flow of people and commerce (e.g., organized crime and drug trafficking) are dealt with, immigration and trade are seen as playing "an overwhelmingly positive role in the life of the city" (Krauss, 1997: 70). Rather than a call for isolationism, the negative effects of globalization are understood as a paradox resulting from attempts to halt the flow of "illegal drugs and migrant labor" while adopting a policy of liberalism (i.e., free trade) in regard to most everything else (Andreas, 1997: 79).

The chapters dealing specifically with immigration evidence a tempered optimism in their appraisal of New York's future. But the discussion is usually understood in relation to the immigrant past: "Throughout its history, New York City has been shaped by the ebb and flow of migrants. . . . In every era, new population groups have helped to reinvent the city economically, socially, and culturally. . . ." (Salvo and Lobo, 1997: 88). They walk the reader through the cyclical phases of immigration, and then conclude their essay by characterizing New York as "A City Dependent on Immigrant Flows" (*Ibid.*: 106-107). By symbolically linking the past with the present-future, the authors are able to establish a pattern of "dependency," equating immigrants with the populace necessary to avoid demographic decline. DeWind (1997: 133-146) also opens his analysis of today's children of immigrants in New York City schools with a customary nod to the past. However, he also highlights differences, stressing that the present era has "diminished the prospects for labor-market mobility for newer immigrants and, more important in the long-term, for their children" (133). Nevertheless, he points out that the children of immigrants tend to do well as compared to native-born children in New York City's schools (135).

Although the present-future narratives of New York City's immigrant population may be best described as guardedly optimistic, these literary representations are tightly tethered to a highly symbolic past. What remains to be seen is how the now ever-present threat of terrorism within the urban context is scripted in relation to the foreign-born population, post-9/11.

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