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CULTURE, TERRITORIALITY, AND
THE ELASTIC MILE

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WE ARE REMINDED frequently that the glue holding together otherwise disparate regional scientists is a shared interest in space. But it is becoming increasingly apparent that this common intellectual property is really a very heterogeneous commodity. In only a limited sense is space measurable as mileage distance on the surface of the earth, or even as the various costs of traversing those mileage distances. "Space" is turning out to be a very complex idea. Mathematicians have described several of its complex geometries. The group dynamicists have been seeking to measure its social dimensions. The economists have, of course, been demonstrating a diversity of cost dimensions. The experimental psychologists have been exploring an individual's perceptions of spatial dimensions and the ways in which he copes with spatial distortions. And now, most recently, a group of sociologists and social psychologists have been examining some of the social-cultural variants in perceptions of space and some of the culturally specific behavior with respect to space.

The findings of these latter studies, and especially those investigations into the culture of working-class ethnic groups, are revealing some striking variations in responses to space among population subgroups. They suggest that culturally specific spaces must be measured by a wide variety of transformations of the linear-distance scale and by an equally varied collection of value scales. In an effort to identify some of these scale differences, I should like first to speculate about the space-related behavior of the intellectual elites and then to summarize some of the more relevant findings of the recent inquiries into working-class behavior. From this perspective of the cultural determinants of demand functions, then, I should like to offer some suggestions for regional science research.

THE INTELLECTUAL ELITES

I would guess that the typical participant in Regional Science Association meetings is an old hand at convocations of this sort. Especially for the types that join such cross-disciplinary clubs as this one, it's quite likely that each get-together of the Association is but one of a never-ending sequence of conferences, each with its own peculiar mix of participants and each in a different place. For those who are favored by generous expense accounts, the locations

are likely to be scattered all over the world, as the matter-of-fact bulletins from our founder so frequently attest. Your contacts with others at distant places are maintained through a large number of channels—the academic journals, books, the mails, the long-distance telephone, and of course the long-haul transportation lines. Some of your friends and colleagues are located at the other ends of those long channels, and yet they are among your most intimate associates. Together you comprise closely-knit communities to which each of you *belongs*. It is to these communites that your loyalties are assigned. It is these spatially-dispersed peers who will understand your work and then convey the rewards that matter most to you.

As with all other professional elites, the primary group is not based on kinship, ethnicity, nationality, *or place*. Rather, it is a voluntary association of men joined by shared interests and shared values. And today, when the gratuitous expense accounts fix the dollar costs of long-distance travel at zero, the intellectual elites exhibit a much higher-average propensity to travel than do others having comparable taxable incomes. As men who trade in information and ideas, they must necessarily maintain intensive communication with other members of their spatially dispersed, *nonplace* communities (27). These folk approximate the true cosmopolites for whom territorial distance is a minor barrier to interaction and whose professional social communities are the least shaped by territorialism. For these, social propinquity is least dependent upon spatial propinquity (26).

Of course, these world-wide or nation-wide communities of specialist elites make only partial claims upon their participants. It is only in his segmental roles as specialist that a man is even a member of these cosmopolitan communities. In others of his roles—as teacher, laboratory worker, grocery shopper, P.-T.A. member, parent, husband, and many more—his communities are likely to be more nearly *place*-based. Each of the many communities to which he belongs has its own set of peers, each set distributed within spatial realms somewhat different from each of the others. As parent and husband, his world typically fixes on the suburban lot; as grocery shopper or participant in the local P.-T.A., perhaps a few statute miles. As "neighbor," he may have virtually no contact with those who live on his block, for he probably selects his social friends largely, if not solely, on the basis of common interests; and he may therefore travel dozens of miles for an evening visit.

The life spaces of these highly-specialized professional types are multi-dimensional and supraterritorial, being scaled against measures of social rank, generation, age, stage of the life cycle, educational attainment, and, almost incidentally, geographic distance. The cosmopolite *himself* is also pluralistic: each individual represents a variegated bundle of role-persons, each at least somewhat different from the others. Each *role* also carries its own special demands, opportunities, and sources of potential gratification (10).

But the striking thing about these men, when playing out their specialist roles, is the ease with which they are able to operate within *extensive* space. In their professional roles, they are likely to be at home in Philadelphia or Denver or Los Angeles, and the more enterprising among us are equally at

home in Lund or Warsaw or Tokyo. Even in their more localized roles as parents or grocery shoppers, they accomodate to *alternate* locational settings with seeming ease, moving their households from one end of the country or world to another with remarkable frequency. The high rates of residential mobility among these groups seem to be sustained by the large adaptive capacities of their families; seldom does a long-distance move represent an adjustment crisis of serious proportions. To be sure, in part this reflects the decline of cultural differences among the regions of the nation; such that a move from Long Island to Santa Monica is nearly equivalent to a move of a few blocks within either of those places (5, 6, 7). In part, it reflects the association of a move with an expanded role opportunity that is positively sought. But in part, too, it reflects their internal, psychic resources for coping with change (4).

Middle-class Americans, and especially those whose education has exposed them to conditions in the world at different times and at different places, are, thereby, better equipped to anticipate conditions they will confront at different places and at later stages in time. In the normal course of acculturation to middle-class ways, one assimilates a concept of futurity, the notion that the future is in some degree controllable, and a capacity to forego present gratifications for potentially greater future gratifications. The cosmopolite's life space is not only geographically extensive; it also extends forward (as well as backward) in time.

THE WORKING CLASS

Now consider another group, at the opposite end of the continuum that extends from the professional cosmopolites to the working-class locals.[1] These people might be located in pre-industrial peasant villages in almost any part of the world or in the high-density slum of any large American metropolitan area (18).

The accumulating studies are revealing some remarkably similar patterns among all these groups, suggesting that locational setting is not the crucial determinant of social structure and behavior. The consistent findings indicate that through several generations, the so-called working-class residents of central-city slums (or of the rare suburban public-housing projects) have retained the "intense localism" and the "close-knit networks" of social relations that have characterized the so-called peasant societies from which they descend.

Life in these subcultures is highly structured to accord with the formalized networks of social relations among immediately proximate kin and neighbors, and to accord with the unambiguously prescribed obligations, prerogatives, and behavioral norms. The primary social unit is the extended family—that tight network that ties mother and father, married children and their children, cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents into a rigid community of interaction and mutual dependence. Especially in early childhood and then after marriage, one's intensive interpersonal relations are primarily with nearby members of

[1] The terms "cosmopolites" and "locals" may have been first used in this sense by Merton (20, p. 387 ff.).

the extended family and nearby neighbors. Older children and unmarried youth maintain close ties with members of their own localized peer groups; working men maintain close associations with co-workers during the day and with proximate neighbors who frequent the same tavern at night; housewives maintain running conversation with the women on the block. These overlapping close-knit networks of associations, *based upon the residence*, are manifested in the intensive interaction and in rapid exchange of information on day-to-day happenings, that reinforce the cohesive social organization through which even the slightest aberations of the rigid moral and behavioral codes are enforced (4).

A great many of the residents of those American and British working-class neighborhoods that recently have been studied have lived within the same block, or within a radius of a couple of blocks, for at least a generation. In London's Bethnal Green, many families had lived there for well over a century. The ties within family (especially the ties between a married daughter and her mother) are so strong that few are willing to live farther away than a few minutes' *walking* distance. As a result, it is common to find parents and married children living within the same apartment building or in adjacent buildings. Aunts and cousins are clustered nearby, and this high degree of accessibility facilitates the daily visiting among kinfolk and neighbors, through which mutual supports and aid in emergencies are personally provided (29).

Although visiting among members of the same family is largely localized within the apartment (one's home is frequently a private place, exclusively reserved for "blood relatives"), the continuous babble among non-kin neighbors reverberates at such places as corridors, front stoops, streets, taverns, stores, and, among women, from window-to-street (8). The street thus becomes an extension of the house, itself a place where people *live*, and where much of the social interaction takes place. Where the house is the habitat of kin, the street is the habitat of neighbors. And, in striking contrast to middle-class groups, *social organization* (encompassing both family and friends) *is territorially coterminous with neighborhood place* (4, 5, 15, 29).

The members of these societies rarely leave their spatial environs. Of course, the jobholder may have to leave the neighborhood daily, but he follows a fixed transit course to his destination, and returns with little intercourse enroute. The family may make a trip to visit an upwardly mobile member of the family who has moved some distance away, but such journeys are rare, even if the distance is only a few miles.

Just outside the few blocks that surround the resident's apartment lies foreign territory. Even though it too may be inhabited by families having apparently identical demographic and cultural characteristics, there is typically no way into its close-knit network of family ties and neighbor associations; and its residents may therefore be seen as strangers and regarded with suspicion and hostility. This sort of parochialism is seen in its extreme form in the localism of male, teenage gangs who fight to defend the turf of their street corner or candy shop against the threat of invasion by gangs from the immediately adjacent, but foreign, blocks (28). Here, in the only genuine

social neighborhoods of our cities, one's physical life space acquires a highly personalized meaning.

The physical place becomes an extension of one's ego. The outer worlds of neighborhood-based peer groups, neighborhood-based family, and the *physical* neighborhood place itself, seem to become internalized as inseparable aspects of one's inner perceptions of self. In the highly personalized life of the working-class neighborhood, where one's experiences are largely limited to social contacts with others who are but minutes away, the physical space and the physical buildings become reified as aspects of the social group. One's conception of himself and of his place in society is thus subtly merged with his conceptions of the spatially limited territory of limited social interaction (4).

Fried has suggested that the highly-structured spatial arrangements of the typical working-class slum area (composed, as they typically are, of the densely-compacted and physically-delineated alleys, streets, basement cubicles, and the like) seem to conform to the highly-structured social organization that marks the residents' society. Proprietary rights to public spaces are staked out by different groups of tenants; and, in accord with the traditionalist and rigid allocation of rights and obligations, others in the community then respect those space allocations. But more important than that, and in marked contrast with contemporary intellectual elites, the underlying conceptions of order and the protocols of social propriety among working-class groups seem to demand clean boundaries and clearly-articulated structure. The literature on the working class has been emphatic about its highly-formalized social structure; and recent research is now suggesting that these patterns of social organization may be mirrored in preferred organization of physical environments and in spatial patterns of social interaction.

The hypothesis is reinforced by our understanding of several related traits of working-class persons. However rich in subtleties of interpersonal associations, life in the working class tends to be concrete and particularistic. One typically knows where he stands, whether in the social hierarchy of his family and friends or in the territorial domain of his physical world. He lives with well-defined rules of behavior. His prerogatives and his limits are clearly understood. The objects of attention are tangible. And they exist in the present (8, 12, 15).

Life for the women is a never-ending round of household chores and child care, and a never-ending round of gossip about the interpersonal relations among kin and neighbor. For the men, whose education may not have progressed beyond grade school, work, when available, is at its routine best only a mean for earning a livelihood. Its performance may be physically arduous and its tenure uncertain. There is virtually no interest in the work as such, either as an outlet for self-expression or as a means of social advancement.[2] Whatever his level of skill, he scarcely expects that he'll over do much better. Indeed, he is scarcely concerned with the future.

[2] When a sample of working-class males was asked which of their many jobs they liked best, the respondents seemed not even to understand the question!

Only the spatially concrete and the temporally immediate are understandable and real. When faced with threatening situations or with uncertainties about the future, the prototype working-class person is poorly equipped to cope with them directly. Perhaps as an adaptive response, instead he resignedly accepts the outcomes as the inexorable workings of Fate. ("What is to be, will be." "You've got to take life as it comes." "The bitter with the sweet.") Just as distant places are unfamiliar and hence unreal, so too is the future unreal. In part, this is because the future really is unmanageable within the psychic, cognitive, and economic resources at his command. But possibly it is in part also because his basis thoughtways and his style of life are oriented to that which is *here* and that which is here *now*.

IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL SCIENCE

The understandings we are accumulating about the social organization and behavior of working-class groups are beginning to inform the activities of city planners, redevelopers, educators, and social workers. It is likely that the next round of redevelopment projects and curriculum revisions will be more sensitive to their culturally conditioned preferences than were those of the recent past. But the contrasts between the spatial patterns of interaction of these groups and those of the middle-class majorities suggest some inferences for the regional scientists as well. Clearly, space, distance, and place have quite different meanings for the residents of working-class slums than they have for the intellectual elites living in low-density suburbs. The stability of the social characteristics of residents in specific areas—ranging from upper-class suburbs and midtown enclaves to ethnic slums—suggests that residential choices are at least as much a function of social stratification and cultural traits as they are of transportation costs and rents. It seems likely, too, that we can now begin to refine our household-location and traffic models to account for these previously untreated variables.

It should be apparent that I have discussed these two special groups as a way of marking the extremes of a continuum, and not because either of them represents any sort of cultural mean. But I did so also because so much of our analysis treats space-related behavior as though populations and space were both homogeneous, and I mean to focus attention upon the wide spectrum of interaction propensities extending from extreme cosmopolitanism to extreme localism.

Of course, it has long been generally recognized that locational patterns are probably influenced by subcultural differences and that distances are functions of the variable costs of overcoming them. In 1956, Isard explicitly called attention to the cultural variances affecting space-related behavior. Indeed, he closed *Location and Space Economy* with an exhortation that the social and psychological variables be examined more closely (14), and then, five years later, he and Karl Deutsch re-entered the plea with some suggestions for empirical investigations (1).

In the course of recent empirical work, Hägerstrand in Sweden has been searching for the social class variables associated with migration distance of

persons and with the spatial diffusion of innovations (11), and this work has been furthered by Marble and his associates. In the metropolitan transportation studies, distance exponents in the gravity and potential models have been adjusted; effects of differential transportation rates have been examined; and such surrogate variables for social class as occupation and income have been employed in multiple-regression analyses of household location. The Herbert-Stevens residential model goes beyond these and calls for an explicit identification of social groups and their preferences (14).

The applications of the model in the Penn-Jersey Transportation Study have been accompanied by detailed surveys of housing-user groups and of their preferences (13), and this exploration certainly represents a major step beyond the earlier approaches that were conceptually simple, however methodologically sophisticated. But, until recently, we have not had available the needed social research that would expose cultural differences and hence permit us explicitly to examine the determinants underlying the preference functions of subcultural groups. As a result, we have of necessity dealt with highly-aggregated classes of persons and locational patterns, and our models have been capable of yielding only very gross predictions. For many urban-planning purposes, those gross predictions are proving very inadequate.

City planning, like regional science, has traditionally treated land-use patterns in very coarse-grained classes. Residential land use, most notably, has typically been described in the language of average densities. We have conducted our surveys to accord with this language; and we have then gone on to enunciate public policy in these terms, as though degrees of proximity of human bodies were, per se, the telling welfare determinants or were even a meaningful indicator of probable levels of interaction. But now, when we are becoming increasingly sensitive to the large behavioral and valuative differences among the metropolis' various publics and when we are trying to design educational, housing, health, and welfare programs that closely match each of the subgroups' special characteristics and special wants, we are finding that these coarse density classifications are not very useful. As the specificity and the sophistication of public-service programming increases, we will need increasingly refined models that are capable of predicting the likely consequences that alternative governmental programs would have on household locations. In turn, households will need to be finely classified by ethnicity, social class, race, age and household composition, religion, and more. Without these kinds of specific delineations of group characteristics, municipal policy-makers will continue to be incapable of designing rational programs for housing and renewal, school locations and curricula, race relations, taxation, and the range of other matters for which they hold some responsibility.

I am aware of at least some of the extraordinarily difficult problems of designing such complex models and then making them operational. I am aware that location theory is in a too-early development stage to satisfy many of the practitioners' wants. But I nonetheless file a plea that location theorists attempt to deal with more finely-disaggregated data and to search for the cultural differentials that underlie the empirically-observed location and interac-

voluntary residential moves, and message-sending transactions;[3] if it were to treat only households, rather than individuals; but if it could classify households by ethnic association, race, social rank, income, and mean educational level of adults, we would have come a very long way indeed. And, if the inferences I have been drawing from the recent studies of urban subcultural groups then prove to be tenable, even a coarse descriptor of this sort should reveal significant parametric differences in propensities to interact over varying mileage distances.

I am confident that these detailed studies would demonstrate a high correlation between social-rank and propensities to interact over distance, perhaps even independent of income levels. Since social rank is also associated with degree oi assimilation into contemporary urban society, increasing social mobility should have the effect of increasing average interaction distance for the aggregate national population. Thus, if the suggested vector were associated with independent predictions of social mobility, we would have a firmer basis for predicting long-term national parameteric changes with respect to travel distance, communication distance, and household relocation.

The long-term historical changes have been toward ever-increasing scale of the society, reflecting increasingly complex networks of interdependence, rising social mobility, lower real transportation and communication costs, and, with it all, ever-increasing mileage distance of social interaction. However, these changes have by no means touched all segments of the heterogeneous population. I find it sobering to be reminded that very large numbers of central-city residents follow styles of life and adhere to systems of values that are essentially unchanged from those brought over from the European peasant villages several generations ago. At the same time that social organization of cosmopolite groups is being largely freed from the restraints of territorial place, the "urban villagers" (8) live out their lives in territorially bounded and territorially perceived societies.

These facts, and the interpolations for the spectrum of other groups that lie between, suggest that the regional scientists, who are the self-professed students of social space, ought to be forming alliances with those space-oriented social and behavioral scientists who have not yet found the Regional Science Association. If collaborative enterprises could be joined, many of us would be less troubled about the present coarseness of locational analyses. With increased capability to disaggregate populations and with increased willingness to look for the cultural determinants behind demand functions, our models and then our public policies could both be more sensitively tuned to the underlying wants of the many different publics that we in the policy sciences seek to serve.

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[3] Perhaps it could be done by counting each letter, each telephone call, and each face-to-face conversation as a single transaction.

tion patterns.

The recent research of the sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists that I have referred to is suggesting that there are important parametric differences in subjective perceptions of distance, place, and time. It suggests that these differences are reflected in a wide range of personalized distance scales, such that "personal regions" may have but small resemblance to the "territorial regions" about which analysts may be agreed. In turn, it suggests that these personalized perceptions are manifested in varying propensities to travel, varying propensities to relocate households, and in varying propensities to transmit messages—each with respect to some standardized "geographic" scales. If these inferences are valid, then the arbitrary mileage and minute scales that have been applied in much of our analysis are just too crude; and the success of the empirical tests of the location and interaction models must be attributed to fortuitous averaging out of these populations differences. But now that we know that the general theoretical formulations *do* offer good approximations for population averages, perhaps we are now ready to undertake more specific studies of the behavior of the various subgroups within the population.

As a crude start, I think it would be worth trying to construct a descriptor of cosmopolitanism-localism. The intent would be to supply a synoptic indicator of behavioral propensities with respect to space which could then be employed to weight population-subgroups in the contemporary traffic and household-location models. Many of the demographic and travel data that would contribute to such a description are available from census and other sources, and I suspect that a first approximation would be fairly easy to construct. Precedents in social-area analysis and in socio-economic indices could be built upon (16, 23, 25). But a refined synoptic indicator would be a very complex thing indeed.

Because even the least place-bound cosmopolite behaves as an extreme localite when playing-out some of his roles, an ideal indicator, or descriptive vector, ought to disaggregate each individual into his most significant, composite roles and to assign index scores to each role. Thus, the more worldly of the regional scientists would record high-cosmopolite scores with respect to their professional roles and very low scores when playing-out parent and gardener roles. Their children would be indexed as localites in most of their roles, for the space-related behavior of middle-class children is probably very similar to that of working-class adults. Most nonworking middle-class women would probably score in the mid-range of the index scale, along with lower-middle-class males. Most aged people would record localite scores, and so on.

I don't believe we know enough yet about individuals' role mixes to construct a role-specific descriptor of cosmopolitanism-localism. But I hold it out as a worthy long-term goal for those who aspire to a refined explanation of space-oriented behavior. In the immediate future, though, I am confident that even a crude vector would prove to be a valuable tool in locational and interactional analysis as well as in city planning practice.

If it could successfully incorporate average mileage lengths of trips,

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